LOST IN A SEA OF LETTERS
SAʿD AL-DĪN ḤAMŪYA (D. 1252)
AND THE PLURALITY OF SUFI KNOWLEDGE

BY
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Curriculum Vitae

Cyril Villarosa Uy II graduated *summa cum laude* and Phi Beta Kappa from Yale University in 2012, with a B.A. in Religious Studies. At Yale, he studied under Gerhard Böwering, Frank Griffel, and Stephen Davis. A member of Berkeley College, Cyril was awarded the Bishop Berkeley Prize as the member of college who had best discovered the intellectual potentialities of a university. His senior thesis, "Prophets, Bezels, and the Gemstone: An Analysis of Ibn ʿArabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*," won the Wrexham prize for best undergraduate senior thesis in the humanities at Yale. Funded by a Paul Mellon Fellowship, Cyril pursued an M.Phil. degree in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies under James Montgomery at Clare College, Cambridge. His thesis, "Angels and Emanation in the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*," passed with distinction in 2014. After completing his M.Phil., Cyril travelled to Wādī al-Naṭrūn, Egypt as part of Stephen Davis' project to produce the first comprehensive catalogue of the Coptic and Arabic manuscripts in the historic library of the Monastery of the Syrians. His contributions were published in 2021 by Peeters as part of a volume entitled *Catalogue of Coptic and Arabic Manuscripts in Dayr al-Suryān, Volume 2: Arabic Commentaries and Canons.* In 2014, he also began work on a critical edition and translation of the Brethren of Purity's "Epistle on Spiritual Beings" with James Montgomery, then Wilferd Madelung. The project was published in 2019 with Oxford University Press in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies as part of a volume entitled *On God and the World: An Arabic Critical Edition and English Translation of Epistles 49-51.* Cyril began his Ph.D. at Stanford University in 2015, earning an M.A. in Religious Studies in 2017. That same year, he transferred to Brown University with his doctoral advisor, Shahzad Bashir. Cyril was awarded a Joukowsky Summer Research Award and a Brown Middle East Studies Graduate Travel Award in 2019 to undertake manuscript research at the Süleymaniye Library archives in Istanbul, Turkey. As a doctoral candidate, he was selected to be the inaugural Mellon Teaching Fellow in Global Islamic Studies at Connecticut College, where he taught a course called Power and Knowledge in Islam. In August 2021, he will begin as Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy and Religion at James Madison University.

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Santarcangelo di Romagna, Italy

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Contents

Note on Transliteration and Usage

For names and terms written in Arabic and Persian, I follow the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* system, but transliterate Persian as if it were Arabic (th for s̲, dh for z̲, and ḍ for ż). I render the *tāʾ marbūṭa* in Persian as *-a* or *-at*, but transcribe the final *hāʾ* in participles, relative pronouns, and prepositions as *-ih* (e.g., *gashtih, kih*, *bih*). The Persian *iḍāfa* is indicated as *-i* (*-yi* for words ending in vowels), but omitted in personal names (e.g., ʿAzīz Nasafī, not ʿAzīz-i Nasafī). The Arabic definite article is omitted from the proper names of individuals from Persian-speaking regions after their first occurrence (e.g., Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, Qūnawī). Conventional English spellings are used for countries and major cities, while regions, provincial localities, and lesser-known cities are given with full diacritics. The full titles of Arabic and Persian texts and subsections are transliterated in full the first time they are mentioned in the body text of the dissertation.

All dates are given according to the Gregorian calendar to facilitate interdisciplinary discussions with nonspecialists. In an attempt to reduce clutter, these dates are not written side-by-side with their Ḥijrī-Qamarī counterparts unless directly relevant (e.g., in direct quotes and detailed analyses of timelines and/or manuscripts). Death dates for individuals (apart from Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya) are listed after the first occurrence of their full names in the body text of each chapter.

Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Arabic, Persian, French, and German are my own. Quotations from the Qurʾān are taken from the translation by M.A.S. Abdel Haleem, with occasional modifications for context and consistency.

Introduction

Countless beings who inferred differently from the way in which we do now perished; and yet they may have come nearer to the truth!

Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Joyous Science*[1]

Do you see me through the whiteness of your blackness, through the blackness of your whiteness, through their sum, or through what exceeds both of them?

Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *The Book of the Beloved*[2]

This dissertation theorizes 13th-century Sufi knowledge not as a body of facts, but as an embodied sensibility. The project focuses on the life and work of Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya (d. 1252), a Mongol-era Sufi whose arcane treatises both inspired and bewildered future generations of occultists, mystics, and messiahs. Hailing from a prominent family in northeastern Iran, Ḥamūya travelled extensively, cultivating relationships with elites across the Iranian Plateau, Central Asia, and the Eastern Mediterranean. Along with shahs, khans, and *ṣāḥib-dīwān*s, his journeys brought him into the orbit of Sufi shaykhs whom later theorists and hagiographers would name the greatest saints of their generation. These Sufis traveled far and wide in their pursuit of knowledge and power, forging loose networks of masters and disciples that bound together nearly all strata of the medieval Islamic world.

Through close readings of theoretical treatises, training manuals, teaching certificates, and personal correspondences written in Arabic and Persian, I excavate an epistemological terrain in which abstract speculation, embodied experience, and social performance were funda-

[1] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Joyous Science*, trans. R. Kevin Hill (London: Penguin Classics, 2018), 125.

[2] Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Kitāb al-Maḥbūb*, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (SBB), MS Or. fol. 4084, fol. 75a.

mentally intertwined. For Ḥamūya and his colleagues, the broader matrix of Sufi thought and practice was the only universalizing framework supple enough to subsume all possible modes of knowing and being. Sufi training coupled regimented programs of social discipline and ritual practice with dynamic theoretical frameworks to produce subjects that lived the world as webs of diverse ontological possibilities. Sufi writers in turn sought to refine how readers navigated these possibilities through textual strategies keyed to the practical and phenomenological dimensions of their training. The lettrist operations, ritual cues, genealogical claims, and dizzying formal structures of medieval Sufi texts thus reflect an episteme in which even the most abstract theory could not be divorced from material and social concerns. For these Sufis, perfect knowledge was a fluid and all-encompassing sensibility that could negotiate diverse ideas, identities, and practices across a plurality of contexts.

In Ḥamūya's writing, these embodied sensibilities became manifest as boundless play: an undammable emanation of letters and words that generated infinite possibilities of meaning. Even among his contemporaries, the shaykh's work stood out for its deconstructive ethos and radical openness to interpretation.[3] His avant-garde treatises destabilized the generic conventions of his colleagues and forced readers to interrogate the underlying mechanisms of medieval Sufi knowledge itself. His deconstructive approach turned Sufi strategies in on themselves, parochializing the work of rivals who would limit the Real to their own particular perspectives. While other Sufis laid claim to perfect knowledge through demonstrations of their *own* totalizing sensibilities, Saʿd al-Dīn wrote Reality by opening up his words to the creative imagination of his readers.

[3] I use the term deconstructive to mark Ḥamūya's penchant for destabilizing ostensibly coherent systems, exploiting irreconcilable contradictions, and relishing in the ebullient productivity of language.

The project puts the work of Saʿd al-Dīn and his colleagues into conversation with an increasingly self-conscious and interdisciplinary attention to knowledge within the academy. By identifying the performative strategies through which these Sufis communicated their abstract-experiential knowledge in text, I expand the epistemological sensitivity of intellectual-historical methodologies and intervene against post-Enlightenment assumptions that confine knowledge to a realm of ethereal ideas and logical propositions.[4] The distinctive features of Ḥamūya's epistemology likewise invite us to reimagine the legacy of medieval Sufi knowledge. My analysis of the shaykh's work reveals a creative and self-conscious engagement with plurality that blossomed amidst the embodied sensibilities of 13th-century Sufis. Saʿd al-Dīn's deconstructive methods and the radical openness of his thought underscore how a nuanced negotiation (or even active promotion) of difference could thrive as a robust approach to social and intellectual competition. The strategies and stakes that his work illuminates thus offer us a means of exploring the global efflorescence of medieval and early-modern Sufism as a function of its rich internal diversity, relational potential, and endlessly contested possibilities.

0.1. Biography, Legacy, and Context[5]

[4] With respect to texts (and images), I use the term performative to mark strategies that directly engage readers in the process of meaning making. I adapt the concept from Bissera Pentcheva's work on medieval Byzantine icons. See eadem, *The Sensual Icon: Space, Ritual, and the Senses in Byzantium* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010) and my discussion on pp. 30 ff. below.

When referring to living human bodies, I use the terms performative and social performance in reference to acts that construct or maintain a sense of self or social identity. See e.g., Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), 173.

[5] At the outset, it is necessary to comment on the multiple forms of Saʿd al-Dīn's family name. The Arabic and Persian sources present a wide variety of spellings, but the most common are as follows:

حمویه | حموی | حمویی | الحموی | الحمویی

According to his great-grandson Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ḥamūya (fl. 14th c.), Saʿd al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Muʾayyad Ḥamūya was born in Baḥrābād (northeastern Iran) on the evening of January 28, 1191.[6] Saʿd al-Dīn's family took their name from Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn

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Scholars writing in the Latin script have offered their own diverse renderings, including Ḥamūya, Ḥammūya, Ḥamawayh, Ḥamuwayī, al-Ḥamawī, al-Ḥammūʾī, and the various permutations of these forms that stem from different transliteration systems. Drawing evidence from analogous names dating back to the Sasanian Period, Saʿīd Nafīsī argues that the suffix would have been originally pronounced as /*-ūyh*/, with the *hāʾ* either lightly enunciated or not at all. Though he cites other examples from the medieval period, he does not explicitly discuss a change in pronunciation apart from a shift to the modern Persian /*-ūyih*/. Nafīsī, "Khāndān-i Saʿd al-Dīn-i Ḥamawī," *Kunjkāwīhā-yi ʿIlmī wa Adabī* 83 (1950), 8-9. Based on evidence from Kubrā's *ijāza* to Saʿd al-Dīn and early manuscripts of *The Book of the Beloved* (*Kitāb al-Maḥbūb*), Jamal Elias argues that the name should be vocalized as Ḥamuwayī. Jamal J. Elias, "The Sufi Lords of Bahrabad: Saʿd al-Din and Sadr al-Din Hamuwayi," *Iranian Studies* 27, no. 1/4 (1994), 53-58.

In light of this vast diversity of forms, I have adopted the simplest spelling of the name—Ḥamūya—for the sake of convenience and clarity. Systems of transliteration notwithstanding, my choice dovetails with that of Paul Ballanfat, Lisa Alexandrin, Marijan Molé, Spencer Trimingham, Hamid Algar, Hermann Landolt, and Bruce Lawrence. See Paul Ballanfat, "Controverses sur le role de l'imagination: Ibn al-ʿArabī et l'ecole Kubrawī," *Ishraq: Islamic Philosophy Yearbook*, no. 2 (2012), 586; Elizabeth Ross Alexandrin, "Seals and Sealing of *Walāyah* in Ṣūfī and Shīʿī Texts: The Cases of al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī and Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūyah," in *Philosophy and Intellectual Life in Shīʿah Islam: Symposium 2015*, ed. Sajjad H. Rizvi and Saiyad Nizamuddin Ahmad (Leiden: Brill, 2017); Marijan Molé, "Les Kubrawīya entre Sunnisme et Shiisme aux huitième et neuvième siècles de l'Hégire," *REI* 29, no. 1 (1961), 74 ff.; J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 99; Najm al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 1256), *The Path of God's Bondsmen from Origin to Return (Merṣād al-èbād men al-mabdā' elā'l-màād): A Sufi Compendium by Najm al-Dīn Rāzī, Known as Dāya*, trans. Hamid Algar (Delmar, New York: Caravan Books, 1982), 3-4; Nūr al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Isfarāyinī (d. 1317), *Le révélateur des mystères*, trans. Hermann Landolt (Lagrasse: Verdier, 1986), 31; and Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyāʾ (d. 1325), *Nizam Ad-Din Awliya: Morals for the Heart*, trans. Bruce B. Lawrence (New York: Paulist Pr, 1991), 229-230.

[6] Ghiyāth al-Dīn gives the Ḥijrī date as 23 Dhū al-Hijja, AH 586. Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Murād al-murīdīn*, ed. S.A.A. Mīr-Bāqirī Fard and Z. Najafī (Tehran: Muʾassasat-i Muṭālaʿāt-i Islāmī-yi Dānishgāh-i Tihrān - Dānishgāh-i Makgīl, 2011), 3.

Ghiyāth al-Dīn's *Goal of the Seekers* (*Murād al-murīdīn*) offers the most detailed account of Saʿd al-Dīn's life as the only extant hagiography dedicated to him. I rely primarily on Ghiyāth al-Dīn for the biography that follows, supplementing his account with other sources where relevant. For more on *The Goal of the Seekers*, see S.A.A. Mīr-Bāqirī Fard and Z. Najafī's introduction to their edition of the text and their stand alone article: Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, i-xxv and S.A.A. Mīr-Bāqirī Fard and Z. Najafī, "Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūyih dar Murād al-murīdīn," *Muṭalaʿāt-i ʿIrfānī* 88, no. 9 (2009): 133–54.

Other premodern sources that report biographical information about Ḥamūya include Shams al-Dīn Abū al-Muẓaffar Yūsuf ibn Qizūghlī Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī (d. 1257), *Mirʾāt al-zamān fī taʾrīkh al-aʿyān*, ed. Muḥammad Barakāt, Kāmil al-Kharrāṭ, and ʿAmmār Rīḥāwī, 23 vols. (Damascus: Dār al-Risāla al-ʿAlamiyya, 2013), XXII.424; Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī al-Qazwīnī (d. 1349), *Tārīkh-i guzīda* (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1983), 670-671 and idem, *The Ta'ríkh-i-Guzída or "Select History" of Ḥamdu'lláh Mustawfí-i-Qazwíní. Compiled in A.H. 730 (A.D. 1330) and Now Abridged in English from a Manuscript Dated A.H. 857 (A.D. 1453). Part II, Containing the Abridged Translation and Indices*, ed. Edward G. Browne (Leiden: Brill, 1913), 216; ʿAfīf al-Dīn Abū ʿAbd Allāh ibn Asʿad al-Yāfiʿī (d. 1367), *Mirʾāt al-jinān wa-ʿibrat al-yaqẓān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1997), IV.34, 94; Faṣīḥ Aḥmad ibn Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Khwāfī (d. 1445), *Mujmal-i Faṣīḥī*, ed. Muḥsin Naṣrābādī (Tehran: Asāṭīr, 1966), II.268-269, 290-291, 313, 319; and Amīn Aḥmad Rāzī (17th c.), *Tadhkira-yi Haft Iqlīm*, ed. Sayyid Muḥammad Riḍā Tāhirī (Tehran:

Ḥamūya Juwaynī (d. 1136), a renowned Sufi shaykh with connections to ʿAyn al-Quḍāt al-Hamadānī (d. 1131).[7] Through the Ḥamūya family namesake, Saʿd al-Dīn traced his lineage back

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Soroush Press, 1999), II.837.

Premodern sources that report accounts of Ḥamūya's thought and anecdotes about his relationships with other Sufis include the following:

ʿAzīz Nasafī (d. before 1300), *Kitāb al-Insān al-kāmil*, ed. Marijan Molé, 3rd ed. (Tehran-Paris: L'Institut Francais de Recherche en Iran / Editions Tahuri, 1993), esp. 80, 109, 316, 320-322—Nasafī recounts his time as a student of Saʿd al-Dīn in Khurāsān and relates anecdotes about his teachings.

idem, *Kashf al-ḥaqāʾiq*, ed. A. Dāmghānī (Tehran: Bungāh-i Tarjuma wa Nashr-i Kitāb, 1965), 7—Nasafī recounts a dream in which he is visited by the Prophet Muḥammad, Saʿd al-Dīn, and Abū ʿAbd Allāh Mūhammad ibn Khafīf (d. 982). See my brief discussion of the dream in the Conclusion, p. 220.

Muʾayyad al-Dīn al-Jandī (d. ca. 1300), *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Mashhad: Intishārāt-i Dānishgāh-i Mashhad, 1982), 107—al-Jandī reports an anecdote involving Ḥamūya, Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 1274), and a student of Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī's (d. 1240) named Shams al-Dīn Ismāʿīl ibn Sūdkīn (d. 1248) in Damascus. See the discussion on p. 11 below.

Nūr al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Isfarāyinī (d. 1317), *Kāshif al-asrār*, ed. Hermann Landolt (Tehran: University of Tehran - McGill University, 1980), 45-55—al-Isfarāyinī reports that while in Juwayn, he heard Ḥamūya's disciples advance their master's claim that the beginning of sainthood was the end of prophecy. He notes that he rejected the claim at first, but then came to accept it after God revealed its meaning to him.

Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyāʾ (d. 1325), *Morals*, 229-230—Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyāʾ reports a story in which Saʿd al-Dīn is commanded to visit Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī (d. 1261) in a dream, but dies before he can complete the journey.

ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla Simnānī (d. 1336), *Chihil majlis-i Shaykh ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla Simnānī*, ed. Najīb Māyil Hirawī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Adīb, 1987), 172-176—Simnānī reports that Ḥamūya set sainthood above prophecy, then offers a lengthy refutation of his claim.

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 1492), *Nafaḥāt al-uns min ḥaḍarāt al-quds*, ed. Mahdī Tawḥīdī-Pūr (Tehran: Kitābfurūshī-yi Saʿdī, 1958), 424-425 and 428-430—Jāmī offers a brief discussion of Ḥamūya's work ("...so long as one's vision is closed to the light of unveiling, [his writing] will be impossible to apprehend"), transcribes several lines of his poetry, and records anecdotes about his spiritual feats and relationships with other Sufis (e.g., Kubrā, Majd al-Dīn Baghdādī (d. 1219), and Qūnawī). These narratives are often lifted directly from other sources, including al-Yāfiʿī, al-Jandī, and an uncredited citation from Nasafī's *Kitāb al-Insān al-kāmil* (Jāmī, 425 and Nasafī, 109).

Ḥāfiẓ Ḥusayn Karbalāʾī (d. 1589), *Rawḍāt al-Jinān wa-jannāt al-janān*, 2 vols. (Tabrīz: Sutūda, 2005), II.392—Karbalāʾī cites a few lines of Ḥamūya's poetry about the coming of the Mahdī.

Nūr Allāh Shūshtarī (d. 1610), *Majālis al-muʾminīn*, 2 vols. (Tehran: Kitābfurūshī-yi Islamiyya, 1986), II.75-77—Shūshtarī cites a quote from Nasafī (*Insān al-Kāmil*, 320-321) to support his assertion that Saʿd al-Dīn was a Shīʿī who limited the saints to the Twelver Imāms. He also reports what he alleges to be Ḥamūya's last will and testament.

For detailed discussions of the medieval and early modern sources that reference Ḥamūya's life and thought, see Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *al-Miṣbāḥ fī al-taṣawwuf*, ed. Najīb Māyil Hirawī (Tehrān: Mawlā, 1983), 9-12; Nafīsī, "Khāndān," 15-28; Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, i-viii; and Mīr-Bāqirī Fard and Najafī, "*Saʿd al-Dīn*," 135-137.

[7] Nafīsī reconstructs Saʿd al-Dīn's full genealogy as follows: Saʿd al-Dīn Abū al-Saʿādāt Muḥammad ibn Muʿīn al-Dīn [al-]Muʿayyad ibn Jamāl al-Dīn Abū Bakr ʿAbd Allāh [al-]Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya. See Nafīsī, "Khāndān," 8. For Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya and ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, see Jāmī, *Nafaḥāt*, 414.

to such luminaries as the Khurāsānī Ḥanbalī Sufi ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī (d. 1089)—author of the classic *Stations of the Travelers* (*Manāzil al-sā'irīn*) and *Generations of the Sufis* (*Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*)—and Abū Ayyūb al-ʿAnṣārī (d. 674), a companion of the Prophet Muḥammad.[8] By the 13th century, the prestigious Ḥamūya clan had produced a dynasty of powerful Sufis who claimed seats of institutional authority across Egypt and Greater Syria.[9]

After completing his elementary Qur'ānic education in Baḥrābād, Saʿd al-Dīn traveled to Nīshāpūr to study at the Sulṭāniyya Madrasa under a certain Muʿīn al-Dīn Jājarmī. While Ghiyāth al-Dīn does not offer much about this period of the shaykh's life, he reports a brief incident in which a precocious young Saʿd al-Dīn bested a formidable group of Ḥanafīs in a public debate, much to the delight of his teacher and beleaguered Shāfiʿī comrades.[10] From Nīshāpūr, the young Ḥamūya traveled to Khwārazm, where he stayed from July/August 1208 to July/August 1212. There he studied the exoteric religious sciences under Shihāb al-Dīn al-Khīwaqī (d. after 1218), a Shāfiʿī scholar renowned for his legal and linguistic knowledge.[11] After Saʿd al-Dīn completed his course of study with al-Khīwaqī, Ghiyāth al-Dīn reports that the Khwārazmshāh

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[8] See Nafīsī's discussion in "Khāndān," 6-10. For ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī, see Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 93-96 and Alexander Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History* (Boston: Brill, 2000), 135-138. For Abū Ayyūb al-ʿAnṣārī, see Michael Lecker, "Abū Ayyūb al-ʿAnṣārī" in *EI3*.

[9] These Ḥamūya family shaykhs include, for example, ʿImād al-Dīn Abū Fatḥ ʿUmar ibn ʿAlī (d. 1181), who was appointed the first Chief Sufi (*shaykh al-shuyūkh*) of Greater Syria and Ṣadr al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad (d. 1220), who presided over Damascus before being appointed Chief Sufi of Egypt. Ṣadr al-Dīn, in turn, passed the position down to his four sons—ʿImād al-Dīn ʿUmar ibn Muḥammad (d. 1238/1239), Kamāl al-Dīn Aḥmad (d. 1242), Muʿīn al-Dīn Ḥasan (d. 1246), and Fakhr al-Dīn Yūsuf (d. 1249)—and a few of his grandsons. See Nafīsī, "Khāndān," 11-13 and Nathan Hofer, "The Origins and Development of the Office of the 'Chief Sufi' in Egypt, 1173–1325," *Journal of Sufi Studies* 3, no. 1 (2014): 1–37. For more on these figures, their positions, and Ḥamūya's relationship with them, see Chapter 3, especially Section 3.5 (pp. 150 ff.).

[10] Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 4.

[11] Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 4-5, 163. For more on al-Khīwaqī, see Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Nasawī (d. 1249/1250), *Sīrat al-sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Mankubirtī*, ed. Ḥafiẓ Aḥmad Ḥamdī (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, 1953), 109-113; Ibn al-Athīr (d. 1233), *al-Kāmil fī al-ta'rīkh*, ed. Muḥammad Yūsuf al-Daqqāq, 4th ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2003), X.402 ff. (under AH 617); and Chapter 3, p. 160.

ʻAlāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. 1220) recruited him to replace the late Jājarmī as an instructor at the Sulṭāniyya Madrasa in Nīshāpūr.[12] Although Saʿd al-Dīn had already resolved to give up the exoteric sciences in favor of Sufi practice, ʻAlāʾ al-Dīn's vizier and notables showered him with such lavish gifts and praise that he could not in good faith refuse their offer. Instead, Ḥamūya donned his new robes, rode into the madrasa at Nīshāpūr, and delivered a series of erudite inaugural lectures. When the day was finished, he stepped down from his post and left the madrasa, never to return again.[13]

From Nīshāpūr, Saʿd al-Dīn made a brief stop in Baḥrābād where he sold the Khwārazmshāh's gifts and used the money to rebuild his family's mosque and *khānaqāh*.[14] He then set out from Baḥrābād to Mosul, where he met up with Ṣadr al-Dīn Abū Ḥasan Muḥammad (d. 1220)—his father's cousin and Chief Sufi (*shaykh al-shuyūkh*) of Egypt—and his son ʻImād al-Dīn ʻUmar ibn Muḥammad (d. 1238/1239), who were returning from a diplomatic mission to Baghdad on behalf of the Ayyūbids.[15] From Mosul, Saʿd al-Dīn accompanied his relatives to the al-Aqṣā Mosque in Jerusalem, where Ṣadr al-Dīn initiated him into the illustrious lineage of Ḥamūya family Sufis.[16] Although the older shaykh secured Saʿd al-Dīn a salaried teaching post at

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[12] For more on ʻAlāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad, see Charles E. Bosworth, "ʻALĀʾ-AL-DĪN MOḤAMMAD" in *EIr*.

[13] Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 5-6.

[14] Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 6-7. Often translated as a Sufi lodge, convent, inn, or monastery, the term *khānaqāh* refers to an institution of Sufi teaching, residence, and practice, organized under the authority of a spiritual master. As we will see below, *khānaqāh*s linked to powerful Sufis and their families often received generous endowments from political authorities across the Islamic world. See Gerhard Böwering and Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "*ḴĀNAQĀH*", *EIr*.

[15] According to Ghiyāth al-Dīn, his report of the event is an Arabic translation of Saʿd al-Dīn's words as relayed to his student Muḥammad al-Muʾadhdhan al-Dihistānī (d. ?) and transcribed by his son Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm (d. 1322). See Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 9-11. As Mīr-Bāqirī Fard and Najafī explain in their Persian introduction to the text, no extant sources have been found to shed light on Dihistānī's biography. See Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, xiv.

[16] Faṣīḥ Khwāfī (d. 1445) dates Ḥamūya's initiation under Ṣadr al-Dīn to the year 1219/1220. See Khwāfī, *Mujmal*, II.290. Ghiyāth al-Dīn places the event around 1217 when Ṣadr al-Dīn returns with his son ʻImād al-Dīn from a diplomatic mission to Baghdad and the caliphal palace (*dār al-khalīfa*), though he suggests the date is conjectural.

the local Shāfiʿī madrasa, the newly initiated Ḥamūya politely declined the offer and set out for the Ḥijāz to memorize the Qur'ān.[17]

After a stint in the Ḥijāz, Saʿd al-Dīn set off for Khwārazm where he underwent a rigorous program of Sufi training under Najm al-Dīn Kubrā (d. 1221).[18] Saʿd al-Dīn mastered Kubrā's curriculum with characteristic aplomb and was granted a teaching license (*ijāza*) in March 1220.[19] As one of Kubrā's *khalīfa*s, he joined a renowned group of luminaries that included Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī (d. 1219), Bābā Kamāl Jandī (d. 1273), Raḍī al-Dīn ʿAlī Lālā (d. 1244), Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī (d, 1261), Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1256, also known as Najm al-Dīn Dāya), and Jamāl al-Dīn Gīlī (d. 1258).[20] Even among Kubrā's elite disciples, Saʿd al-Dīn seems to have held an im-

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See Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 10-11.

Ghiyāth al-Dīn records Saʿd al-Dīn's spiritual genealogy through Ṣadr al-Dīn as follows: (i) Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, (ii) Ṣadr al-Dīn Abū Ḥasan, (iii) ʿImād al-Dīn ʿUmar, (iv) Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya, (v) Abū ʿAlī Fārmadī, (vi) Abū al-Qāsim Kurragānī, (vii) Abū ʿUthmān Maghribī, (viii) Abū ʿAmr Zujājī, (ix) Junayd Baghdādī, (x) Sarī Saqaṭī, (xi) Maʿrūf Karkhī, (xii) ʿAlī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā, (xiii) Mūsā Kāẓim, (xiv) Jaʿfar al-Ṣāḍiq, (xv) Muḥammad Bāqir, (xvi) Imām Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, (xvii) Imām Ḥusayn, (xviii) ʿAlī ibn Abū Ṭālib, (xix) The Prophet Muḥammad. See Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 37-38. Ghiyāth al-Dīn also presents an alternate line: (x) Maʿrūf Karkhī, (xi) Dāwud al-Ṭā'ī, (xii) Ḥabīb al-ʿAjamī, (xiii) Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, (xiv) ʿAlī ibn Abū Ṭālib, (xv) The Prophet Muḥammad.

See also Ibn Abū Uṣaybiʿa (d. 1270), who records the same genealogy for Ṣadr al-Dīn, along with several "alternate lines," including a direct bestowal of the *khirqa* from the Prophet Muḥammad, to Khiḍr, to Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya. Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *'Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*, ed. Nizār Riḍā (Beirut: Manshūrāt Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāt, n.d.), 740-741 and Trimingham, *Orders*, 262.

[17] Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 9-11.

[18] For Ḥamūya's training under Kubrā, see Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 13-15. For more on Kubrā's program of Sufi training, see Gerhard Böwering, "Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā on Ṣūfī Seclusion, *Risāla fī 'l-khalwa*," *Ishraq: Islamic Philosophy Yearbook*, no. 5 (2014): 268–91.

[19] Kubrā's *ijāza* to Saʿd al-Dīn records the following spiritual genealogy: (i) Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, (ii) Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, (iii) Ismāʿīl al-Qaṣrī, (iv) Muḥammad ibn Mānkīl, (v) Dāwūd ibn Muḥammad, known as Khādim al-Fuqarā', (vi) Abū al-ʿAbbās ibn Idrīs, (vii) Abū al-Qāsim ibn Ramaḍān, (viii) Abū Yaʿqūb al-Ṭabarī, (ix) Abū ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUthmān, (x) Abū Yaʿqūb al-Nahrajūrī, (xi) Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sūsī, (xii) ʿAbd al-Wāḥid ibn Zayd, (xiii) Kumayl ibn Ziyād, (xiv) ʿAlī ibn Abū Ṭālib, (xv) The Prophet Muḥammad.

For the *ijāza*, see Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, *Ijāza li-Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Murad Buhari MS 318, fols. 57b-58a and Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 17-19.

[20] Jāmī, *Nafaḥāt*, 424. Jāmī notes that some also list Bahā' al-Dīn Walad (d. 1231), the father of Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 1273) among Kubrā's disciples. For more on Kubrā's disciples, see Hamid Algar, "KOBRAWIYA II. THE ORDER," in *EIr*.

portant place. According to Jāmī (d. 1492), Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī turned to him for help after he accidentally insulted their master with his arrogant boasting.[21] Multiple sources highlight Saʿd al-Dīn's intimate friendship with Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī.[22] Ghiyāth al-Dīn reports that the bond between the two was so strong that it carried over into their spiritual training and visionary experiences. Likewise, when their time together came to an end, each scribbled touching farewell verses for the other as a parting gift.[23]

When the Mongols reached Khwārazm in 1220/1221, al-Yāfiʿī reports that Kubrā commanded Ḥamūya and a few other disciples to flee while he and the rest stayed behind to fight.[24] Following his master's orders, the newly minted shaykh left Khwārazm, traveling through Khurāsān and Ṭabaristān (Mazanderan) to Iraq, Diyarbakır, the Ḥijāz, Egypt, and Greater Syria.[25] While he does not offer specific dates for Ḥamūya's time in Central Asia and Iran, Ghiyāth al-Dīn puts him in the Ḥijāz in 1228/1229, Egypt in September/October 1230 (when he wrote an *ijāza* for a certain ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Miṣrī), Mosul and Baghdad from June to August 1230, and Hebron (*al-Khalīl*) in November/December 1230. From March to June 1232, Ḥamūya found himself in Baghdad, where he led sessions teaching al-Baghawī's (d. 1122) *Lamps of the Sunna*

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[21] Jāmī, *Nafaḥāt*, 425. See also Eyad Abuali's analysis of the narrative in idem, "The Genesis of Kubrawī Sufism: A Study of Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī" (PhD dissertation, SOAS, University of London, 2017), 39 ff.

[22] See e.g., Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 23-25 and Faṣīḥ Khwāfī, *Mujmal*, II.290. Reports of a close friendship between Ḥamūya and Bākharzī are corroborated by extant copies of an epistolary exchange between the two that the latter initiated on March 6, 1220. For Saʿd al-Dīn's letter to Bākharzī, see Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, "Makātīb-i Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥammūʾī," in *Jashn-Nāma-yi Ustād Sayyid Aḥmad Ḥusaynī Ashkūrī*, ed. Aḥmad Khāmih-Yār and Rasūl Jaʿfaryān (Tehran: Nashr-i ʿIlm, 2013), 482-483. For Bākharzī's letter to Saʿd al-Dīn, see Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī, *Nāma bih Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya,* Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehid Ali Paşa MS 1382 fols. 81a-83b and idem, *Majmūʿa-yi āthār-i shaykh al-ʿālam Sayf al-Dīn-i Bākharzī*, ed. Ghulām-Nabī Tawakkulī-Pushtih-ī, ʿĀmir Tawakkulī-Pushtih-ī, and Muḥammad Nāṣir Mawdūdī (Tehrān: Dībāyih, 2018), 55-57.

[23] Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 23-25.

[24] Yāfiʿī, *Mirʾāt*, IV.34.

[25] Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 19, 163.

(*Maṣābīḥ al-sunna*) to a group of companions and disciples (including a certain ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ʿUmar ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥakīm al-Arghiyānī) in the Manṣūr mosque.[26]

While in Baghdad, Saʿd al-Dīn also studied with Shihāb al-Dīn ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī (d. 1234), from whom he learned a special *dhikr* formula.[27] Suhrawardī's disciples purportedly had trouble grasping the meaning of Saʿd al-Dīn's arcane teachings, leading them to reject him and dismiss his abilities. According to Ghiyāth al-Dīn, Suhrawardī intervened, scolding these naysayers and confirming the authority of Saʿd al-Dīn's knowledge with the following words: "All of what he says is the Truth, for it is hidden knowledge with which God has distinguished him, teaching him directly from Himself... He is among those who fly, not those who walk!"[28]

From December 1232 to May 1233, Saʿd al-Dīn passed through Harran, Aleppo, Homs,

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[26] Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 164. It is possible that the dates for Saʿd al-Dīn's first stint in Baghdad have been misprinted in Mīr-Bāqirī Fard and Najafī's edition or miscopied in their manuscript source. Ghiyāth al-Dīn's timeline skips from AH 627 in Egypt to AH 628 in Hebron, back to AH 627 in Mosul and Baghdad, and then forward again to AH 629 in Baghdad. It may be the case that either the scribe or the editors misread a seven (*sabʿ*) for a nine (*tisʿ*), which are nearly indistinguishable when written in undotted characters (سبع vs سبع). In my copy of the manuscript, the dates are undotted, though the *sīn* of *sabʿ* is written as an extended line, rather than a set of three teeth. See Kitābkhānih-yi Markazī-yi Danishgāh-i Tihrān MS 2451, ~fol. 51b (the folia are mostly illegible in my microfilm copy).

Adjusting for such an error would produce a much more plausible timeline, placing Ḥamūya in Egypt in September/October 1230, Hebron in November/December 1230, Baghdād from March to June 1232, Mosul in June/July 1232, and then back to Baghdad in August 1232. As another point of evidence external to *The Goal of the Seekers*, a copy of Ḥamūya's, *Risālat al-qahr wa-l-luṭf* extant in H. Çelebi MS 442 (fol. 95a) dates its composition to September 4, 1231 in Baghdad.

[27] See Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 11, 26-27 and Faṣīḥ Khwāfī II.290, 319. Ghiyāth al-Dīn's accounts of Ḥamūya's shaykhs and their roles are not completely clear. Although he relates the story of Saʿd al-Dīn's training under Kubrā (including both *khalwa* and *dhikr*) before his encounter with Suhrawardī, he refers specifically to the latter as the shaykh who taught him *dhikr* (*shaykh dhikrihi*), Kubrā as the shaykh under whom he underwent spiritual retreat and companionship (*shaykh khalwatihi wa-ṣuḥbatihi*), and Ṣadr al-Dīn Ḥamūya as the shaykh who bestowed the *khirqa* upon him (*shaykh khirqatihi*). Faṣīḥ Khwāfī, on the other hand, explains that Saʿd al-Dīn learned *dhikr* from both Kubrā and Suhrawardī. Though Khwāfī does not specify where Ḥamūya initially met Suhrawardī, he does mention a gathering of Sufi shaykhs in Mecca during the year 1219/1220 that included Ḥamūya, Suhrawardī, Awḥad al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (d. 1238) and a certain Majd al-Dīn al-Abharī (d. ?). For more on this discrepancy, see pp. 151 ff. in Chapter 3.

[28] Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 27.

and al-Nabk on the road to Damascus, where he resided until September/October 1240.[29] According to Nafīsī, Mount Qāsiyūn in Damascus was a hotbed for 13th-century Sufi activity and it was not uncommon to find young Sufis flocking to the area in hopes of devoting themselves to a renowned shaykh.[30] It was here in Qāsiyūn that Ḥamūya mingled with the group of disciples that had gathered around Ibn ʿArabī.[31] While other sources equivocate as to whether or not Saʿd al-Dīn ever met Ibn ʿArabī in person, *The Goal of the Seekers* (*Murād al-murīdīn*) paints the two Sufis as respectful colleagues who gathered frequently to discuss advanced topics.[32]

While in Qāsiyūn, Ḥamūya developed a close friendship with Ibn ʿArabī's chief disciple Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī. According to Jāmī, the latter spent a great deal of time with Saʿd al-Dīn, from whom he would seek answers to his many questions.[33] Qūnawī's own *Unraveling of the Mysteries behind the Wisdom of the Bezels* (*al-Fukūk fī asrār mustanadāt ḥikam al-Fuṣūṣ*) remembers Ḥamūya fondly, recalling how he could contemplate existents in the absolute world of subtle exemplars (*ʿālam al-mithāl al-muṭlaq*) and grasp the nuances of Self-Disclosure.[34] Shed-

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[29] Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 164-165. More specifically, Ghiyāth al-Dīn puts Ḥamūya in Harrān from December 1232 to February 1233; in the environs of Aleppo on March 18, 1233; in Homs on May 1, 1233; and in al-Nabk on May 3, 1233. Although he does not specify when Saʿd al-Dīn arrived in Damascus, Ghiyāth al-Dīn reports that the shaykh penned a treatise entitled *ʿĪd al-fiṭr* in Qāsiyūn on September 6, 1233. Coincidentally, Google Maps suggests the same itinerary for one wishing to drive from Harran to Damascus.

[30] Nafīsī, "Khāndān," 15.

[31] Saʿd al-Dīn's time in Qāsiyūn is well recognized. See e.g., Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mirʾāt*, XXII.424, al-Yāfiʿī, *Mirʾāt,* IV.94, and Jāmī, *Nafaḥāt*, 428-429.

[32] Ghiyāth al-Dīn reports that whenever Ḥamūya would drop by for a visit, Ibn ʿArabī's pen would immediately run dry, leading him to remark, "One who is more deserving of us than writing has now come to the door of the mosque!" Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 29. Jāmī, on the other hand, notes that Qūnawī brought Ḥamūya's teachings to Ibn ʿArabī, but does not record evidence of any direct interaction. See Jāmī, *Nafaḥāt*, 429. Whether or not they met in person, copies of an epistle penned by Saʿd al-Dīn suggest that the two were at least in correspondence with one another. Ḥamūya, "Makātīb," 459-462 and idem, *Sharḥ bāl wa-rashḥ ḥāl* (*Risāla ilā Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī*), Los Angeles, UCLA Library, Special Collections, Caro Minasian MS 32, fols. 99-108. See also my discussion of the epistle on pp. 89 ff. in Chapter 1.

[33] Jāmī, *Nafaḥāt*, 556.

[34] Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, *al-Fukūk fī asrār mustanadāt ḥikam al-Fuṣūṣ*, ed. ʿĀsim Ibrahīm al-Kayyālī (Lebanon: Books - Publisher (Kitāb - Nāshirūn), 2013), 55. For more on the *Fukūk*, see Richard Todd, *The Sufi Doctrine of*

ding light on their personal relationship, Mu'ayyad al-Dīn al-Jandī's (d. ca. 1300) *Commentary on the Bezels of Wisdom* (*Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*) records an incident in which Ṣadr al-Dīn and another of Ibn ʿArabī's disciples named Shams al-Dīn Ismāʿīl ibn Sūdkīn (d. 1248) met up with Ḥamūya for a *samāʿ* session in Damascus.[35] In the middle of the session, Ḥamūya rose up, crossed his arms over his chest, and bowed his head in reverence. As the session came to a close, he kept his eyes closed and called out for Qūnawī and Ibn Sūdkīn. When the two stepped forward, Saʿd al-Dīn pulled them in for a tight embrace. Finally opening his eyes, the shaykh revealed that he had just experienced a vision of the Prophet and wanted to gaze upon their faces while the image was still fresh in his mind.[36]

Ḥamūya's time in Ayyūbid territories was not without difficulties. In 1235/1236, he journeyed to Egypt, where his cousin ʿImād al-Dīn ʿUmar ibn Muḥammad (d. 1238/1239) had assumed the rank of Chief Sufi at the Saʿīd al-Suʿadā', the premier state-backed *khānaqāh* in Cairo. Despite their familial bonds and the time they had spent together as travel companions, an extant epistle suggests that ʿImād al-Dīn refused to send Saʿd al-Dīn so much as a message of welcome, much to the latter's chagrin.[37] Upon his return to Damascus, Ḥamūya's financial situation seems to have slowly deteriorated. The historian Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī (d. 1257) reports that Ḥamūya eventually fell into a state of utter poverty, adding that despite his dire straits, the shaykh refused to

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Man: Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī's Metaphysical Anthropology (Boston: Brill, 2014), 42-43.

[35] *Samāʿ*, often glossed as "audition," refers to Sufi sessions in which *dhikr* formulae, prayers, and/or poetry were recited—often accompanied by musical instruments—as a means of cultivating divine knowledge, ecstatic states, or visionary experiences. See e.g., Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism*, 170-172.

[36] al-Jandī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ*, 107. Jāmī quotes the passage directly, but translates it from Arabic into Persian. See Jāmī, *Nafaḥāt*, 429.

[37] See Ḥamūya, "Makātīb," 463 and Ghiyāth al-Dīn *Murād*, 169-172. For more on the incident and Saʿd al-Dīn's relationship with the Ḥamūyas of Egypt and Greater Syria, see Chapter 3, Section 3.6 (p. 153).

ingratiate himself with political elites, shunning even his paternal cousins.[38] (Perhaps the incident with ʿImād al-Dīn left him with wounded pride.)

Whatever the reason for his departure, Ḥamūya left Damascus and set his sights back east. From September/October 1241 to October/November 1244, Ghiyāth al-Dīn places him on a journey through Jākūra, Baalbek, Nusaybin, Tabriz, Gilan, Herat (where he penned an *ijāza* for a certain Kamāl al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn al-ʿAzīz al-Marāghīnī), and Jajarm. From this point onward, Saʿd al-Dīn spent his time writing and teaching students between Amol and Khurāsān.[39] During his time in Khurāsān, Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī reports that the shaykh enjoyed the company of Mongol overlords who held him in high esteem, showered him with wealth, and even converted to Islam at his hand. He likewise received a grand reception in Amol, where he oversaw the construction of a *khānaqāh* and adjacent burial ground.[40]

Ḥamūya issued several teaching licenses during this period. Ghiyāth al-Dīn lists a license to transmit (*ijāzat fī al-riwāya*) for Shams al-Dīn Abū Bakr ibn ʿAlī al-Maqqarī al-Jājarmī in 1246; licenses to teach (sing. *ijāza*) for Najm al-Dīn ʿUthmān ibn al-Muwaffaq al-Adkānī and Sharaf al-Dīn al-Ṭabīb al-Khūrandī in 1247 and 1250; and certificates of investiture (sing. *nisbat al-khirqa*) for Muḥammad Zakriyya al-Rāzī and Shihāb al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Māhān al-Simnānī in 1259/1250 and 1251.[41] It was during this time as well that Ḥamūya must have taught ʿAzīz Nasafī (d. before 1300), who would go on to present his own didactic and wild-

[38] See Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mirʾāt,* XXII.424.

[39] Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 165-166. Faṣīḥ Khwāfī reports that Ḥamūya returned from Amol to Baḥrābād in 1243/1244, but does not seem to indicate any further travel. See Faṣīḥ Khwāfī, *Mujmal*, II.313.

[40] Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mirʾāt*, XXII.424.

[41] Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 165-166. For the exact dates of the *ijāza*s and *nisbat khirqa*s, see Section V of the Appendix (p. 231). Ghiyāth al-Dīn also records the births of Ḥamūya's sons Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm and Yaḥyā on January 13, 1247 and in March 1251, respectively. Both children were born in Khurāsān while their father was in Amol.

ly popular writings as lucid expositions of his shaykh's abstruse thought.[42]

Saʿd al-Dīn died in his family *khānaqāh* in Baḥrābād on a night in early March 1252.[43] After his death, the shaykh's legacy remained a potent source of authority among Mongol elites and their administrators. His son Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm, for example, married the daughter of the famed Īlkhānid historian and official ʿAṭā-Malik Juwaynī (d. 1283) in 1272/1273, then went on to play a central role in the Īlkhān Maḥmūd Ghāzān's (d. 1304) conversion to Islam in 1295. During the conversion ceremony, Ṣadr al-Dīn bestowed Ghāzān with a talisman and a robe originally owned by his father, effectively linking the Īlkhān's conversion to the spiritual authority of Saʿd al-Dīn.[44]

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[42] For Nasafī's explicit references to having served Ḥamūya in Khurāsān, see e.g., Nasafī, *al-Insān al-kāmil*, 316, 321. For Nasafī's framing of his work vis-à-vis that of Saʿd al-Dīn, see Nasafī, *Kashf al-ḥaqāʾiq*, 7 and my discussion in the the Conclusion.

[43] Sources are not entirely consistent with respect to the date of Ḥamūya's death, but sometime during Dhū al-Ḥijja, AH 649 (March, 1252) seems most probable.

The genealogy of shaykhs upon which Nafīsī bases "Khāndān-i Saʿd al-Dīn-i Ḥamawī" records Ḥamūya's death date as 12 Dhū al-Ḥijja, AH 649 (March 3, 1252). See Nafīsī, "Khāndān," 19. This date is corroborated by a note included in the Berlin copy of *The Book of the Beloved*, as well as the Topkapı manuscript (Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Museum Library MS A1418 (TK)), which also contains an *ijāza* for the text's copyist signed by Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm. See Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fol. 306a and (TK) fols. 2a (*ijāza*), 295a (death date). (Elias erroneously records the death date listed in the Topkapı manuscript as 10 Dhū al-Ḥijja, AH 649.)

Ghiyāth al-Dīn's *Goal of the Seekers* reports the date as the night of Saturday 18 Dhū al-Ḥijja, AH 649 (March 9, 1252). See Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 166.

Faṣīḥ Khwāfī puts Ḥamūya's death in AH 649 (1251/1252), but notes that some say he died in AH 650 (1252/1253) or AH 665 (1266/1267). Faṣīḥ al-Khwāfī, *Mujmal*, II.319.

Jāmī puts his death on ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā, AH 650 (ca. February 18, 1253). Jāmī, *Nafaḥāt*, 430.

Ṣibt ibn al-Jawzī and al-Yāfʿī put his death in AH 650 (1252/1253). Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mirʾāt*, XII.424 and al-Yāfiʿī, *Mirʾāt*, IV.94.

Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī puts his death in AH 658 (1260). Mustawfī, *Tārīkh*, 670.

For an in-depth discussion of the multiple dates reported for Saʿd al-Dīn's death, see Nafīsī, "Khāndān," 18-19.

[44] See Charles Melville, "Pādshāh-i Islām: The Conversion of Sultan Maḥmūd Ghāzān Khān," in *Pembroke Papers, Vol.1: Persian and Islamic Studes in Honour of P.W. Avery*, ed. Charles Melville (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Center of Middle Eastern Studies, 1990), 161 and Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh al-Hamadānī (d. 1318), *Kitāb Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghāzānī: dāstān-i Ghāzān Khān*, ed. Karl Jahn (London: Luzac, 1940), 76 ff. For his marriage to ʿAṭā-Malik Juwaynī's daughter, see Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 1449), *al-Durar al-kāmina*, 4 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Jayl, 1993), I.67.

The most enduring dimensions of Ḥamūya's legacy, however, were his prodigious intellectual output and the endless possibilities of his lettrist methods. Texts like *The Book of the Beloved* (*Kitāb al-Maḥbūb*) and *The Mirror of Spirits and Signs on Tablets* (*Sajanjal al-arwāḥ wa-nuqūsh al-alwāḥ*)—perhaps his most recognized works in the medieval and early modern periods—manipulated the visual, sonic, and phenomenal qualities of the Arabic alphabet to explore the hidden recesses of Reality.[45] Alongside numerous other treatises and a formidable collection of poetry, these esoteric tomes served as generative points of inspiration for a wide range of thinkers in Ḥamūya's wake.[46] As noted above, ʿAzīz Nasafī framed himself as an unparalleled exegete of his master's thought, boasting of his ability distill the arcane secrets scattered across Ḥamūya's over four hundred treatises into just ten chapters of simple Persian prose.[47] Although the Kubrāwī systematizer ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla al-Simnānī (d. 1336) rejected Saʿd al-Dīn's theories of prophecy and sainthood, he had no choice but to engage with the shaykh's lettrist methods in order to refute him.[48] During the Tīmūrid period, the occult theorist Ṣāʾin al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī (d. 1432) held up Ḥamūya's *Book of the Beloved* as a master key to universal knowledge, while the apocalyptic revolutionary Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh (d. 1464) marshaled the text as evidence for

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[45] These two texts are cited together by name in Jāmī, *Nafaḥāt*, 429; Shūshtarī, *Majālis*, II.76 (though he miswrites the *Sajanal* as *Sajīl al-arwāḥ*); and Amīn Aḥmad Rāzī, *Haft*, II.837.

For other references to *The Book of the Beloved,* see e.g., Ṣāʾin al-Dīn ʿAlī Iṣfahānī Turka, "*Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*," in *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, by Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī, ed. Muḥsin Bīdārfar, 2 vols. (Qom: Intishārāt-i Bīdār, 2000), I.385ff and Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh, "The *Risālat al-Hudā* of Muḥammad Nūrbakš (d. 869/1464): Critical Edition with Introduction," ed. Shahzad Bashir, *Rivista Degli Studi Orientali* 75, no. 1/4 (2001), 107-108.

For a Safavid-era commentary on the *Mirror of Spirits*, see Maḥmūd Dihdār Širazī (fl. 1576), *Ḥall al-rumūz fī sirr al-kunūz*, Ankara, Milli Kütüphanesi, Milli MS 2706f-1.

[46] For an annotated list of Ḥamūya's writings, see the Appendix (p. 225).

[47] See Nasafī, *Kashf al-ḥaqāʾiq*, 7 and Lloyd V. J. Ridgeon, *ʿAzīz Nasafī* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1998), 11.

[48] See al-Simnānī, *Chihil*, 172-176; Molé, "Kubrawīya," 100-102; Jamal J. Elias, *The Throne Carrier of God: The Life and Thought of ʿAlāʾ ad-Dawla as-Simnānī* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 43-44; and Giovanni Maria Martini, *ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla al-Simnānī between Spiritual Authority and Political Power: A Persian Lord and Intellectual in the Heart of the Ilkhanate*, Islamicate Intellectual History 4 (Leiden: Brill, 2018), xvi-xix.

his own messianic claims.[49] Around a century later, Maḥmūd Dihdār Shīrāzī (fl. 1576)—the Safavid occultist and teacher of Shaykh Bahā'ī (d. 1621)—cited Ḥamūya as one of the foremost masters of the science of letters and penned his *Decoding Symbols in the Treasure's Secret* (*Ḥall al-rumūz fī sirr al-kunūz*) as a commentary on *The Mirror of Spirits*.[50] Each of these figures and others besides them drew upon the authority of Saʿd al-Dīn's spiritual and intellectual legacy, appropriating, challenging, and transforming his work to suit their own ideological and material goals.

0.2. Literature Review

Ḥamūya has been largely ignored by contemporary scholarship. He has yet to receive a monographic study, the majority of his texts languish in manuscript collections, and surveys of medieval Sufism and intellectual history frame him as a marginal figure at best. This dearth of scholarly attention flies in the face of the shaykh's medieval and early modern renown. As we have seen above, Ḥamūya linked masters of jurisprudence, ascetic discipline, visionary experience, divine love, advanced metaphysics, and institutionalized piety across the Islamic world. His legacy echoed throughout the centuries as a source of ideological authority for Mongol dynasts, Sufi hagiographers, messianic visionaries, and occult theorists alike. If we cannot make sense of Saʿd al-Dīn, it is because we fail to grasp something fundamental about his world.

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[49] Matthew S. Melvin-Koushki, "The Quest for a Universal Science: The Occult Philosophy of Ṣā'in al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī (1369-1432) and Intellectual Millenarianism in Early Timurid Iran" (PhD dissertation, Yale University, 2012), 200 ff.; Shahzad Bashir, *Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions: The Nūrbakhshīya Between Medieval and Modern Islam* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 79-80; and Nūrbakhsh, "*al-Hudā*," 107-108. Incidentally, Ḥamūya's text is the only work besides the Qur'ān that Nūrbakhsh mentions by name.

[50] See Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "MAḤMUD DEHDĀR ŠIRAZI" in *EIr* and Dihdār Shīrāzī, *Ḥall al-rumūz*.

Before addressing the unmarked biases that obscure his epistemological vision, it may be helpful to sketch an overview of the studies that touch upon Saʿd al-Dīn's life and work:

a) Works devoted to Mongol-era Sufism in general and the Kubrawī lineage in particular

Studies devoted to "normative" Kubrawīs like ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla al-Simnānī (d. 1336) often cite Ḥamūya as a polemical target, framing his engagement with Ibn ʿArabīʾs esoteric teachings as an anomaly vis-à-vis the early antagonism between Kubrawī and Akbarī worldviews.[51] Scholarship on Ḥamūya's student ʿAzīz Nasafī typically frames the former as a precursor to Nasafī's deep interest in Ibn ʿArabī, his ambiguous relationship with Shīʿism, and/or his tenuous place within the Kubrawī lineage.[52] Finally, broader surveys occasionally marshal Ḥamūya's theories of prophecy and sainthood to explore the connections between Sufism and Shīʿism during the Mongol period.[53]

b) Works on Ibn ʿArabī and his school

In these studies, Ḥamūya appears as a peripheral figure influenced by the metaphysical speculation of Ibn ʿArabī and his followers.[54] These works often emphasize a mutual respect between

[51] See e.g., Elias, *Throne Carrier*, 43-44, 156-157 and Algar, "The Order."

An important exception here is Eyad Abuali's 2017 doctoral dissertation, "The Genesis of Kubrawī Sufism: A Study of Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī," which intervenes against the claim that Kubrā's disciples rejected Saʿd al-Dīn on the grounds of "heterodox" teachings and roots the antagonism instead in a political struggle between factions gathered around the prominent Ḥamūya family and another one of Kubrā's disciples, Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī. See Abuali, "Genesis," 45-53.

[52] See e.g., Ridgeon, *Nasafī*, 5-7, 22-28, 127, 152, 192, 195; Fritz Meier, "Die Schriften des ʿAzīz-i Nasafī," *Wiener Zeitschrift Für Die Kunde Des Morgenlandes* 52 (1953/55), 137-138; and Hermann Landolt, "NASAFI, ʿAZIZ," *EIr*.

[53] See e.g., Molé, "Kubrawīya," 74-76, 100-102 and Trimingham, *Orders*, 99, 261n3.

[54] See e.g., William C. Chittick, "The School of Ibn ʿArabī," in *History of Islamic Philosophy. Part I*, ed. Seyyed Hossein

Saʿd al-Dīn and Ibn ʿArabī, likewise underscoring his close friendship with Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī to cement the link between him and the Akbarīs. As is the case with scholarship on Sufis in Kubrā's lineage, these studies point to Ḥamūya's disciple ʿAzīz Nasafī as a primary exponent of Ibn ʿArabī's thought in Persian.

c) Works focusing on lettrism and the occult sciences

These studies generally reference Saʿd al-Dīn as a central figure in the development of the science of letters in Islamic intellectual history, but direct their focus towards later thinkers who systematized his thought.[55]

d) Journal articles, encyclopedia entries, and introductions to critical editions that focus specifically on Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya and/or his family

The most meticulous contemporary study of Saʿd al-Dīn's life continues to be Saʿīd Nafīsī's "Khāndān-i Saʿd al-Dīn-i Ḥamawī," published in 1950.[56] Nafīsī's article is based upon a genealogy of Ḥamūya family shaykhs (*mashyakha*) that had belonged to one of Saʿd al-Dīn's descendants, a Niʿmatullāhī Sufi by the name of Sālik al-Dīn Muḥammad Ḥamūya (fl. 16th c.). After discussing

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Nasr and Oliver Leaman (London: Routledge, 1996), 519-521; and idem, "A History of the Term *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*," in *In Search of the Lost Heart: Explorations in Islamic Thought*, by William C. Chittick, ed. Mohammed Rustom, Atif Khalil, and Kazuyo Murata (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012), 82-83; Claude Addas, *Quest for the Red Sulphur: The Life of Ibn ʿArabī*, trans. Peter Kingsley (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1993), 231, 271-272; Henry Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn Arabi*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 30-31; and Todd, *Sufi Doctrine*, 50n23.

[55] See e.g., Shahzad Bashir, *Fazlallah Astarabadi and the Hurufis* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), 67; idem, *Messianic Hopes*, 52, 79, 82, 92; Melvin-Koushki, "The Quest," 200-204; and İlker Evrim Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran: Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAlī Yazdī and the Islamicate Republic of Letters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 122, 147.

[56] Nafīsī, "Khāndān."

the Ḥamūya clan's primogenitor and the etymology of their family name (he insists on Ḥamūyh as the original pronunciation), Nafīsī offers biographical information for twenty-eight of the family's shaykhs. Notably, each of Nafīsī's entries includes full citations from a range of medieval and early modern chronicles, hagiographies, and biographical dictionaries, as well as modern studies when appropriate. The section on Saʿd al-Dīn (the longest in the article) includes accounts of the shaykh's birth, life, death, and thought from the likes of ʿAzīz Nasafī, Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī (d. 1349), ʿAfīf al-Dīn Abū ʿAbd Allāh ibn Asʿad al-Yāfiʿī (d. 1367), ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 1492), Qāḍī Mīr-Ḥusayn Maybudī (d. 1504), Qāḍī Nūr Allāh Shūshtarī (d. 1610), Fu'ād Köprülü Zāde (d. 1966) and many more. Over the course of his study, Nafīsī establishes the shaykh's complete genealogy; untangles conflicting accounts of his birth (he settles on January 28, 1191); explores his ties to contemporary Sufis like Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, Majd al-Dīn Baghdādī, and ʿAzīz Nasafī; addresses his sectarian allegiance (he affirms a Shāfiʿī affiliation over the claims of Shūshtarī the "Shīʿa-maker"); briefly characterizes his theoretical work ("veiled, obscure, and twisted discourses"); and records a veritable treasure trove of Ḥamūya's poetry.[57]

Apart from Nafīsī's piece, the Persian introductions to published editions of Ḥamūya's texts offer important analyses of Saʿd al-Dīn's life and work. Foremost among these studies is Najīb Māyil Hirawī's introduction to *The Lamp of Sufism* (*al-Miṣbāḥ fī al-taṣawwuf*), published in 1983.[58] Though Hirawī draws from many of the same sources as "Khāndān-i Saʿd al-Dīn-i Ḥamawī" in his examination of Saʿd al-Dīn's biography, he also incorporates information inaccessi-

[57] Nafīsī, "Khāndān," 8-10, 15-28.

[58] Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 9-52.

ble to Nafīsī from Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ḥamūya's *Goal of the Seekers*, offering readers a precise itinerary for Ḥamūya's life, travels, and compositions.[59] Analyzing the claims of later Sufis like ʿAzīz Nasafī and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, Hirawī likewise explores Saʿd al-Dīn's approach to such themes as asceticism, *dhikr*, spiritual ascent, and predetermination.[60] His discussion of Ḥamūya's thought focuses primarily on the question of sainthood, reading key quotes from *The Lamp of Sufism* in conversation with comments from ʿAzīz Nasafī, Nūr al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Isfarāyinī (d. 1317), and ʿAlā al-Dawla al-Simnānī. Ultimately, Hirawī argues that Ḥamūya did not set sainthood above prophecy (*pace* Simnānī), but acknowledges that his views regarding the dialogical relationship between the two principles were certainly controversial in their context.[61] With respect to the relationship between the saints and the Mahdī in the shaykh's teachings, Ḥiravī accepts Nasafī's claims with little to no objection, reporting that Saʿd al-Dīn limited the saints after Muḥammad to twelve, the twelfth being the Seal of the Saints, the Lord of Time, and the Mahdī.[62] Finally, Hirawī includes a prodigious collection of the shaykh's poetry in Arabic and Persian, building upon Nafīsī's work with excerpts absent from "Khāndān-i Saʿd al-Dīn-i Ḥamawī."[63]

To Hirawī's introduction to *The Lamp of Sufism* we may also add his introduction to *The Heart of the Hereafter* (*Qalb al-munqalab*) (1988), S.A.A Mīr-Bāqirī Fard and Z. Najafī's stand alone study and introduction to Ghiyāth al-Dīn's *Goal of the Seekers* (2009, 2011), Aḥmad Khāmih-Yār's introduction to his edition of Ḥamūya's correspondences (2013), and most recent-

[59] Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 13-15 and 46-48. Hirawī also benefits from Muḥammad-Taqī Dānishpazhūh's study of Ghiyāth al-Dīn's hagiography, published in volume 13 of *Farhang-i Īrān-Zamīn* (1965).

[60] Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 22-26.

[61] Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 26-33.

[62] Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 33-35. See also my discussion on pp. 171 ff in Chapter 3.

[63] Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 36-46.

ly, Sārā Kashfī's introduction to her edition of *The Repose of the Righteous* (*Sakīnat al-ṣāliḥīn*) (2015).[64] Each of these pieces covers similar ground to the studies mentioned above, contextualizing their text editions with information regarding key sources for Ḥamūya's biography, a general itinerary of his life, comments on his primary associates, and discussions of his work and thought. Of these studies, Kashfī's introduction deserves special mention for its detailed reflection on Ḥamūya's work in relation to key Sufi themes—the character of his Sufism; his attitude towards ecstatic utterances; his penchant for the science of letters; his opinions regarding spiritual intoxication and audition; his approach to Sufi practice; and his theories of prophecy and sainthood.

Apart from a trio of brief encyclopedia entries penned by Fu'ād Köprülü Zāde (*EI1*), Louis Massignon (*EI1*), and Hermann Landolt (*EI2*), only a handful of articles on Ḥamūya have been published in English (and none of which I am aware in other European languages).[65] Jamal Elias' "The Sufi Lords of Bahrabad: Saʿd al-Din and Sadr al-Din Hamuwayi" (1994) remains the definitive English-language piece on Saʿd al-Dīn, sketching a biography of the shaykh and his son culled together from a range of medieval, early-modern and modern sources, including Nafīsī's "Khāndān-i Saʿd al-Dīn-i Ḥamawī."[66] Weighing in on Ḥamūya's sectarian identity, Elias sides with Nafīsī and Hirawī, affirming the shaykh's Sunnī affiliation against Meier and Trimingham's matter-of-fact claims that he was a Shīʿī.[67] With respect to Saʿd al-Dīn's relationship with other

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[64] Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, "Qalb al-munqalab," ed. Najīb Māyil Hirawī, *Maʿārif* 5 (1988), 256-259; idem, "Makātīb," 451-458; Mīr-Bāqirī Fard and Najafī, "*Saʿd al-Dīn*"; Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād,* i-xxv; and Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Sakīnat al-ṣāliḥīn*, ed. Sārā Kashfī (Qom: Majmaʿ-i Dhakhā'ir-i Islāmī, Mu'assassat-i Tārīkh-i ʿIlm wa Farhang, 2015), 8-50.

[65] For encyclopedia articles, see Fu'ād Köprülü Zāde, "Saʿd al-Dīn al-Ḥamawī" in *EI1*; Louis Massignon, "Ḥamawī" in *EI1*; Hermann Landolt, "Saʿd al-Dīn al-Ḥammū'ī" in *EI2*. Until 17 April, 2021, Saʿd al-Dīn was even without an English Wikipedia page (though the Persian entry was first created in March 2012).

[66] Elias, "Sufi Lords."

[67] Elias, "Sufi Lords," 70-72; Meier, "Schriften," 137-138; and Trimingham, *Orders*, 99. For a discussion of Ḥamūya

Sufis in Kubrā's lineage, Elias argues for an antagonistic shift later in the shaykh's life, brought about by his keen interest in Ibn ʿArabī's teachings and close affiliation with the Īlkhānid state.[68] Apart from laying out important biographical sources, "The Sufi Lords of Bahrabad" offers an impressive list of Saʿd al-Dīn's extant manuscripts, along with their locations, catalogue numbers, and, where possible, brief descriptions of their contents and provenance.[69]

Most recently, Paul Ballanfat and Elizabeth Alexandrin have begun work on a critical edition of Ḥamūya's *Book of the Beloved* along with several other texts centered around the themes of messianism and sainthood. Building upon a string of talks and conference papers, Alexandrin has published "Seals and Sealing of Walāyah in Ṣūfī and Shīʿī Texts: The Cases of al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī and Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūyah" (2017) on the Seal of the Saints in Ḥamūya's thought, with another piece on the shaykh's esoteric diagrams forthcoming.[70] Alexandrin's work focuses primarily on Saʿd al-Dīn's approach to questions of mystical and messianic authority, reading his texts in conversation with colleagues like Ibn ʿArabī, Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, and ʿAzīz Nasafī. In so doing, she offers a fine-grained analysis of Sufi themes whose echoes would envelop the social, intellectual, and political landscapes of the following centuries.

0.3. Theoretical and Methodological Considerations

Even with promising new work on the horizon, contemporary scholarship on Ḥamūya pales in

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and Shīʿism, see pp. 171 ff. in Chapter 3.

[68] Elias, "Sufi Lords," 72-75. Cf. Abuali, "Genesis," 45-53

[69] Elias, "Sufi Lords," 61-66.

[70] Alexandrin, "Seals and Sealing" and idem, "Reading and Reciting the Qurʾān: Calligraphic Spaces in Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūyeh's *Kitāb al-Maḥbūb*" (forthcoming in a volume of Brill's Islamicate Intellectual History series).

comparison with his medieval and early-modern renown. I suggest that this lack of interest stems primarily from contemporary epistemological inhibitions. The rationalist frameworks that dominate intellectual history implicitly limit knowledge to logical systems that organize facts about the world. Such approaches typically mine theoretical texts for propositions about the nature of reality, assembling these claims into stable metaphysical systems whose parts are then tracked through time or stuck to specific problems for comparative analysis.

In Islamic intellectual history and its adjacent fields, these biases have led scholars to analyze Sufism as a disembodied phenomenon, privileging theoretical treatises devoted to a systematic elaboration of abstract concepts. Through a careful attention to ontology, metaphysics, and psychology, such approaches have produced important studies of key Sufi thinkers, illuminating the incredible depth and complexity of their intellectual worlds.[71] Despite their textured accounts of Sufi theory, however, these studies typically direct their gaze away from the material plane and thus neglect fundamental dimensions of medieval Sufism. Intellectual histories likewise skew towards Perennialist sensibilities when faced with phenomenological arguments or logical contradictions. In so doing, they tend to accept claims regarding ineffable or supra-rational experience at face value, withholding phenomenological data from critical analysis and obscuring the historically contingent strategies through which Sufis mapped their worlds.[72]

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[71] See e.g., Gerhard Böwering, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam: The Qur'ānic Hermeneutics of the Ṣūfī Sahl at-Tustarī (d. 283/896)* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980); Toshihiko Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-ʿArabī's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989); idem, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-ʿArabī's Cosmology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998); Michel Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints: Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn ʿArabī*, trans. Liadain Sherrard (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1993); Michael A. Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsaying* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994); and Elias, *Throne Carrier*.

[72] For the problematic dimensions of Perennialist approaches to the study of Sufism, see Gregory A. Lipton, *Rethinking Ibn ʿArabi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) and the Preface to Chapter 2 (pp. 93 ff.).

After extensive research on Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, the late Swiss Islamicist (and my *Ururgroßdoktorvater*) Fritz Meier called for a turn towards cultural history:

> A movement like Sufism, aspiring to a life of dedication and involving itself in social work on a broad front, should not necessarily be judged by the literature it produces. Precisely because its pretensions lay in other areas, a large part of its "true" history escapes us.[73]

Within the last two decades or so, scholars in the field have taken up Meier's challenge, framing Sufis as social actors inextricable from the material and discursive constraints of their immediate contexts. Such interventions have spawned creative approaches to texts and material evidence typically ignored by intellectual history, mining miniatures, endowment deeds, teaching certificates, pedagogical guides, and hagiographies for insights into the rich social worlds of the medieval Sufis.[74] This body of work inverts the intellectual-historical paradigm, glossing over the technical intricacies of abstract theory to explore questions of social imagination and lived reality. Nevertheless, while their social-constructivist approaches to phenomenological questions illuminate important historical dimensions of Sufi subjectivities, these studies tend to bracket the specific metaphysical claims through which Sufi theorists articulated their own experiences.

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[73] Fritz Meier, "The Mystic Path," in *The World of Islam: Faith, People, and Culture*, ed. Bernard Lewis (New York: Knopf in association with American Heritage Publishing Company, 1976), 127. For Meier's text edition and monographic study of Kubrā's *Effusions of Beauty and Revelations of Majesty*, see Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, *Die Fawā'iḥ al-ǧamāl wa-Fawātiḥ al-ǧalāl des Nağm ad-Dīn al-Kubrā Eine Darstellun Mystischer Erfahrungen im Islam aus der Zeit um 1200 n. Chr.* (M), ed. Fritz Meier (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1957).

[74] See e.g., Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Middle Period 1200-1550* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006); Erik Ohlander, *Sufism in an Age of Transition: ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī and the Rise of the Islamic Mystical Brotherhoods* (Leiden: Brill, 2008); Shahzad Bashir, *Sufi Bodies: Religion and Society in Medieval Islam* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2011) and idem, "Naqshband's Lives: Sufi Hagiography between Manuscripts and Genre," in *Sufism in Central Asia: New Perspectives on Sufi Traditions. 15th-21st Centuries*, ed. Devin A. DeWeese and Jo-Ann Gross (Boston: Brill, 2018), 75–97; Nathan Hofer, *The Popularisation of Sufism in Ayyubid and Mamluk Egypt, 1173-1325* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015); and Alexandre Papas, ed., *Sufi Institutions, Volume I*, *Sufi Institutions* (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

This brief sketch, of course, represents a general heuristic. It is not the case that intellectual-historical studies resolutely ignore socio-historical context while cultural studies neglect abstract Sufi thought completely. Even when pursuing a more holistic approach, however, contemporary scholarship tends to relegate material and metaphysical concerns to separate spheres of analysis. For intellectual-historical projects, discussions pertaining to socio-political context or the exigencies of embodied practice typically function as a means of contextualizing more focused analyses of abstract thought. Cultural histories likewise marshal technical minutiae from theoretical texts only to set the stage for sustained engagements with the social imaginaries of medieval Sufi actors.

When confronted with Ḥamūya's oeuvre, each of these approaches runs up against a serious analytical impasse. The shaykh articulates complex theoretical accounts of reality, yet subordinates rational objectivity to subjective experience. His ontological vision is not one of discrete parts and stable structures, but rather of dynamic forces whose qualities and boundaries are endlessly reconfigured. For Ḥamūya, theoretical texts are not repositories for information about the world; they are tools that provoke new ways of thinking, feeling, and being in it. His treatises thus produce knowledge through a dialogical interplay between text and audience, transforming the bodies of his readers into laboratories within which the meaning of his words can become manifest as boundless experiential possibilities. It is not the flat surface of the page, the shaykh suggests, but rather living, breathing, and speaking bodies that can encompass and reflect the inexhaustible potential of Reality. Disciplined by the ascetic rigors and social bonds of Sufi practice, these bodies were firmly rooted in material conditions and historical time. It is precisely through its arcane complexity, therefore, that Ḥamūya's knowledge is bound up with world in which it

circulated.

A critical engagement with Ḥamūya's thought thus demands that we reimagine the historical possibilities of knowledge production. Recent scholarship in the histories of science and knowledge deconstruct post-Enlightenment mythologies, theorizing knowledge as a contingent human phenomenon whose qualities are inextricable from the contexts in which it is produced and engaged.[75] Rooting knowledge in the social and material realities of historical actors, these studies highlight embodied practices as significant articulations of epistemology. Such an approach to knowledge counters the seductive draw of Platonic sensibilities, encouraging us to pull even the loftiest metaphysics out of the world of Forms and into the realm of fleshy bodies.

Following James Secord, I analyze the production of knowledge as a fundamentally communicative act. Secord advocates for a "foundational shift" in the way that we understand knowledge, urging us to think "always about every text, image, action, and object as the trace of an act of communication, with receivers, producers, and modes of conventions of transmission."[76] Rather than direct representations of static systems imprinted wholesale from the mind of an author onto the page, Secord characterizes texts as narratives indexed to particular concerns and

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[75] See e.g., Peter Burke, *What Is the History of Knowledge?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016); Lorraine Daston, "The History of Science and the History of Knowledge," *KNOW: A Journal on the Formation of Knowledge* 1, no. 1 (March 1, 2017): 131–54; Marwa Elshakry, *Reading Darwin in Arabic, 1860-1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013); Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Peter Harrison, *The Territories of Science and Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015); David Larsson Heidenblad and Johan Östling, eds., *Circulation of Knowledge: Explorations in the History of Knowledge* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2018); Helge Jordheim and David Gary Shaw, "Opening Doors: A Turn to Knowledge," *History and Theory* 59, no. 4 (2020): 3–18; Projit Bihari Mukharji, *Doctoring Traditions: Ayurveda, Small Technologies, and Braided Sciences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016); Kapil Raj, *Relocating Modern Science: Circulation and the Construction of Knowledge in South Asia and Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, *Toward a History of Epistemic Things: Synthesizing Proteins in the Test Tube* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997); James A. Secord, *Victorian Sensation: The Extraordinary Publication, Reception, and Secret Authorship of Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); and idem, "Knowledge in Transit," *Isis* 95, no. 4 (2004): 654–72.

[76] Secord, "Knowledge," 661.

conventions of communication.[77] As a single text circulates through multiple audiences, its meaning changes according to new concerns, conventions, and interpretations. Inseparable from the local settings in which it is produced and read, a text's meaning emerges from the negotiation of power among multiple communities of actors and thus is *inherently* heterogeneous.[78] Secord's formulation of knowledge production as a form of communication thus allows thick technical analyses to be situated within broader contexts without reproducing essentialist or diffusionist models. At the same time, his framework centers the relationships of power at stake in any form of communication between agents.[79]

As communities and individuals produce and consume knowledge through discursive and embodied practices, they contest not only the meaning of texts and ideas, but also their sense of self and the nature of their relationships with others. The boundaries and qualities that differentiate historical identities are neither stable nor independent, but rather come into being as actors deploy shared objects, strategies, and discourses to position themselves vis-à-vis their interlocutors.[80] Understood as historical phenomena, therefore, even seemingly intractable divisions—religious, confessional, intellectual, political—become dynamic and contingent, shifting according to the specificities of time, place, and the goals of particular actors.[81] In negotiating

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[77] Secord, *Victorian Sensation*, 667-670.

[78] Secord, *Victorian Sensation*, 518.

[79] Secord, "Knowledge," 667-670.

[80] See e.g., Nancy Khalek, *Damascus after the Muslim Conquest: Text and Image in Early Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early ʿAbbāsid Society (2nd-4th/8th-10th Centuries)* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1998); and Judith Weisenfeld, *New World A-Coming: Black Religion and Racial Identity during the Great Migration* (New York: New York University Press, 2016).

[81] See e.g., Finbarr B. Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009) and Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

the messy realities of their social worlds, individuals constantly adapt and refashion their relationships with others, articulating a plurality of complex and often conflicting identities through the discourses and materials available to them.[82]

Bringing these insights together, I frame the production of abstract theory and social identity as a single process through which individuals map their worlds and negotiate relationships of power. As actors fashion themselves and their realities, they do so not only through logically coherent facts or objective propositional statements, but also according to implicit claims vis-à-vis *how* legitimate truth is to be defined, organized, absorbed, and articulated, as well as *who* holds the authority to produce it. While propositional statements offer rhetorical points of congruence and convergence, focusing exclusively on these aspects of knowledge production obscures both the shared substrates underlying diverse traditions and the multifaceted identities that actors communicate to the networks of interlocutors with whom they interact.

This dissertation reads Ḥamūya against his contemporaries to identify a set of contextually-specific stakes, the networks of individuals invested in them, and the textual forms, social values, and embodied practices through which these actors attempted to define and contest them. The specificity of the shaykh's strategies comes into view through an analysis of how he engages with this competitive field—i.e., how he continually deconstructs and recontextualizes its rules to set himself above his rivals.[83] As we will see, Ḥamūya's work makes meaning by twisting, warp-

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[82] See e.g., Antony Eastmond, *Tamta's World: The Life and Encounters of a Medieval Noblewoman from the Middle East to Mongolia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017) and Lara Deeb, *An Enchanted Modern: Gender and Public Piety in Shīʿī Lebanon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

[83] My analysis of Ḥamūya's deconstructive tendencies runs parallel to Ian Almond's approach in *Sufism and Deconstruction*. See idem, *Sufism and Deconstruction: A Comparative Study of Derrida and Ibn ʿArabi*, (New York: Routledge, 2004). While Almond explores the analytical purchase of reading Ibn ʿArabī and Derrida in dialogue across time, I am more interested in illuminating the stakes (and possibilities) of Ḥamūya's strategies in their immediate 13th-century context. As we will see in Chapter 1 (esp. pp. 84 ff.), for example, Saʿd al-Dīn leverages

ing, and exaggerating Sufi conventions to the point that they are almost unrecognizable. Nevertheless, like Dadaists, French post-structuralists, and free jazz pioneers, it is precisely *through* these ubiquitous forms—from *within* this shared field of play—that the shaykh's strategies produce their most compelling effects.

Adapting a bricolage of interdisciplinary methods, I explore the practical and phenomenological dimensions of medieval Sufi texts, demonstrating how Ḥamūya and his colleagues keyed techniques of reading and writing to specific epistemological ideals, social relationships, regimens of bodily training. Recent scholarship on encyclopedism offers tools with which to illuminate the formal and structural dimensions of Sufi writing.[84] For scholars working on encyclopedias, theoretical and methodological difficulties arise from the formulaic and compilatory nature of their sources. Encyclopedic texts appear opaque to intellectual historians because the information they transmit often seems mundane, derivative, and utterly unremarkable. Through attention to the organizational frameworks, paratextual technologies, and material qualities of written or printed documents, however, recent scholarship illuminates how such features can themselves reflect contextually-specific claims about knowledge, power, and identity.

In Ḥamūya's case, the problem of the encyclopedia is inverted. Rather than ostensibly formulaic or derivative, the idiosyncrasies of the shaykh's style subvert modern sensibilities regarding theoretical coherence or continuity. As is the case with encyclopedias, however, an attention

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shared epistemological commitments and the radical openness of his own lettrist approach to challenge Ibn ʿArabī, essentially critiquing him for *not being deconstructive enough*.

[84] See e.g., Elias Muhanna, *The World in a Book: Al-Nuwayrī and the Islamic Encyclopedic Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017); Mary Franklin-Brown, *Reading the World: Encyclopedic Writing in the Scholastic Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); Ann Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); and Jason König and Tim Whitmarsh, "Ordering Knowledge," in *Ordering Knowledge in the Roman Empire*, ed. Jason König and Tim Whitmarsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 3–42.

to how Sa'd al-Dīn structures his work reveals modes of communication whose primary epistemological thrust lies beyond the straightforward propositional statements they produce. *The Book of the Beloved*, for example, uses organizational techniques to subvert audience expectations and defer meaning indefinitely. His strategies work in tandem with medieval theories of Qur'ānic inimitability, which rooted the miracle of revealed language in its ability to withold, layer, or nuance multiple levels of meaning through grammatical and structural forms.[85] By appropriating and expanding these forms, the shaykh not only performs a vision of infinite epistemological and ontological possibilities in text; he implicitly equates *The Book of the Beloved* with the Qur'ān to assert himself as a saintly fount of divine revelation.

For a textured approach to the experiential dimensions of medieval Sufi reading and writing, I benefit from the work of phenomenologically-minded scholars in the history of philosophy, religious studies, and art history.[86] Focusing on the performative dimensions of texts and images, this body of scholarship centers strategies of knowledge production premised upon engagement and direct experience rather than detached observation. Rather than bracketing subjective phenomena as beyond the realm of critical analysis, these studies develop methodologies to historicize the means through which texts and images target the body, emotions, and intellect to shape subjective experience. Attending to the phenomenological dimensions of Sufi theoretical treatis-

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[85] See Lara Harb, *Arabic Poetics: Aesthetic Experience in Classical Arabic Literature*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 203-251.

[86] For studies in history of philosophy, see e.g. Sara Rappe, *Reading Neoplatonism: Non-Discursive Thinking in the Texts of Plotinus, Proclus, and Damascius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) and Peter T. Struck, *Birth of the Symbol: Ancient Readers at the Limits of Their Texts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004). For religious studies, see e.g. Sells, *Mystical Languages*; Joshua Levi Ian Gentzke, "Imaginal Renaissance: Desire, Corporeality, and Rebirth in the Work of Jacob Böhme" (PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 2016); and Jessica Barr, *Intimate Reading: Textual Encounters in Medieval Women's Visions and Vitae* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2020). For art history, see e.g., Pentcheva, *Sensual* and Jeffrey F. Hamburger, *Diagramming Devotion: Berthold of Nuremberg's Transformation of Hrabanus Maurus's Poems in Praise of the Cross* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020).

es, for example, we are able to discern Ḥamūya manipulates Arabic and Persian letters to provoke embodied experiences of dynamic cosmic processes. Likewise, when directed towards Sufi handbooks, a focus on experiential concerns illuminates how Saʿd al-Dīn's colleagues used supplications and prayers to generate specific emotional states. By tracing how Ḥamūya recontextualizes analogous liturgical language within his advanced theoretical texts, we are able to analyze in turn how he manipulates these shared conventions to explore the affective possibilities of abstract knowledge.

I couple my focus on experience and practice with an attention to the material circumstances in which medieval Sufis lived and wrote. As recent work in the history of knowledge has shown, political, economic, and institutional alignments can shape both abstract theories of human behavior and the most fundamental rules of knowledge production.[87] Ḥamūya and his colleagues were not only Sufis; they also boasted a wide range of legal and theological affinities, geographic affiliations, and genealogical allegiances. They inhabited myriad social and professional positions, acting as jurists, warriors, theologians, courtiers, traditionalists, landed nobles, ritual specialists, occult scientists, and much more. Although contemporary narratives tend to distance mystics from worldly authority, the figures at the center of this study were cultural elites who maintained close ties with political regimes: Kubrā with the court in Khwārazm, Suhrawardī with the ʿAbbāsids, Ibn ʿArabī with the Saljūqs and Ayyūbids, and Ḥamūya and Bākharzī with the Mongols in Iran (the Īlkhāns) and Central Asia (the Golden Horde), respectively.[88] As Saʿd al-

[87] See e.g., Paul Erickson, Judy L. Klein, Lorraine Daston, Rebecca Lemov, Thomas Sturm, and Michael D. Gordin, *How Reason Almost Lost Its Mind: The Strange Career of Cold War Rationality* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2013)

[88] See Hamid Algar, "KOBRAWIYA I. THE EPONYM" in *EIr*; idem, "The Order"; Ohlander, *Sufism*, 16-27, 89-112; Addas, *Quest*, 218-244; Elias, "Sufi Lords", 74-75; and Mohammad Javad Shams, "Bākharzī, Abū al-Maʿālī Sayf al-Dīn," trans. Matthew S. Melvin-Koushki in *Encyclopedia Islamica*.

Dīn and his interlocutors contested the boundaries of their knowledge amongst themselves and with their critics, they did not disregard other dimensions of their identities, but rather negotiated what it meant to be a Sufi *through* these diverse commitments.

It is exceedingly difficult to present Ḥamūya's performative writing in a mode amenable to the analytical conventions of contemporary scholarship. In many cases, his techniques of destabilizing or recontextualizing interpretive possibilities operate through recursive expositions, abrupt shifts in context, and deferrals of meaning that unfold across dozens of folia. Succinct summaries of these textual forms erase the nuances through which they produce meaning, while detailed descriptions of their qualities alternate between tedious and vexing. In the chapters that follow, therefore, I offer extensive quotations from Saʿd al-Dīn's work, both in their original languages and in translation. These examples serve to orient readers, offering specific points of reference in which to ground analyses of the shaykh's textual performances. As Ḥamūya's writing produces meaning through a self-conscious engagement with the subtleties of language and form, a study of his work without such quotations would be tantamount to an art history without the images.

In assembling this theoretical scaffolding, my goal is to illuminate dimensions of medieval Sufi knowledge production typically obscured by modern epistemological biases. I use contemporary frameworks as a set of tools: lenses through which to identify and analyze the elements that made medieval Sufi systems viable (or even *potent*) constellations of knowing and being. In so doing, I recognize that nuanced approaches to the heterogeneous possibilities of knowledge and the dialogical relationship between epistemology and identity are not the sole purview of modern scholarship. For Ḥamūya and his colleagues, real knowledge transformed the minds,

bodies, and souls of its knowers, catalyzing new ways of being in the world. The question of knowledge was not one of dispassionate abstraction; it was an urgent moral and ethical concern. To achieve perfect knowledge was to perform perfect actions, adapting oneself to the demands of each and every moment with perfect fluency. As was the case with the micro- and macrocosms, medieval Sufis recognized the mesocosm of the social world as a dynamic play of forces navigable only by endlessly reassessing and representing one's self amidst a plurality of subjective possibilities. It was precisely this sensibility—adaptable across all all realms of knowing and being—that constituted the apex (and purportedly exclusive property) of the Sufi path.

Medieval Sufis likewise embraced the multivalent possibilities of knowledge in text. As we will see, Saʿd al-Dīn's work in particular reflects a sophisticated approach to epistemology that was rooted in relational difference, a multiplicity of meaning, and dynamic play. He recognized the dialogic interplay between subjectivity and meaning, developing creative methods to exploit the endless interpretive potential that different readers could bring to a single text. Through a range of performative strategies, he manipulated specific experiential dimensions of reading, forcing his audiences into an active process of meaning making. As diverse readers mapped his language to the physical, emotional, and intellectual dimensions of their own dynamic subjective states, they expanded the meanings of his words indefinitely. Ironically, Saʿd al-Dīn asserted his claims to authoritative knowledge by loosening the reigns of authorial intent and cultivating a plurality of interpretive possibilities.

Despite their universalizing ideals, Ḥamūya and his ilk were not *laissez-faire* relativists unmoored from the shore of critical acumen. The knowledge they produced was not universally accessible; nor did they intend it to be. While Ḥamūya may have opened his words to the creative

imagination of his audience, his writing nevertheless belies an attempt rebuff readers whose subjectivities had not been disciplined by advanced Sufi training. The very same strategies that opened up endless possibilities for an elite corps of readers thus rendered his texts utterly illegible to the uninitiated. This is not to say that non-Sufis could not read his words, but rather that these individuals were barred from the social bonds, embodied experiences, and epistemological practices that would mark them as knowing beings. A boundless interpretive sensibility may have been an epistemological and ethical ideal, but the question of *which* bodies could best perform this potential was always up for debate.

If the theoretical and methodological considerations outlined above help to render Ḥamūya's work legible, then the reverse is true as well. The generative insights offered by medieval Sufis expand the epistemological range of contemporary academic approaches, opening avenues through which to explore our *own* ways of knowing. The maps may be different, but our contemporary forms of academic knowledge production belie their own dynamic constellations of the corporeal, social, affective, and intellectual.

To illustrate the point, I offer what I suspect will be familiar narrative. As new graduate students enter the academy, they undertake rigorous programs of embodied and socially embedded practices that reframe how they understand themselves and their worlds. Disciplinary boundaries determine the shape of these worlds, the entities that populate them, and the meaningful connections that can be drawn between their constituent parts. The physical layout of campuses and universities naturalize disciplinary boundaries in material space while funding bodies maintain epistemological (and social) hierarchies through investments, donations, and general economic support. Faculty regulate knowledge production in seminar discussions, writ-

ten feedback, and individual meetings through a range of social, intellectual, and affective modes. Students' bodies are marked by long hours of reading and writing, shaping posture, motor capacity, sense perception, and comportment. Temperaments are transformed by critique, competition, and asceticism. In social settings, students are disciplined into a professional etiquette that regulates interactions with faculty, colleagues, and undergraduates. Institutional affiliations, professional relationships, and academic genealogies determine the reception vis-à-vis the academy and the public at large. (In the COVID era, the alienation and ennui of virtual academia have only brought our reliance on social and embodied practices into greater relief.)

At the end of the process, newly minted doctors organize and communicate their visions of the world through field-specific strategies whose myriad valences are legible only to individuals whose bodies are marked by the same rigorous training. To the uninitiated, a citation represents a neutral point of reference. To the discerning scholar, its form and content reflect disciplinary affiliations, research practices and capabilities, and even moral and social commitments. While academics may maintain diverse social identities, the work we produce for patronage (and, if they are lucky, prestige) remains bound to our abstract frameworks and arcane modes of expression.

Though exploring comparative questions is beyond the scope of this study, their overtones resonate across nearly all of its pages. What might marking and interrogating these dimensions of our epistemologies reveal about our own universalizing pretensions and the relationships of power they aim to fix? How might our basic practices of reading, writing, and even *feeling* authorize particular knowing subjects while erasing others? And finally, how might our epistemologies and identities be entangled with those from which we so desperately wish to tear

ourselves free?

0.4. Chapter Overview

I divide the dissertation into four main chapters, each of which explores a theme central to the conversations of medieval Sufis: ontology, embodied practice, social bonds, and human perfection.

Chapter 1, "Writing the Cosmos: Ḥamūya, Ibn ʿArabī, and Relational Being," reads Ḥamūya against his famous contemporary Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī, demonstrating how the two deploy an esoteric discourse known as the science of letters (*ʿilm al-ḥurūf*) to articulate what I call a relational approach to epistemology. For these two Sufis, entities *qua* entities have no essential qualities; they are knowable only through the shifting relationships in which they are embedded and the infinite points of view from which these relationships may be considered. By manipulating the Arabic alphabet's phenomenal qualities across a range of disciplines and discursive registers, Ḥamūya and Ibn ʿArabī develop ways of reading and writing that perform the infinite ontological-semantic potential of Reality within the bodies of their readers. I explore how these performative strategies could reinforce social and intellectual boundaries by analyzing how these two Sufis parochialize the rationalist worldviews of their Peripatetic contemporaries. Likewise, by teasing out the differences between Saʿd al-Dīn and Muḥyī al-Dīn's lettrist methods, I reveal how the former could leverage the radical openness of his own approach to critique the universalizing claims of his fellow Sufis.

Chapter 2, "Like a Prayer: Language and Embodied Practice," reads Ḥamūya's abstract theoretical texts in conversation with Sufi litanies and training manuals. For medieval Sufis, the

human body was the ultimate point of intersection for all levels of Reality. Their manuals brought together bodily instructions, imaginative exercises, and dynamic theoretical frameworks, teaching readers to navigate fluently across abstract and experiential realms. By deconstructing the conventions of these texts, Ḥamūya exploits their performative mechanisms to generate new interpretive possibilities. In the fifth appendix to *The Levels of Joy in the Fountains of Power* (*Kitāb Marātib al-qurra fī ʿuyūn al-qudra)*, the shaykh uses techniques of structure and allusion to place his text in conversation with contemporary and classic Sufi training manuals. While conventional manuals carefully map embodied sensations to metaphysical principles, Ḥamūya's text warps the body to the point of utter abstraction and forces readers to continually reconfigure intellectual, corporeal, and affective possibilities. *The Book of the Beloved* excises Sufi prayers from litanies and recontextualizes them amidst a flurry of recursive analyses, lettrist operations, arcane diagrams, and ecstatic poetry. In litanies and prayer books, supplications function as transformative practices that engage the bodies and minds of supplicants to discipline specific spiritual and emotional states. By suffusing *The Book of the Beloved* with the language of Sufi prayer, the shaykh opens up the meaning of his words to the dynamic subjectivities of his readers. Read together, the textual strategies that Ḥamūya deploys in *The Levels of Joy* and *The Book of the Beloved* generate endless interpretive potential while simultaneously rooting access to his work in an advanced familiarity with the specialized literature and ritual practices of medieval Sufism.

Chapter 3, "Genealogies of Knowledge: Shaykhs, Sufis, and Spiritual Inheritance," illuminates the social dimensions of Ḥamūya's knowledge production. While other chapters analyze how the shaykh's performative writing generates endless interpretive possibilities for his readers, this chapter illuminates how he manipulates shared conventions to open up diverse social possi-

bilities for himself. The first part of the chapter reads the shaykh's *Lamp of Sufism* against the work of his master Najm al-Dīn Kubrā and his close friend Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, exploring how all three root authoritative knowledge in the interpersonal bonds of master-disciple relationships. Despite his repeated emphasis on the importance of Sufi masters, however, Saʿd al-Dīn's own shaykhs are noticeably absent from his work. In their place, we find appeals to the legacy of his great-great-grandfather, the renowned Sufi Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya Juwaynī. Reading his treatises and personal correspondences in the broader context of Sufi training, trans-regional scholarly networks, and the ideological underpinnings of the Ayyūbid and Mongol dynasties, I demonstrate how the strategies through which Ḥamūya frames himself as an authoritative producer of knowledge reflect the differing expectations of his diverse audiences and the many privileges afforded to him as the scion of a powerful and well-connected family. In this case, material conditions worked in tandem with epistemological sensibilities, allowing the shaykh to move fluidly across a plurality of contexts.

Chapter 4, "Real Talk: Language, Reality, and Human Perfection," pulls together threads from previous chapters to analyze how Ḥamūya articulates his own saintly authority in text. After sketching a general overview of the shaykh's approach to prophecy and sainthood, I explore the dialogic relationship between his theoretical claims and his textual performances. On the one hand, Saʿd al-Dīn's theoretical elaboration of sainthood reflects the idiosyncratic structures I identify throughout the dissertation. The shaykh sketches hierarchies of saints and prophets that are continually reconfigured, articulating a vision of human perfection rooted in an interplay of shifting qualities and relationships. On the other hand, Ḥamūya's distinct modes of expression enact what he imagines perfect saints to do. As he explains in texts like *The Appearance of the*

Seal of the Saints (*Risāla fī ẓuhūr khātim al-awliyā'*) and *The Sea of Gratitude in the River of Disavowal* (*Baḥr al-shukr fī nahr al-nukr*), saints drive human beings to perfection through writing, their pens mirroring the swords of the prophets. Through close readings of a passage on the Seal of Saints from *The Book of the Beloved*, I frame incomprehensible expression itself as a performative writing strategy. By continually deferring meaning and subverting conceptual resolution, Sa'd al-Dīn engages readers in an active process of meaning making, projecting the experiential and epistemological possibilities of his words beyond the totalizing grasp of his own text. In so doing, he transforms readers' living, breathing, and *speaking* bodies into sites within which the totality of the Divine Self-Disclosure may become manifest as dynamic and boundless play. Reading his strategies in conversation with medieval theories of Qur'ānic inimitability, I demonstrate how Ḥamūya manipulates contemporary assumptions about revealed language to assert himself as a bona fide saint.

In what follows, I offer an experiment in method—the first steps towards an approach that I hope will provoke its own generative possibilities in the study of knowledge.

Chapter 1
Writing the Cosmos: Ḥamūya, Ibn ʿArabī, and Relational Being

Is it so surprising that I use the same expression in different games? And sometimes, as it were, even between the games?

> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Philosophical Investigations*[89]

But nontotalization can also be determined in another way: no longer from the standpoint of a concept of finitude as relegation to the empirical, but from the standpoint of the concept of *play*.

> Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences"[90]

For medieval exegetes and modern interpreters, Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya's investigations into the nature of being have been a fascinating and frustrating enigma. Writing in the late 15th century, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 1492) warns readers with the following remarks:

> در علوم ظاهری و باطنی یگانه است. . . در مصنّفات وی سخنان مرموز و کلمات مشکل و ارقام و اشکال و دوایر که نظر عقل و فکر از کشف و حلّ آن عاجز است بسیار است و همانا که تا دیده بصیرت به نور کشف منفتح نشود ادراک آن متعذر است
>
> He is unparalleled in exoteric and esoteric knowledge... His works contain allusive discourses, difficult words, and numbers, figures, and circles whose unveiling and solution lie beyond the gaze of intellect and thought. They are numerous, and so long as one's vision is closed to the light of unveiling, they will be impossible to apprehend.[91]

[89] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, ed. P.M.S. Hacker and Joachim Schulte, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, P.M.S. Hacker, and Joachim Schulte, Rev. 4th (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 197.

[90] Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 2001), 365.

[91] Jāmī, *Nafaḥāt*, 429.

As Jāmī relates, it is not necessarily *what* Ḥamūya says thats resists easy interpretation, but *how* he says it. Plumbing the hidden recesses of being, Saʿd al-Dīn twists and turns through cunning wordplay, ostensibly incoherent digressions, recondite allusions, blatant inconsistencies, impenetrable diagrams, bizarre neologisms, and above all, a feverish obsession with the sound, form, and semantic potential of the Arabic alphabet. Nevertheless, despite these difficulties, Ḥamūya's works read like a profound code ready to be cracked. Behind obscure language and arcane images, readers can imagine the contours of an overarching system whose infinite interpretive reach encompasses nearly every ontological and epistemological possibility. Just one more word, one more reference, one more figure grasped and God's ultimate secrets will give themselves up freely.

I do not purport to unlock such secrets here. Instead, this chapter analyzes the techniques and strategies through which Ḥamūya explores being in order to illuminate the epistemological assumptions that underpin such esoteric modes of expression. To clarify the particularities of Saʿd al-Dīn's approach, I read his work in conversation with that of Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1240), whose theoretical sophistication, provocative exegetical experiments, and virtuosic discursive flexibility have rendered him a focal point for the study of Sufism (both apologetic and polemical) since the 13th century. As noted in the Introduction, later hagiographers remember Ḥamūya as a close companion of Ibn ʿArabī's chief disciple Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 1274) and, if we are to believe his great-grandson Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ḥamūya (fl. 14th c.), a friend of al-Shaykh al-Akbar as well.[92] Whether or not a face-to-face meeting ever took place, Saʿd al-Dīn penned at least one letter to Muḥyī al-Dīn, challenging the shaykh on specific points regarding the secrets of

[92] Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 28 ff.

the letters and the nature of being.[93] By the 14th and 15th centuries, many Sufis read the two thinkers' theoretical works together as twin approaches to hidden realities. The Tīmūrid lettrist Ṣā'in al-Dīn Turka (d. 1432), for example, quotes lengthy sections from Ḥamūya's *Book of the Beloved* as a means of elucidating the subtle points of Ibn ʿArabī's *Bezels of Wisdom* (*Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*).[94] Likewise, a cursory survey of the Sufi manuscripts in Istanbul's Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi reveals several 15th-century collections (*majāmīʿ*) in which the two Sufis' works are bound together; Şehit Ali Paşa MS 1342 even purports to include one of Ibn ʿArabī's epistles copied by none other than Ḥamūya himself.[95]

Reading Ḥamūya and Ibn ʿArabī against one another, a shared set of ontological and epistemological presumptions becomes discernible. As I argue below, the two Sufis articulate what I refer to as a relational epistemology, rooted in a dynamic and ever-renewed Divine Self-Disclosure. Utterly unfathomable in Its Essence, the Real only becomes known through Its manifestation in created entities. As projections of the Real, however, these entities *qua* entities lack essential qualities of their own and cannot be known in and of themselves. Instead, they are differentiated through (a) their relationships with the Divine Essence, (b) their relationships with one another, and (c) the context according to which all of these relationships are understood. Because the Real continually manifests Itself in new ways, these webs of association and the vistas from which they may be considered are in constant flux. Grounded as they are in stable premises

[93] Ḥamūya, "Makātīb," 459-462 and idem, *Sharḥ bāl*, fols. 99-108. See also pp. 84 ff. in Section 1.5.

[94] See e.g., Ibn Turka, "Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ," I.385ff and Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fols. 28a-28b.

[95] See Şehit Ali Paşa MS 1342 (dated AH 837-839; 1434-1436), fols. 145a-158a. On June 12 2019, I had the chance to inspect the treatise in person. The text's ending reads, "This epistle has been completed at the hand of Saʿd al-Ḥamawī." The folia in question appear to be written on a type of paper that differs from the rest of the collection. These folia are lighter in color, narrower, more uniform in quality, lack page rubrics, and display their own pagination. Likewise, they seem to be bound together as part of a distinct unit. They do not, however, seem to originate in the 13th century.

and logical sequence, rational methodologies (at least according to our two Sufis) are woefully ill-equipped to capture fundamental realities.

To communicate knowledge about the nature of being, Ḥamūya and Ibn ʿArabī develop performative strategies that seek to shape readers' experiences of self and cosmos. Rather than mapping a static world, these techniques cultivate an epistemological sensibility that allows readers to recognize the Real and reproduce Its dynamic modes of Self-Disclosure across each and every context, discourse, and mode of expression. In what follows, I identify and analyze these strategies through a close reading of Saʿd al-Dīn and Muḥyī al-Dīn's texts, illuminating how the two Sufis negotiate questions of knowledge, being, and expression through a comparative analysis of representative cases.

The first section of the chapter focuses on Ḥamūya and Ibn ʿArabī's critiques of philosophers and their methodologies. In identifying an epistemological other against which our two Sufis frame real knowledge, I lay the foundation for a discussion of Saʿd al-Dīn and Muḥyī al-Dīn's writing and foreshadow the stakes of their claims. From here, I delve into the primary focus of the chapter: an analysis of Ḥamūya and Ibn ʿArabī's performative strategies. I center my discussion on the science of letters (*ʿilm al-ḥurūf*), offering a brief history up to the 13th century before exploring how the two Sufis use the letters of the Arabic alphabet to negotiate myriad expressive and discursive registers. Ḥamūya manipulates the letters' shapes, sounds, and allusive/semantic qualities, emphasizing the fundamental interrelation, utter instability, and infinite ontological-semantic potential of all created beings. By continually drawing together, breaking apart, and recontextualizing a plurality of interconnected possibilities, Saʿd al-Dīn leaves readers without any stable hermeneutical ground. Though Ibn ʿArabī exploits the letters' sonic and visual quali-

ties as well, he positions them as pivot points between discrete and infinitely complex conceptual frames. Unlike Ḥamūya, Ibn ʿArabī articulates his relational approach by exploiting the sense of dissonance that arises from juxtaposing incommensurable, yet fairly stable structures.

After comparing their approaches, I demonstrate how Saʿd al-Dīn appeals to shared relational commitments to contest Ibn ʿArabī's authority. The former parochializes his interlocutor's approach to the science of letters, accusing him of stabilizing interpretive possibilities and limiting the dynamic potential of Reality. Against Ibn ʿArabī's reified structural frames, Ḥamūya emphasizes the utter unboundedness of his own techniques. A close attention to Saʿd al-Dīn's critique reveals a distinct penchant for deconstruction and highlights the radical openness of his work as a potent strategy of Sufi competition.

1.1. (In)coherence of the Philosophers

Despite overlapping conceptual vocabulary, similar metaphysical mechanisms, and a shared concern with divine unity and cosmic multiplicity, Ḥamūya and Ibn ʿArabī inveigh against the language and methodologies of the philosophers, who in the wake of Ibn Sīnā had become largely synonymous with Muslim Peripatetics.[96] A close look at the two Sufis' critiques reveals a deep

[96] For *falsafa*, *kalām*, and Ibn Sīnā, see Frank Griffel, "Al-Ghazālī's (d. 1111) *Incoherence of the Philosophers*," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Khaled el-Rouayheb and Sabine Schmidtke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 191–209.

With respect to shared terminology and metaphysical mechanisms, Ḥamūya, Ibn ʿArabī, and their Peripatetic rivals draw to varying degrees from Neoplatonic metaphysical principles, which by the 13th century had become familiar to a wide range of thinkers writing in Arabic and Persian. The general outline of Neoplatonic emanation was pioneered by the Greek philosopher Plotinus (d. 270), whose *Enneads* drew upon Platonic and Aristotelian principles to articulate a distinct ontological and soteriological vision. In the 9th century, the Christian Ibn Nāʿima al-Ḥimsī (fl. 9th c.) translated the *Enneads* into Arabic as *The Theology of Aristotle* (*Uthūlūjiyā Arisṭāṭālīs*), reworking Plotinus' claims to suit the needs of the small circle of philosophers that had gathered around al-Kindī (d. 870). Although later philosophers, theologians, and Sufis modified the so-called "classical" hierarchy of Neoplatonic hypostases, the basic framework and terminology of emanation remained fairly consistent from the 9th to the 13th

epistemological divide that I argue cannot be reduced to mere doctrinal squabbles or terminological nitpicking. Saʿd al-Dīn and Muḥyī al-Dīn take issue just as much with what philosophers say as with their fundamental premises vis-à-vis how knowledge is to be cultivated and produced, accusing their Peripatetic counterparts of ossifying God's presence in the world and mistaking skeletal structures for the infinite complexity of animate reality.[97] This is not to say that contemporary philosophical systems *were* rigid, hidebound, or inadequate; 13th-century Peripatetic (or Peripatetic-adjacent) thinkers like Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 1274) and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1210) developed nuanced systems of metaphysics and ethics dedicated to exploring the subtle intricacies of life at micro- and macrocosmic scales.[98] Nevertheless, Ḥamūya and Ibn ʿArabī's

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centuries.

For Plotinus' metaphysics see Dominic J. O'Meara, "The Hierarchical Ordering of Reality in Plotinus," in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, ed. Lloyd P. Gerson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 66–81. For general studies, see Pierre Hadot, *Plotinus, or The Simplicity of Vision*, trans. Michael Chase (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1993) and Lloyd P. Gerson, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

For the Arabic adaptation of Plotinus *Enneads*, ironically entitled *The Theology of Aristotle*, see Cristina D'Ancona, "The Theology Attributed to Aristotle: Sources, Structure, Influence," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Khaled el-Rouayheb and Sabine Schmidtke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 8–29 and Peter Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus* (London: Duckworth, 2002).

[97] Ibn ʿArabī himself draws a similar analogy in Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* (OY), ed. Osman Yahia, 14 vols. (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma li-l-Kitāb, 1972-1992), II.228 and idem, *The Meccan Revelations, Volume I*, ed. Michel Chodkiewicz, trans. William C. Chittick and James W. Morris (New York: Pir Press, 2002), 36.

[98] For the latest study of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's life and work, see Sayeh Meisami, *Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī: A Philosopher for All Seasons* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2019). For Ṭūsī's engagement with Ibn Sīna, see Jon McGinnis, "Naṣīr Al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 1274), *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Khaled el-Rouayheb and Sabine Schmidtke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 326–47.

While Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī may not have been an "Avicennist" strictly speaking, his commentaries and philosophical-theological works demonstrate a virtuosic knowledge of and sustained engagement with Ibn Sīnā and Aristotelian philosophy broadly speaking. See Ayman Shihadeh, *The Teleological Ethics of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī* (Leiden: Brill, 2006); idem, "Al-Rāzī's (d. 1210) on Avicenna's *Pointers*: The Confluence of Exegesis and Aporetics," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Khaled el-Rouayheb and Sabine Schmidtke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 296–325; Frank Griffel, "Was Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī an Averroist After All? On the Double-Truth Theory in Medieval Latin and Islamic Thought," in *Studying the Near East at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, 1935-2018*, ed. Sabine Schmidtke (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2018), 205–16; and Nora Jacobsen Ben Hammed, "Knowledge and Felicity of the Soul in Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī" (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 2018).

polemics give us insight into how these two Sufis imagined knowledge and their relationship with it, illuminating the ways through which they sought to define their projects over and against those of their opponents.

In Ibn ʿArabī's *Meccan Revelations* (*al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*), the shaykh relates an incident in which he was so disgusted by what he found in al-Fārābī's (d. 950) *Virtuous City* (*al-Madīna al-fāḍila*) that he flung the pages back at their owner and never touched another copy.[99] Muḥyī al-Dīn writes:

> ولقد رأيت بعض أهل الكفر في كتاب سمّاه المدينة الفاضلة رأيته بيد شخص بمرشانة الزيتون ولم أكن رأيته قبل ذلك فأخذته من يده وفتحته لأرى ما فيه فأوّل شيء وقعت عيني عليه قوله وأنا أريد في هذا الفصل أن ننظر كيف نضع إلهًا في العالم ولم يقل الله فتعجّبت من ذلك ورميت بالكتاب إلى صاحبه وإلى هذا الوقت ما وقفت على ذلك الكتاب
>
> I saw some of the unbelievers' views in a book entitled *The Virtuous City*, which I saw in the hands of an individual in Marchena and had never seen before. I took it from him and opened it up to see what was inside. The first thing I came across was the following: "In this section, I would like to examine how we might postulate [the existence of] a deity in the world." He didn't even use the word "God"! I was astonished at this and hurled the book back at its owner; to this day I haven't consulted it again.[100]

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[99] On Ibn ʿArabī's familiarity with Arabic philosophy, see Addas, *Quest*, 102-110.

For an introduction, translation, and edition of *The Virtuous City*, see al-Fārābī, *al-Fārābī on the Perfect State: Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī's Mabādiʾ ārāʾ ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*, ed. Richard Walzer (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).

For studies of al-Fārābī's metaphysics, see Damien Janos, *Method, Structure, and Development in al-Fārābi's Cosmology* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); Thérèse-Anne Druart, "al-Fārābī, Emanation, and Metaphysics," in *Neoplatonism and Islamic Thought*, ed. Parviz Morewedge, Studies in Neoplatonism (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 127–48; Herbert Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, on Intellect: Their Cosmologies, Theories of the Active Intellect, and Theories of Human Intellect* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

[100] Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya* (SD), ed. Aḥmad Shams al-Dīn, 9 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1999), V.264.10-14. For longer passages and block quotes from the *Futūḥāt*, I provide citations to this nine-volume 1999 edition (SD) and Osman Yahia's fourteen-volume 1972-1999 edition (OY) of the text. Because Yahia's edition finishes with Chapter 161, however, citing from both is not always possible.

While Ibn ʿArabī's invective could be read as a generic charge of unbelief premised upon a willful misunderstanding of technical terminology, I argue that the broader context of his comments belies a fundamental ontological claim with respect to the unity of the Divine Essence, the infinite multiplicity of the Divine Self-Disclosure, and the nature of human perfection.

As a prelude to the passage cited above, Ibn ʿArabī expounds upon his understanding of the Perfect Human (*al-insān al-kāmil*) as a reflection of the Divine Attributes:

> فالكامل ينصبغ بكلّ صورة في العالم ويتستّر بما يقدر عليه . . . فينبغي لصاحب هذا المقام أن لا يظهر لشخصين في صورة واحدة أبداً كما لا يتجلّي الحقّ لشخصين في صورة واحدة أبداً فإنّ الدرجات هي الدرجات، فإن كفّره وزندقه من لم ير اختلاف الصور عليه فذلك جهل منه وحسد . . .
>
> وذلك الواقع فيه من المفترين فإنّه ما حكم عليه إلاّ بما شاهده منه
>
> The perfect one is dyed with each form [while he is] in the world and veiled by whatever comes over him... The master of this state must never appear to two individuals in the same form, just as the Real never manifests Itself to two individuals in the same form; these degrees are truly [*different*] degrees. If one who does not see the diversity of forms vis-à-vis [the Perfect Human] charges him with unbelief and apostasy, then this is out of ignorance of him and envy...[101]
>
> The calumny brought against [the Perfect Human] by the slanderers is only leveled upon him due to [the incomplete aspect] of what they saw in him.[102]

For Muḥyī al-Dīn, human perfection entails understanding and actualizing the totality of the Divine Attributes (or Names) such that one transforms oneself into a complete microcosm of the universe and a veridical reflection of the Divine Essence.[103] In Ibn ʿArabī's view, these Attributes/

[101] Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt* (SD), V.263.25-28.

[102] Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt* (SD), V.263.30.

[103] For studies of the Perfect Human in Ibn ʿArabī's thought, see Chodkiewicz, *Seal* and Gerald T. Elmore, *Islamic Sainthood in the Fullness of Time: Ibn al-ʿArabī's Book of the Fabulous Gryphon* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

Names are not concrete elements that inhere in the Essence, but rather *relationships* that emerge between the Essence and its loci of manifestation—i.e., the infinite entities that populate the material and immaterial realms.[104] In addition to the relationships that pertain between entities and the Essence, the entities themselves exist in a plurality of shifting associations with one another, such that the qualities of each vary in accordance with the particular context in which they are considered.[105] As a complete manifestation of these relationships, the Perfect Human mirrors the Divine Essence, revealing himself according to an ever-shifting array of attributes. According to Ibn ʿArabī, therefore, those who level charges of apostasy against the Perfect Human do so primarily because they are unable to recognize the dynamic and contextually dependent character—i.e., the "relationality"—of how the Divine Attributes are made manifest in his states and actions.[106]

Muhyī al-Dīn implies that those who slander the Perfect Human likewise misconstrue the nature of the Divine Self-Disclosure on a cosmic scale with dire consequences. Continuing the passage above, he expounds:

> فدرجات الحقّ ما هو العالم عليه . . . واللّه غنيّ عن العالمين فلا يدخله تنكير والإله يدخله التنكير فيقال إله فاجعل بالك لما نبهتك عليه لتعالم الفرقان بين قولك اللّه وبين قولك إله فكثرت الآلهة في العالم لقبولها التنكير واللّه واحد معروف لا يجهل
>
> The degrees of the Real are those upon which the universe is founded... God (*Allāh*) is completely independent from the worlds and thus indefiniteness does not

[104] See Mohammed Rustom, "Philosophical Sufism," in *The Routledge Companion to Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Richard C. Taylor and Luis Xavier López-Farjeat (London: Routledge, 2016), 403-405 and William Chittick, "The Central Point: Qūnawī's Role in the School of Ibn ʿArabī," *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn ʿArabi Society* 35 (2004), 38.

[105] See Chittick, *Self-Disclosure*, 242 and idem, *Sufi Path*, 33 ff.

[106] See also Michael Sells' discussion of Ibn ʿArabī's critique of dogmatism, rationalism, and all "static" modes of ontological inquiry in idem, *Mystical Languages*, esp. 79, 83, 90-92, 97 ff. Sells frames the critique in terms of "binding" (*taqyīd*)—i.e., imagining the Real as fixed to any category or frame of reference.

> befall Him. Indefiniteness *does* befall the deity (*al-ilāh*)—for this reason, it is called a deity. Fix your mind on what we have told you in order that you may know the difference between saying "God" and saying "a deity." Deities proliferate in the world since they admit indefiniteness, while God is one and always definite.[107]

Just as they mistake the Perfect Human's individual acts for his entire spiritual state, these skeptics confuse a single facet of the Divine Self-Disclosure for the Essence in and of Itself. Ibn ʿArabī epitomizes his discussion of being, manifestation, and multiplicity in a concise linguistic analysis. Here, the difference between the grammatically definite God (*Allāh*) and the grammatically indefinite deity (*ilāh*) functions as a metonym that stands in for a deeper criticism of the Peripatetics and any others who would limit the Divine Essence to a single aspect of Its manifestation. For Ibn ʿArabī, al-Fārābī's attempt to provide philosophical justification for the existence of a (grammatically indefinite) deity in the world is a clear admission of his own ignorance and the shortcomings of his methods *ab initio*. Read in its context, therefore, Muḥyī al-Dīn's critique of *The Virtuous City* implies a deep frustration with the fundamentals of Peripatetic methodologies whose very premises, he claims, obscure and distort how the Real becomes manifest in the world and embodied in the figure of the Perfect Human.

Saʿd al-Dīn scatters similar calumnies against the philosophers throughout his *Levels of Joy in the Fountains of Power*. In the main body of this esoteric and often difficult text, Ḥamūya deploys a motif of three darknesses (*ẓulumāt*) to narrate a progression through interpenetrating ontological, temporal, and soteriological schemata.[108] According to Saʿd al-Dīn, humanity ad-

[107] Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt* (SD), V.264.1-4.

[108] As a whole, the *Levels of Joy* consists of a main body of text made up of fifteen sections, five appendices of varying length, and a conclusion. The main body deals primarily with the aforementioned three darknesses and emphasizes the reality of the resurrection. In broad strokes, the first appendix expounds upon the creation of Adam; the second treats topics related to sainthood and prophecy; the third explores issues related to authority and divine law; the

vances—both historically and in the present moment—through these three darknesses, guided by specific manifestations of God's elect. As human beings traverse new levels of darkness, they are afforded access to higher truths regarding Reality and, in particular, the nature of the bodily resurrection. Not all individuals, however, are able to pass through all three stages. Ḥamūya singles out the philosophers for explicit and repeated censure, suggesting that despite their grandiose claims, their refusal to follow God's elect in thought and action mires them in the depths of the first darkness. In a section of the text entitled "On the Unveiling of the First Darkness" (*Injilā' al-ẓulma al-ūlā*), Saʿd al-Dīn expounds:

> ومنهم من طفق في السير والطير على طريق الضير مستنداً إلى رأيه القابل وغفله المائل فخطفته الطير وهوت به الريح من مكان سحيق ثمّ سلك مسلك الأوهام العاطلة والقضايا الباطلة وستند ظهره إلى البراهين الزائدة والتماثيل الحائلة فرجع خليًا عن اليقين مُقبلاً على اليسار ومعرضًا عن اليمين راكبًا على متون الظن والتخمين . . . وهو الحكيم الفلسفي النفسي ومن تابعه هو الخبيث العكسي
>
> Among them is whoever rushes to walk and fly on the path of wrongdoing, trusting in his fickle opinion and carelessness; the birds and winds from far away places seize him and sweep him away.[109] He travels the path of vain imagination and null judgements, propping himself up on superfluous proofs and feeble analogies. Thus, he returns empty of certainty, drawing near to the left, turning away from the right, and riding upon the backs of opinion and conjecture... This is the

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fourth explains the truth of the divine message; the fifth relates forty *ḥadīth*s on such issues as knowledge, purity, prayer, alms, fasting, etc.; and the conclusion outlines several divine sciences. See the text's *fihrist* in Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Kitāb Marātib al-qurra fī ʿuyūn al-qudra* (P), Princeton, Princeton University Library, Garret Collection MS 3793Y, fols. 1b-2a.

Ḥamūya divides the primordial darknesses in the main body of the text according to a variety of classifications that span multiple ontological registers. The first darkness corresponds to light (*al-nūr*), the majesties of God's face (*subuḥāt wajhihi*), the veil of the names (*ḥijāb al-asmāʾ*), the veil of existence (*ḥijāb al-wujūd*), and the mosque of the spirit (*masjid al-rūḥ*); the second darkness corresponds to manifestation (*al-ẓuhūr*), the face (*al-wajh*), the veil of the attributes (*ḥijāb al-ṣifāt*), the veil of what is named (*ḥijāb al-musammā*), and the homeland of the body (*mawṭin al-jasad*); and the third corresponds to clarification (*al-wuḍūḥ*), the reality of the Divine Nature (*ḥijāb al-ḥaqīqa al-ulūhiyya*), the veil of natures (*ḥijāb al-akhlāq*), the veil of the Essence (*ḥijāb al-dhāt*), and the house of the heart (*bayt al-qalb*). See Figure 7 and Ḥamūya, *Marātib*, (P) fol. 3a.

[109] This may be an allusion to Q. 105:3—"He sent ranks of birds against them"—, a verse to which Ḥamūya devotes a short section in the *Lamp of Sufism*. See Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 132-133.

philosopher-sage [interested only in matters] of the carnal soul; whoever follows him is wicked and disobedient.[110]

Later in the *Levels of Joy*, Ḥamūya contrasts philosophers with enlightened individuals from the second darkness, writing:

فدخل أرباب العقول الصحيحة المرتبة الفارغة المتخلّصة عن الظلمة الأولى في الظلمة الثانية فأدركوا حقيقة الآخرة وأدرك الجنّة والنار والنعم والحميم وعلموا نشأة الآخرة حقّ والبعث حقّ والإعادة حقّ والحشر والنشور والإخراج حقّ من اللّه إلى عبيده فلا بدّ لهم من ذلك فاقبلوا على اللّه الكريم بكلّيتهم فتشبّثوا بديل متابعة نبيّهم بسيرتهم وصورتهم حتّى علموا أن الظلمة الأولى قد ادبرت في عهد نبيّنا المصطفى وذهبت بحجبها وطرحت بصورها على أهل الأهواء والبدع وأنّ الظلمة الثانية قد أقبلت ودخل فيها الموحّدون المجرّدون وأدركوا حقائق الآخرة وأحكامها مواقفةً لعقائدهم المأخوذة من صاحب الشريعة

والحكيم والفلسفيّ بمعزل عن هذه الأسرار ومصرّ على الأنكار . . . ومع هذا يزعم أنّه على الحقّ مبين . . . واسترخص بيع دينه بالظنّ والتخمين . . . أيّها الفاسق دع عنك الفشار حسبك النار

. . .

علموا [أرباب العقول] أنّ اللّه تعالى أوجب على عباده في الدنيا أحكامًا وكلمات وشيء من قبيل البليات والعقوبات مثل الحجّ والزكاة والصلاة والصوم والتلفظ بكلمتيٍ النفي والإثبات وإلى غير ذلك من أنواع العبادات . . . الحكيم الفلسفيّ في ظلّ الظلمة الأولى متحيّرا استخوذ عليه الشيطان وغضب عليه الرحمن عارٍ عن الإيمان والعيان متمسّك بالبرهان ومتوجّه إلى علّة العلل المؤدّية إلى النيران

Those with sound intellects enter the level of freedom and liberation from the first darkness in the second darkness. They perceive the reality of the afterlife, as well as the garden, fire, blessings, and scalding water. They realize that the final creation is real, that the resurrection is real, that the return is real, and that the gathering, dispersing, and removal are real—this was sent from God to His servants,

[110] Ḥamūya, *Marātib* (P), fols. 4a.4-4a.11. Due to errors in the Arabic text, I have collated the passage with idem, *Kitāb Marātib al-qurra fī ʿuyūn al-qudra* (DK), Cairo, Dār al-Kutub MS 2070, fols. 4b.6-4b.13.

> so it must be [true] for them. Thus, they devote themselves to noble God with their entire selves (*bi-kulliyyatihim*). They hold fast to the skirts of following their prophet in what they do and how they appear (*bi-sīratihim wa-ṣūratihim*) until they know [for sure] that the first darkness had withdrawn in the time of the prophet Muṣṭafā; it was sent off with its veils and cast in its forms upon the people of passion and heresy. They know also that the second darkness has come. The apophatic monotheists (*al-muwaḥḥidūn al-mujarridūn*) enter into it, perceiving that the reality of the afterlife and its rules are in accordance with their doctrines, which were taken from the master of the *sharīʿa*.[111]
>
> The philosopher-sage is far removed from these secrets and persistent in his denial... Despite all this he lays claim to clear truth... He sells his religion (*dīn*) like a cheap trinket, trading it for fancy and conjecture... O sinner, give up your boasting for you deserve the fire![112]
>
> ...
>
> [Those with sound intellects] know that God has imposed rules, words, and various trials and punishments upon His servants. These include the hajj, alms, prayer, fasting, negating and confirming, and other religious duties... The philosopher-sage remains in the shadow of the first darkness. The devil spurs him on and he vexes the Merciful. Stripped of faith and true vision, he grasps at proofs and turns to the "cause of causes," which drives him into the fire.[113]

In these passages, Ḥamūya censures philosophers for their assertion that demonstrative proofs alone can give rise to anything but conjecture and opinion. Like Ibn ʿArabī, Ḥamūya's critique of the philosophers pertains to fundamental questions of epistemology and method as much as it does issues of technical terminology and metaphysical minutiae. For Saʿd al-Dīn, true knowledge must *always* be accompanied by a complete devotion to the Real in accordance with the duties laid out by God and embodied most perfectly in the person of Muḥammad. These duties include not only beliefs and principles, but also specific ritual practices and modes of comportment. The philosophers err not only because they reject fundamental dogmas, but also because of how they

[111] Ḥamūya, *Marātib*, (P) fols. 4a.21-4b.7; collated with (DK) fols. 4b.4-4b.13.

[112] Ḥamūya, *Marātib*, (P) fols. 4b.15-21; collated with (DK) fols. 5a.5-5a.11.

[113] Ḥamūya, *Marātib,* (P) fols. 5a.4-7 and 5a.16-18; collated with (DK) fols. 5a.15-5b.2 and 5b.10-12.

carry themselves—or rather, how they choose *not* to carry themselves. Saʿd al-Dīn suggests, therefore, that passing through the levels of darkness and acquiring real knowledge about one's self and the world entails a personal transformation that is simultaneously epistemological and ontological, inseparable from modes of comportment explicitly linked to imitation of the prophet Muḥammad.[114]

These two Sufis are not identical in their critique of rational methodologies, however. Although Ibn ʿArabī censures Peripatetic philosophers for their myopic approach to the Real and the Perfect Human, he makes room for their theories and methods within his epistemological framework. In the passage cited above, Ibn ʿArabī does not argue that the philosophers' claims are wholly divorced from Reality, only that they mistake a static image of a single point for the infinite complexity of a dynamic whole. When deployed within a holistic (read: Sufi) epistemological vision, the shaykh suggests that philosophical argument and speculation can be useful tools through which one may approach *particular* manifestations of the Divine Self-Disclosure.[115] Ḥamūya, on the other hand, is fundamentally opposed to philosophical argument, framing the approach as the quintessential marker of the *falāsifa* as a social and intellectual group. At best, rationalist methodologies yield fanciful delusions unmoored from Reality; at worst, they cultivate ways of being fundamentally opposed to the attitudes, practices, and modes of comportment intrinsic to real knowledge. As we will see below, Ḥamūya's own use of philosophical terminology

[114] Ibn ʿArabī echoes the sentiment in his letter to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. He urges the *mutakallim* to take up the path of ascetic exercise (*riyāḍa*), inner struggle (*mujāhada*), and spiritual retreat (*khalwa*) to achieve knowledge of God, tracing these practices back to the prophet Muḥammad. See Mohammad Rustom's study and translation of the epistle in Mohammed Rustom, "Ibn ʿArabī's Letter to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī: A Study and Translation," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 25, no. 2 (2014): 113–137, esp. 132. See also the discussion in Section 2.0 (p. 93).

[115] In Chapter 88 of *The Meccan Revelations* ("The Sources of Law"), for example, Ibn ʿArabī upholds the value of speculative thought, especially with respect to confirming such fundamentals as God's existence and unity. See Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, (SD) III.245 and *Revelations I*, 67.

and metaphysical structures is resolutely deconstructive—a direct challenge to the syllogistic reasoning upon which the *falāsifa* stake their authority.

If Ḥamūya and Ibn ʿArabī reject rational methods as sufficient modes of producing and achieving ultimate knowledge, how then, we may ask, do they propose to communicate what they know to their readers? Moreover, what exactly is the character of the knowledge they aim to convey? As I will argue in the following sections of this chapter, a comparison of Ḥamūya and Ibn ʿArabī's work reveals a shared "relational" conception of the cosmos and analogous premises vis-à-vis the relationship between knowledge and action. For Saʿd al-Dīn and Muḥyī al-Dīn, true knowledge is premised upon a distinct experience of the world rather than a dispassionate analysis of its constituent parts. In producing knowledge about the nature of being, the two Sufis do not organize their texts as stable caches to be mined for discrete facts about God and the cosmos. Instead, Ḥamūya and Ibn ʿArabī develop discursive strategies that demand active engagement, directing readers toward specific ways of imagining and inhabiting the worlds around them. While I have focused thus far on the ways in which the two Sufis critique methods they claim fall short of real knowledge, I turn my attention now to the science of letters (*ʿilm al-ḥurūf*) as a primary strategy through which Saʿd al-Dīn and Muḥyī al-Dīn articulate their own ontological claims.

1.2. The Science of Letters: A Brief History

As several recent studies have undertaken excellent and extended treatments of the science of letters in Islamic intellectual history, I offer only a brief sketch here.[116] Interest in the hidden

[116] See Pierre Lory, *La science des lettres en islam* (Paris: Éditions Dervy, 2004); Denis Gril, "Introduction and Chapter

meanings of the Arabic alphabet arose early on, especially with respect to the unconnected letters (*muqaṭṭaʿāt*) that inaugurate twenty-nine of the Qurʾān's one hundred and fourteen *sūra*s.[117] The speculations of such early scholars as Ibn ʿAbbās (d. 687/688) and Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (d. 767) are preserved in the collections of exegetes like al-Ṭabarī (d. 923) and Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 938), whose anthologies demonstrate a plurality of divergent interpretations. Ibn ʿAbbās, for example, is recorded to have read the *muqaṭṭaʿāt* as names for the Qurʾān, titles of particular *sūra*s, abbreviations for Divine Names and Attributes, divine oaths, or even ciphers for God's Greatest Name.[118] As Nguyen notes, early exegetes evinced an eagerness to frame the Qurʾān and the *muqaṭṭaʿāt* as rich wellsprings of meaning, refusing to collapse interpretive possibilities into univocal readings.[119] Over the following centuries and into the modern period these creative possibilities were refined and expanded by a wide range of thinkers who adapted interpretations of the letters to fit new contexts and goals.[120]

The earliest frameworks that coupled the analysis of letters with cosmological speculation in an Islamic context are linked to al-Mughīra ibn Saʿīd (d. 737), an "extremist" Shīʿī (*ghālin*), reputed sorcerer, and pro-ʿĀlid revolutionary. Though executed by the Umayyad governor of Iraq and disavowed by later generations of Sunnīs and Shīʿīs alike, al-Mughīra's speculations on the

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Analysis for 'The Science of Letters,'" in *The Meccan Revelations, Volume II*, by Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1240), ed. Michel Chodkiewicz (New York: Pir Press, 2004), 127-147; Michael Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy in al-Andalus: Ibn Masarra, Ibn al-ʿArabī and the Ismāʿīlī Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 77-122; Noah Daedalus Gardiner, "Esotericism in a Manuscript Culture: Aḥmad al-Būnī and His Readers through the Mamlūk Period" (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 2014), 166-185; and Melvin-Koushki, The Quest," 171-216.

[117] See Martin Nguyen, "Exegesis of the *ḥurūf al-muqaṭṭaʿa*: Polyvalency in Sunnī Traditions of Qurʾanic Interpretation," *Journal of Qurʾanic Studies* 14, no. 2 (2012), 6 ff. and Gardiner, "Esotericism," 166-167.

[118] Nguyen, "Exegesis," 10.

[119] Nguyen, "Exegesis," 10.

[120] Nguyen, "Exegesis," 6.

Supreme Name and his vision of God as a luminous figure composed of letters from the Arabic alphabet played an important role in the lettrist discourses that proliferated among *ghulāt* circles of the 8th century.[121] In the 9th and 10th centuries, lettrist discourses were adopted and developed by a wide range of occultists, philosophers, Ismāʿīlīs, and other thinkers who drew upon Neoplatonic frameworks to fashion their cosmologies. Here, secondary sources highlight the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, Fāṭimid *dāʿī*s, and the corpus attributed to Jābir b. Ḥayyān—purported pupil of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 765)—as key touchstones in the history of Arabic lettrism.[122]

From the late 9th century onward, such Sufis as Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 896), al-Ḥallāj (d. 922), and al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī (d. between 905 and 910) adopted lettrist discourses to articulate esoteric modes of knowledge. Many of these early Sufi speculations are preserved only in Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī's (d. 1021) *Interpretation of the Letters' Meanings* (*Sharḥ maʿānī al-ḥurūf*), an addendum to his major Qurʾān commentary, the *Realities of Qurʾānic Exegesis (Ḥaqāʾiq al-tafsīr*). In his *Interpretation*, al-Sulamī records a wealth of Sufi statements about the letters of the Arabic alphabet, citing interpretations that touched upon their divine origins, their manifest and hidden meanings, their phenomenological "flavors," and their relationships with entities across multiple ontological registers.[123] Though al-Sulamī affords al-Ḥallāj pride of place in his *Interpretation* as the authority most frequently cited by name, he generally avoids the provocative alle-

[121] For more on al-Mugīra b. Saʿīd, see Lory, *Science*, 62-65; Melvin-Koushki, "The Quest," 174-175; Gardiner, "Esotericism," 170-171; W.F. Tucker, "Rebels and Gnostics; al-Muġīra Ibn Saʿīd and the Muġīriyya," *Arabica* 22, no. 1 (1975): 33–47; and Steven Wasserstrom, "The Moving Finger Writes: Mughīra b. Saʿīd's Islamic Gnosis and the Myths of Its Rejection," *History of Religions* 25, no. 1 (1985): 1–29.

[122] See the studies on the history of lettrism cited in note 116 on p. 54.

[123] Gerhard Böwering, "Sulamī's Treatise on the Science of Letters (*ʿilm al-ḥurūf*)," in *In the Shadow of Arabic: The Centrality of Language to Arabic Culture: Studies Presented to Ramzi Baalbaki on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. Bilal Orfali and Ramzi Baalbaki, Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 344, 348-350.

gorical interpretations found in texts like the *Ṭāwasīn,* favoring interpretative methods centered around alliterative connections instead.[124] In this regard, al-Sulamī likewise omits esoteric analyses attributed to Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq and Sahl al-Tustarī from his treatise.[125]

In al-Andalus, Ibn Masarra al-Jabalī (d. 931) forged a sophisticated mystical system that incorporated aspects of eastern Sufism, Neoplatonic philosophy, the science of letters, and allegorical interpretation of the Qurʾān.[126] This "father of Andalusī mysticism" rooted his worldview in the technique of *ʿibra* or *iʿtibār*, an intellectual and spiritual exercise that sought to contemplate God's signs in the universe as a means of experiencing higher ontological realities and acquiring divine knowledge.[127] As a burgeoning Andalusī mystical tradition began to form, its adherents rallied around this technique of contemplation or "crossing over," taking the name of *muʿtabirūn* as a reflection of their shared epistemological commitments.[128] From the 12th century onward, Andalusī and Maghribī mystics like Ibn Barrajān (d. 1141), Ibn al-ʿArīf (d. 1141), Ibn Qasī (d. 1151), and Abū Madyān (d. 1197) drew heavily upon the Neoplatonic-Hermetic approach pioneered by Ibn Masarra and his followers, resulting in an efflorescence of mystical lettrism in the Islamic West.[129] Ibn ʿArabī emerges from this Andalusī lineage, tracing his spiritual

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[124] Böwering, "Sulamī's Treatise," 350, 356.

[125] Böwering, "Sulamī's Treatise," 350, 356, 365.

[126] Yousef Casewit, *The Mystics of al-Andalus: Ibn Barrajān and Islamic Thought in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 23, 33-34. See also Ebstein, *Mysticism*, 8-32.

[127] Casewit, *Mystics*, 36. In other words, the technique of *ʿibra* purportedly allowed these mystics to discern the immaterial spiritual realities that they believed to govern physical existence.

[128] Casewit, *Mystics*, 24. As Casewit explains, the label originated among Ibn Masarra's followers, who self-identified as *muʿtabirūn*, rather than as philosophers, Sufis, or Masarrīs.

[129] Melvin-Koushki, "The Quest," 186. On these 12th-century mystics, see also Casewit, *Mystics*, 74 ff. and Mercedes García-Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform: Mahdis of the Muslim West* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 106-108. For Casewit, the *muʿtabirūn* represent an identifiably Andalusī mystical tradition characterized by an emphasis on the study of the Qurʾān and Sunnī *ḥadīth* corpora, as well as the influence of Ibn Masarra, Muslim Neoplatonism, the *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity,* and Fāṭimī-Ismāʿīlī thought. While he argues that Ibn Barrajān, Ibn ʿArīf, and Ibn Qasī should not be considered Sufis *in stricto sensu*, Casewit admits the boundaries between eastern Sufism and

genealogy back to Abū Madyān through ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Mahdawī (d. 1224). His *Commentary on the Doffing of the Sandals* (*Sharḥ Kitāb Khalʿ al-naʿlayn*) likewise demonstrates an intimate, albeit critical, understanding of Ibn Qasī's arcane ontological, messianic, and millenarian claims.[130]

1.3. Ḥamūya and the Science of Letters

An almost obsessive attention to letters is perhaps one of the most recurring and recognizable features of Ḥamūya's work. Although Saʿd al-Dīn's interests ran the gamut from Sufi devotion to the nature of being, most of his works frame the visual, sonic, and grammatical features of the Arabic language as ciphers for the fundamental secrets of the universe. In analyzing Saʿd al-Dīn's lettrist strategies, I offer a close reading of key passages that illuminate the shaykh's underlying epistemological commitments. I focus on how Saʿd al-Dīn exploits particular features of Arabic letters—shape, sound, feel, and semantic/allusive potential—to bring the hidden realities of the Divine Self-Disclosure to the forefront of readers' experiences. By continually dismantling and recontextualizing letters and their referents, Ḥamūya's performative strategies resist any and all hermeneutical fixity. The experience of Reality that he provokes is a dynamic play forces whose qualities and boundaries are endlessly reconfigured (and reconfigurable). In light of these decon-

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Andalusī mysticism were not rigid and notes that *muʿtabirūn* like Ibn Barrajān understood themselves to share many spiritual aspirations with their eastern counterparts. See Casewit, *Mystics*, 81-82.

[130] See Gardiner, "Esotericism," 184. For ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Mahdawī and his relationship with Ibn ʿArabī, see Gerald T. Elmore, "Shaykh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Mahdawī, Ibn al-ʿArabī's Mentor," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 121, no. 4 (2001): 593–613. For Ibn ʿArabī's *Commentary on the Doffing of the Sandals* (*Sharḥ Kitāb Khalʿ al-naʿlayn*), see Addas, *Quest*, 55-56.

For more on Ibn Qasī, see Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn Ibn Qasī, *Kitāb Khalʿ al-naʿlayn wa-iqtibās al-nūr min mawḍiʿ al-quddamayn*, ed. Muḥammad al-Amrānī (Marrakesh: M. al-Amrānī, 1997); David R. Goodrich, "A Ṣūfī Revolt in Portugal: Ibn Qasī and His *Kitāb Khalʿ al-naʿlayn*" (PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 1978); Michael Ebstein, "Was Ibn Qasī a Ṣūfī?," *Studia Islamica* 110 (2015): 196–232; and Ali Humayun Akhtar, *Philosophers, Sufis, and Caliphs: Politics and Authority from Cordoba to Cairo and Baghdad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 178-210.

structive tendencies, I focus my discussion on passages with an overarching thematic unity in order to maintain a sense of analytical clarity.

In *The Realities of the Letters* (*Ḥaqāʾiq al-ḥurūf*), Saʿd al-Dīn outlines a complex process through which the Real—referred to as the Point (*nuqṭa*)—becomes manifest in the world (see Figures 2 and 3). As the Point unfolds, It projects Its Reality through a series of triads:

> (i) the Holy Spirit (*rūḥ al-quddūs*), the Spirit of God (*rūḥ Allāh*), and the Faithful Spirit (*rūh al-amīn*)
>
> (ii) the Existing Soul (*nafs-i wājida*), the Single Soul (*nafs-i wāḥida*), and the Seizing Soul (*nafs-i wākhida*)
>
> (iii) prophecy (*nubuwwa*), sainthood (*wilāya*), and divinity (*ilāhiyya*)
>
> (iv) seeing (*baṣr*), hearing (*samʿ*), and knowing (*ʿilm*)[131]

These triplicate projections of the Point, Ḥamūya continues, merge to form a single principle, which he calls the Divinity (*ilāhiyya*) and the letter *alif*. To illustrate how Divinity/*alif* gives rise to a multiplicity of created beings, the *Realities* outlines two modes of disclosure:

> (i) Divinity (*alif*) projects its being through the Blown Spirit (the letter *bāʾ*) out of which the Intellect (the letter *tāʾ*) emerges. The Intellect, in turn, gives rise to Adam as the letter *thāʾ*, whose three dots represent the triplicate principles that make up the divine *alif* (see Figure 2).[132]
>
> (ii) Divinity projects its being according to a series of tetrads. Out of *alif*, *lām*, *lām*,

[131] Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Ḥaqāʾiq al-ḥurūf*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, MS Petrev Paşa 606 (P), fol. 13b.

[132] Ḥamūya, *Ḥaqāʾiq*, (P) fols. 13b-14a.

and *hā'*—the four letters of the name Allāh—the Heart (*qalb*), Intellect (*'āql*), Spirit (*rūḥ*), and Soul (*nafs*) emerge. From this tetrad, Ḥamūya forges chains of being that trace each principle across macrocosmic, microcosmic, angelic, ritual, and sacred-historical registers (see Figure 3).[133]

Despite minor variations (see Figures 1 and 9), Ḥamūya outlines similar frameworks in *The Book of the Point* (*Kitāb al-Nuqṭa*) and *The Lamp of Sufism.* Rather than attempting to harmonize the ways in which each of these texts diverge, I direct my attention here to an analysis of the fundamental lettrist metaphor common to all three.[134] By illustrating creation in terms of written linguistic phenomena, Ḥamūya articulates a sophisticated relational understanding of the Divine Essence and the cosmos; one with profound implications for the production and reception of knowledge as he understands it.

Sa'd al-Dīn's metaphor of the point and the letters operates according to two primary registers, both of which are grounded in the principles of Arabic and Persian writing. We catch a glimpse of Ḥamūya's first metaphorical register in his discussion of primordial projection of the Point. In *The Lamp of Sufism*, he explains:

ونقطه حقیقی اصلی یکی است و اینها که گفته شد مراتب او اند و محلّ ظهور نور حضور وی اند و اوست که بصنوف حروف در می آید از برای کشوف اوّل مظهر او در حروف الف است

The original, true Point is one. Those [triplicities] that have been mentioned are

[133] Ḥamūya, *Ḥaqā'iq*, (P) fols. 15a-18a.

[134] In using the term metaphor, I do not to suggest that Ḥamūya's lettrist ontological scheme is "merely" rhetorical or allegorical; his relational understanding of both knowledge and being obviates the premises of such a distinction. Instead, I analyze Ḥamūya's work through the lens of metaphor as a way of illuminating how his attention to the allusive potential of language underscores fundamental ontological and epistemological claims. Here, I take methodological inspiration from the work of Hans Blumenberg. See e.g., idem, *Paradigms for a Metaphorology*, trans. Robert Savage (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010) and idem, *Shipwreck with Spectator: Paradigm of a Metaphor for Existence*, trans. Steven Rendall (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1997).

> ranks of [that Point]—the locus for the light of Its presence to become manifest. By means of disclosures, [the Point] comes to be in the varieties of the letters. The first place of its manifestation is in the letter *alif*.[135]

Here, Ḥamūya's discussion of the Real Point, Its triplicate projections, and Its manifestation in the form of the divine *alif* resonates with Neopythagorean theories, yet textures these processes through sustained allusions to the physical process of writing.[136] In medieval Arabic scripts, the point is foundational, yet never exists by itself. Instead, it becomes manifest only through the act of producing and differentiating letters.[137] Through an act of extension, the initial point of the nib pressing down on the page is drawn out into a line—that is, the *alif*.[138] Following Saʿd al-Dīn, we may imagine that in moving from point to line, the point is not multiplied but rather expanded or projected, such that its hidden attributes or ranks become discernible in the line. As an extended line, the *alif* then forms the foundation for all other written letters as it is twisted, bent, looped, and curved into their shapes. While each act of writing begins with a single point, the point itself only becomes visible when the pen is set in motion; not as point *qua* point, but rather as an extension of its latent qualities.

In the second register of Ḥamūya's metaphor, the point is used as a means to differentiate between letters. Again in *The Lamp of Sufism*, Saʿd al-Dīn reveals:

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[135] Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 57-58.

[136] For an illustration of the following discussion, see Figure 4. For a brief summary of the Neopythagorean conception of the one and the numbers, see Cyril V. Uy II, "Introduction to Epistle 49," in *On God and the World: An Arabic Critical Edition and English Translation of Epistles 49-51*, by Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ (Oxford: Oxford University Press in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2019), 8-9.

[137] This, of course, excludes the various technical symbols used to organize manuscripts and to produce figures and diagrams.

[138] See also Gril's notes on Ibn ʿArabī and the *alif* in *Revelations II*—passage on 158, note on 203n199.

پس الف مرکّب باشد از اعراب که آن اختلاف آخر کلمه است به رفع و نصب و خفض و از نقطه که آن موجب است تمییز را بعضی از بعضی و حرفی از حرفی . . .

[The *alif*] is composed of the *iʿrāb*—i.e., marking difference at the end of a word according to the nominative, accusative, and genitive case—and the point, which distinguishes between some things and others as well as between some letters and others...[139]

Ḥamūya's understanding of the point as a principle of differentiation likewise operates according to the logic of written language. Without the point, the Arabic letterforms cannot be distinguished from one another; without the letterforms, one has no occasion to draw the differentiating point.[140] In this context, the point *qua* point always stands outside of the letterforms, yet its varying spatial relationships with their shapes allows them to be distinguished from one another. While Saʿd al-Dīn only offers brief accounts of this metaphorical register, its logic illuminates important aspects of his ontological and epistemological vision, as we will see below.

Finally, Saʿd al-Dīn expands his linguistic-ontological framework beyond the point and the *alif*, characterizing the multiplicity of the cosmos as a proliferation of written words. He explains:

فی الجمله نقطه به الف درآمد و الف بمراتب حروف درآمد و حروف کلمات گشت و کلمات کلام شد و کلام صحف و طومار گشت و این مجموع آیینه صفات گشتند و صفات مشکات انوار اسرار ذات شدند و از کثرت روی به وحدت نهادند و از تفرقه بجمعیّت رسیدند

In sum, the point enters into the *alif* and the *alif* enters into the ranks of letters. The letters become words and the words become a book and pages. This totality becomes a mirror for the Attributes, the Attributes themselves being niches for

[139] Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 135.

[140] Here, I bracket various forms of writing that deliberately avoid the use of points for effect.

> the lights of the Essence's secrets. From multiplicity they turn towards unity, and from dispersion they reach wholeness.[141]

Read as a whole, Ḥamūya's metaphor of written language illuminates complex and often contradictory character of the Divine Self-Disclosure. While the Real forms the foundation of all being, Its Attributes can only be recognized through acts of extension and transformation that magnify, warp, or otherwise distort as they reveal. At the same time, the Real is known through distance, difference, and separation. Just as letters are distinguished by their spatial relationships with the point, so too are beings identified through their relationships with the Real; marked as entities by the very fact of their separation and differentiated according to the specific relationships they reflect.

If we follow the implications of Ḥamūya's metaphor beyond his explicit comments, a relational ontological and epistemological framework emerges. Saʿd al-Dīn characterizes the entirety of the universe—from the highest metaphysical principles to the lowest terrestrial creatures—as an infinite collection of letters and words. To understand the meaning of any entity, the metaphor suggests, one must "read" it in the context of other beings. Taken on their own, letters—and thus entities—only become intelligible when brought together and inflected to form words. These words, in turn, are capable of expressing a rich range of meanings—affective, conceptual, abstract, sensible—as they are fashioned into sentences, passages of prose, and couplets of poetry. As the same letters and words are brought together in new relationships, new layers of meaning emerge. Finally, the totality of these diverse meanings are integrated into the pages of a single universal text. Such a framework demands a dynamic approach to the knowledge of indi-

[141] Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 136.

vidual entities and metaphysical structures; an "ontological fluency" familiar with the infinite language games of cosmic discourse.

In his more advanced lettrist discussions, Ḥamūya uses performative strategies to bewilder his readers, pulling any sense of conceptual stability out from under them. Meaning, these strategies suggest, arises only from relationships between entities and these relationships are *always* in flux. To illustrate how Ḥamūya performs the vertiginous experience of Divine Self-Disclosure, I will focus on a rather lengthy excerpt from *The Lamp of Sufism*. In what follows, Saʿd al-Dīn deploys an extended lettrist meditation on the letter *kāf* to explore how the Real becomes hidden by the very mechanisms that make It manifest. He explains:

(۱) و بسط نور اللّه ظهور کلمه فاللّه اصل اللّه از ﴿إنّي أنا﴾ باشد و ﴿إنّي أنا اللّه﴾ سه الف است و و دو نون سه الف اشارت است به استوی و احاطت و ارادت و آن دو نون اشارت به دو نفس و آن نبوّت است و ولایت و نبوّت صورت قوّت است و ولایت مظهر قدرت و به قوّت فتح دایره ملکوتی می کند و به قدرت فتح دایره جبروتی و اشخاص دایره ملکوتی ابراراند و اشخاص دایره جبروتی اشرار و ابرار از طرف معروفات و اشرار از طرف منکورات [اند] و هر نفسی را از این سایقی و شهیدی همراه است و سایق همه نبی است و شهید ولی چنان که می فرماید ﴿کلّ نفس معها سائق وشهید﴾ آن سه الف ﴿إنّي أنا﴾ محتجب اند به حرف کاف و کاف کسوت ﴿کن﴾ کلّ کون کل کلمه انسانی است

(۲) و هر الف از آن مرکّب است از سه نقطه و آن سمع است و بصر و نطق و روح اللّه و روح القدس و روح الامین [و][142] واحده و واجده و واخذه و اماره و لوّامه و مطمئنّه [و] علم یقین و عین یقین و حق یقین و نبوّت و ولایت و الهیّت و آدم و حوّا و اولاد و شمس و قمر و کواکب و بحر ونهر و و عین و ذات و صفات و اسماء

(۳) کاف کسوت این کلّیّات است امّا کون کاف وقتی روشن شود که کاف کفر به کاف فکر

[142] The interpolated conjunctive *wāw*s in this paragraph are my own additions.

برخیزد وکشف گردد و ظهور کنز مخفی از کاف کنت به کن پدید آید جمله مکوّنات در کاف ممکن است و متکوّن ظاهراً و باطناً وسراً و جهراً کاف صورت شیخوخیّت الف است و سه نقطه گشته است شاخ الف و صار کافاً پس به حقیقت مخزن کنز مخفی کاف است

(٤) و کاف کلمه کون حقّ است و الف کاف احدیّت است و فاء فردیّت است و فوقیّت و قاف و کاف عرض بلد کرار [است] که شیطب و قسطب گویند و هر دو یک معنی دارد

(٥) پس قاف قدرت و قوّت کاف است و قرار مکین و قول مبین و کیمیای سعادت ابدی و اقبال سرمدی هم در وی است کمال کلّی و کفایت جزوی و کبریای کبیر و که اشیا و کرور نعمت و کرم جمله ازاوست و کشف ستور [نیز از اوست] چنان که می فرماید إنّ في جوف ابن آدم لمضغة إذا صلحت صلح سائر البدن و إذا فسدت فسد سائر البدن ألاّ وهي القلب

(i) The unfurling of God's light is the manifestation of the words "So, God..." (*fa-Llāh*). The word "God" stems from "Verily, I am." "Verily, I am God" (Q. 28:30) has three *alif*s and two *nūns*. The three *alifs* are tokens of mounting (*istiwā'*), encompassing (*iḥāṭat*), and volition (*irādat*), while the two *nūn*s are tokens of the two souls (*nafs*)—i.e., prophecy and sainthood.[143] Prophecy is the form of power and sainthood is the locus where potency becomes manifest. The circle of *malakūt* is opened with power and the circle of *jabarūt* is opened with potency. The individuals in the circle of *malakūt* are the righteous and those in the circle of *jabarūt* are the wicked. The righteous stem from the side of what is known (*ma'rūfāt*) and the wicked stem from the side of what is denied (*mankūrāt*). Each of these souls will have a driver and witness—the driver is the prophet and the witness is the saint—just as He says, "Each soul will have a driver and a witness." (Q. 50:21) The three *alifs* of "Verily, I am" are veiled by the letter *kāf*. For all of existence, the *kāf* of the garment "Be!" is the word of the human being.

(ii) Each of those *alifs* is composed of three points. These are: hearing, seeing, and speaking; the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, and the Faithful Spirit; the singular, seizing, and existing [soul]; the commanding [soul], accusing [soul], and the [soul] at rest; the knowledge of certainty, the essence of certainty, and the truth of certainty; prophecy, sainthood, and divinity; Adam, Eve, and [their] children; the sun, the moon, and the planets; the sea, the river, and the fountain; and the essence, the attributes, and the names.

(iii) *Kāf* is the garment (*kiswat*) of these universals (*kulliyyāt*). However, when the existence of *kāf* (*kawn-i kāf*) becomes evident, the *kāf* of unbelief (*kāf-i kufr*) rises up to the *kāf* of contemplation (*kāf-i fikr*) and becomes unveiling (*kashf gardad*).

[143] I translate *istiwā'* as "mounting" here, since Ḥamūya usually uses the term with reference to the Qur'ānic verses in which God mounts the throne. See e.g., Q. 25:59.

> The appearance of the hidden treasure (*kanz-i makhfī*) becomes manifest on account of *kāf*'s shift from "I was" (*kuntu*) to "Be!" (*kun*). In *kāf*, the totality of generated beings (*mukawwanāt*) are contingent (*mumkin*) and brought into being (*mutakawwan*) in a way that is manifest and hidden, secret and open. *Kāf* is thus the form of *alif*'s shaykhliness (*shaykhūkhiyyat*)—i.e., when it has become three dots (*sih nuqṭa gashtih ast*). "When the *alif* reaches full maturity (*shākha*), it becomes *kāf*." So, in reality, the storehouse of the hidden treasure (*bih ḥaqīqat makhzan-i kanz-i makhfī*) is *kāf*.
>
> (iv) The *kāf* of the word [*kāf*] (*kāf-i kalimat*) is the being of the Real (*kawn-i ḥaqq*). The *alif* of *kāf* is unity (*aḥadiyyat*). Its *fā'* is uniqueness (*fardiyyat*) and supremacy (*fawqiyyat*), and *qāf* and *kāf* are the latitude lines of the tiny bead (*'irḍ-i balad-i karār*). These are called Shayṭab and Qasṭab, for each of the two have a single meaning.
>
> (v) So, the *qāf* of potency and power (*qudrat wa-quwwat*) is *kāf* and the firm dwelling (*qarār-i makīn*), the clear speech (*qawl-i mubīn*), the alchemy of happiness eternal (*kīmīyā-yi sa'ādat-i abadī*), and the endless arrival (*iqbāl-i sarmadī*) are all within it. The universal perfection (*kamāl-i kullī*), particular sufficiency (*kafāyat-i juz'ī*), magnificent grandeur (*kibriyā-yi kabīr*), the core of things (*kunh-i ashyā'*), the return of grace (*karūr-i ni'mat*), and the nobility of the whole (*karm-i jumlat*) come from [*kāf*], as does the removal of covers (*kashf-i sutūr*). This is just as [the Prophet] said, "Within the son of Adam is a morsel of flesh (*muḍgha*); when it is sound, so is the rest of the body, and when it is corrupt, so is the rest of the body. Certainly, this [morsel] is the heart (*al-qalb*)."[144]

As noted above, the passage as a whole outlines the simultaneous manifestation and concealment of the Real as It unfolds into the world and marks the special role of the human being in this Divine Self-Disclosure. The opening paragraph likewise offers an extended aside into the nature of prophecy and sainthood, positing the two as primordial principles linking Divine Attributes (mounting, encompassing, and volition), higher ontological realms (*malakūt* and *jabārūt*), and the salvation of individual souls (drivers and witnesses for the righteous and the wicked).[145] While the themes of prophecy and sainthood will be analyzed in depth in Chapter 4, it is impor-

[144] Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 81-82.

[145] For more on *malakūt* and *jabārūt*, see note 175 on p. 80.

tant to note here that even Ḥamūya's most abstract cosmogonies are inextricable from questions of soteriology and human perfection. Rather than disciplining this passage into a coherent narrative, situating its technical terminology within an overarching metaphysical framework, or distilling its elements into a series of dogmatic assertions, I will concentrate in what follows on Ḥamūya's use of sound, citation, and allusion as critical features of his textual performance.

As he explores the tension between the manifest and the hidden, Saʿd al-Dīn manipulates *kāf* as a sound, repeating and reorienting the letter *qua* name (*kāf*) and the letter *qua* phoneme ([k]) in diverse permutations. As we work through paragraph 3, for example, we hear *kāf kiswat-i īn kulliyyat, kawn-i kāf, kih kāf-i kufr, kāf-i fikr, kashf, kanz, kāf-i kuntu, kun*. The same paragraph finds Ḥamūya drifting between *kāf* and neighboring palatals *khā'*, *gā'*, and *qāf*, presenting readers with *kashf gardad*, *kanz-i mukhfī*, *shaykhūkhiyyat*, *nuqṭa gashtih*, *shākha*, and finally *bih ḥaqīqat makhzan-i kanz-i makhfī*. In paragraph 4, he breaks *kāf* into its constituent parts—that is, *kāf*, *alif*, and *fā'*—, associating each of these letters with specific Divine Attributes.[146] The letter *qāf* in the Attribute of supremacy (*fawqiyyat*) inspires another series of shifting palatals in paragraph 5: *qāf*, *qudrat, quwwat, kāf*, *qarār-i makīn, qawl*, *kīmīyā', iqbāl, kamāl, kafāya, kibrāya, kunh, karūr, karm, kashf, qalb*. Recited *clara voce*, the constant repetition of *kāf*, its constituent parts, and adjacent palatal consonants allows readers to hear and feel how cosmic principles are continually broken apart, transmuted, reoriented, and refashioned in new contexts through the Divine Self-Disclosure.

Ḥamūya couples this sonic play with myriad allusions and citations. Apart from clear ref-

[146] For the technique of breaking apart words into constituent letters as a hermeneutical strategy in Muslim and Jewish exegetical texts, see Sara Sviri, "Kun—The Existence-Bestowing Word in Islamic Mysticism: A Survey of Texts on the Creative Power of Language," in The Poetics of Grammar and the Metaphysics of Sound and Sign, ed. David Shulman and Sergio La Porta (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 48-49.

erences to the Qur'ānic verse "Verily, I am God" (Q. 28:30), paragraphs 1 and 3 allude to the passages in which God creates through speech—that is, "He says 'Be,' and it is" (e.g., Q. 2:117, 3:47, 3:59, 6:73, 14:60). Paragraph 3 likewise includes an allusion to the hidden treasure *ḥadīth*, a favorite among medieval Sufis. As the letter *kāf* moves from the word *kuntu* ("I was") to the word *kun* ("Be!"), the hidden treasure—i.e., the Real—becomes manifest, albeit cloaked in the garment (*kiswat*) of creation and, ultimately, the letter *kāf* itself.[147] On the one hand, Ḥamūya's citation adds an affective dimension to the Divine Self-Disclosure ("I was an unknown treasure, yet *longed* to be known"), encouraging readers to understand the play of manifestation and concealment through the drama of emotional experience. On the other, the shaykh's Qur'ānic allusions intimate a link between readers' own voices (here, repeating the letter *kāf*) and the divine speech (*kun*) through which the entire cosmos is brought into being.

Saʿd al-Dīn textures his discussion with allusions to concepts from outside the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* corpora as well. Paragraph 3, for example, expands Ḥamūya's triplicate projections of the point while also drawing upon such philosophical terminology as universals (*kulliyāt*), generated creatures (sing. *mukawwan*), and contingent beings (sing. *mumkin*).[148] The shaykh sprinkles the passage as a whole with an array of obscure concepts and technical terms—*malakūt* and *jabarūt*,

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[147] The hidden treasure *ḥadīth* is widely attested in Sufi works, yet absent from major *ḥadīth* collections. The *ḥadīth* is commonly formulated as follows: "I was an unknown treasure, yet longed to be known." See also Ibn ʿArabī's citation in Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, ed. Abū al-ʿAlā ʿAfīfī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, n.d.), 203 and idem, *Ibn al ʿArabi: The Bezels of Wisdom*, trans. R.W.J. Austin (Mahwah: Paulist, 1980), 257.

According to Moeen Afnani, the oldest attestation of the *ḥadīth* can be found in ʿAbd Allāh Anṣarī's (d. 1089) *Generations of the Sufis* (*Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*). See Moeen Afnani, "Unraveling the Mystery of the Hidden Treasure: The Origin and Development of a Ḥadīth Qudsī and Its Application in Ṣūfī Doctrine" (PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2011), 10.

[148] The triplicate projections of the point outlined in the *Miṣbāḥ* most closely resemble the scheme presented in *The Book of the Point* (*Kitāb al-Nuqṭa*). See Figure 1 and Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Kitāb al-Nuqṭa,* Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehid Ali Paşa MS 1364, fols. 76b-77a.

the maturation and visual transformation of the letter *alif*, Shayṭab and Qasṭab, universal perfection and particular sufficiency—, many of which are mentioned, but never fully explained. Finally, paragraph 5 includes a brief reference to al-Ghazālī's (d. 1111) *Alchemy of Happiness* (*Kīmīyā-yi saʿādat*), whose opening chapters probe the nature of the human heart.[149] Here, the microcosmic heart mirrors the macrocosmic *kāf* as a storehouse for the entirety of the Divine Attributes. As in paragraph 1, Saʿd al-Dīn emphasizes the human being as the focal point of creation, the nexus through which cosmic processes (and lettrist strategies) intersect. Ḥamūya underscores this intertextual allusion with a *ḥadīth* outlining role of the heart in the body, deploying the citation as a way to propel his readers toward his a sustained discussion of the heart in the following section of the text.

While it is clear that Ḥamūya's discussion outlines a general progression from unity to multiplicity, the knowledge he produces about the nature of being is not of a systematic or logical quality. One could, of course, stabilize elements of the passage to construct a general metaphysical scaffolding, collating this conceptual edifice with comments scattered throughout *The Lamp of Sufism* and other texts to discern particular patterns of cosmogenesis. Inconsistencies could be glossed, concepts explained, and technical terms defined to clarify and illuminate the features of "Ḥamūya's metaphysical system." Saʿd al-Dīn's textual strategies, however, belie an epistemological position that defines itself *against* such system building. Instead, these modes of exposition offer readers an experiential knowledge of how the Real becomes manifest in the world through a textual performance of a limitless Divine Self-Disclosure. By coupling a dynamic set of aural transformations with an array of fleeting scriptural, intertextual, and technical allusions, Ḥamūya

[149] Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Kīmīyā-yi saʿādat*, ed. Ḥusayn Khidīw-Jam (Tehran: Sharikat-i Intishārāt-i ʻIlmī wa Farhangī, 2001), 15 ff.

effectively pulls the reader in several directions at once. Each word in the passage analyzed above offers a world of interpretive possibilities, presenting itself as a potential site for excursus, innuendo, or lettrist transmutation *ad infinitum*. At the same time, by spinning these shifting forms and associations around a single set of symbols and sounds, Ḥamūya balances the experience of dynamic transformation with a sense of sonic, visual, and corporeal-experiential unity.

Occasionally, Ḥamūya *does* seem to operate in a systematic manner. Despite a few modifications within and across texts, he offers a fairly consistent development of the cosmogonic framework centered around triplicate projections of the Point. Likewise, such treatises as *The Epistle on the Explanation of the Expansion of Absolute Existence Upon the Sites of Manifestation of the Existing Beings* (*Risāla fī bayān inbisāṭ al-wujūd al-muṭlaq ʿalā maẓāhir al-kā'ināt*) define and explain key metaphysical concepts in a methodical and fairly straightforward fashion (see Figure 5).[150] If we work across or even within single texts, however, it becomes clear that Saʿd al-Dīn's ostensibly systematic metaphysical arguments almost always entail the possibility of transformation or abrogation. We have already noted the two incommensurable mechanisms through which Divinity is said to unfold in *The Realities of the Letters* (see Figures 2 and 3). The same text includes yet another framework in which Divinity is bifurcated according to its higher and lower aspects, incorporating elements from previous schemes with little concern for harmonizing discrepancies (see Figure 6). Moving between treatises, these differences can be even more jarring—*The Levels of Joy* and *The Book of the Beloved* do away with projections of the point altogether, outlining ontological hierarchies founded upon systems of overlapping darknesses and concen-

[150] Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Risāla fī bayān inbisāṭ al-wujūd al-muṭlaq ʿalā maẓāhir al-kā'ināt*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, MS Hacı Selim Ağa 491, fols. 1b-3b.

tric lettrist circles, respectively (see Figures 7 and 8).[151]

Even technical terms are subject to revision and reinterpretation. In the *Lamp of Sufism*, for example, Ḥamūya divides the divine *alif* according to four pillars (sing. *rukn*, pl. *arkān*)—form (*sūrat*), likeness (*shakl*), shape (*hay'at*), and model (*mithāl*)—which he then maps according to a fourfold schema similar to the ones we have already encountered (see Figure 9).[152] Here, Sa'd al-Dīn suggests, the four pillars stand on equal ontological footing, serving as the foundation for several other four-fold principles. *The Levels of Joy* weaves these same pillars into a new framework, developing a complex understanding of affinity rooted in notions of relation (*nisba*), relationship (*munāsaba*), and relationality (*tanāsub*) (see Figure 10).[153] Ḥamūya links likeness to relationship, shape to relationality, and model to relation, such that the perfect form unites all three modes.[154] While the shaykh refuses to collapse likeness, shape, and model into form, he nonetheless suggests an ontological hierarchy in which form is set *above* the other three principles.[155]

Apart from these technical discrepancies, *The Lamp of Sufism* and *The Levels of Joy* orient form, likeness, shape, and model within divergent webs of cosmic correspondence. While Figures 1, 9, and 10 offer detailed presentations of each scheme, I have epitomized the most salient fea-

[151] See Figures 6 and 7. While some of the principles associated with the three darknesses in *The Levels of Joy* resemble the triplicate projections of the point outlined in *The Book of the Point*, there are several inconsistencies between the two schemes that resist easy harmonization. *The Book of the Point* groups Essence (*dhāt*), Attributes (*ṣifāt*), and Disposition (*khalq*) within the same rank, for example, but *The Fountains of Joy* groups Attributes and Dispositions with Names (*asmā'*), associating Essence with another group consisting of Existence (*wujūd*) and "What is Named" (*al-musammā*).

[152] Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, esp. 58 and 96-97.

[153] Ḥamūya, *Marātib*, (P) fols. 15b ff. and (DK) fols. 80a ff.

[154] Ḥamūya, *Marātib*, (P) fol. 16a and (DK) fol. 81a.

[155] Ḥamūya *Marātib*, (P) fols. 17b-18a and (DK) fol. 83a.

tures below:

(i) *The Lamp of Sufism*[156]

Form—Heart—Gabriel

Likeness—Soul—Azrael

Shape—Spirit—Israfel

Model—Intellect—Michael

Essence—Blackness—Holy Spirit

Attributes—Whiteness—Spirit of God

Dispositions—Redness—Faithful Spirit

(ii) *The Levels of Joy*[157]

Form—Contains aspects of likeness, shape, and model

Likeness—Intellect—Holy Spirit

Shape—Heart—Faithful Spirit

Model—Face—Spirit of God

Azrael—Blackness, whiteness, and redness

[156] See Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 58, 95-97.

[157] See Ḥamūya, (P) fols. 11a ff. and (DK) fols. 12b ff.

Gabriel—Blackness—Holiness—Action—Intellect

Michael—Whiteness—Capacity—Essence—Spirit

Israfel—Redness—The Face—Prayer—Soul

Unlike the *Lamp of Sufism*, which incorporates complimentary mechanisms of threefold and fourfold projection (see Figures 1 and 9), *The Levels of Joy* consistently sketches unique frameworks that reorient elements from the other two modes. Not only do these new schemas blur otherwise distinct webs of affinity, they do so in a way that disrupts or directly contradicts the fundamental connections upon which other models are based.

In short, while Ḥamūya may deploy the science of letters as the most succinct way to articulate his ontological vision, his manipulation of concepts, correspondences, and technical terminology demonstrate analogous epistemological commitments. Saʿd al-Dīn's endless deployment, transformation, and reprisal of letters, ideas, and allusions entices readers with the illusion of a stable order, the possibility that each element may be defined, mapped, or glossed to illuminate a profound, all-encompassing secret. The deeper one delves into his work, however, the more Ḥamūya rearranges the pieces. Each eureka moment is marked with a sense of déjà vu, sending readers scrambling back to old landmarks, only to find new paths and possibilities in their place. Here, ontology and epistemology are inextricably intertwined. As is the case with the cosmos, there is no knowable "object" at the core of Ḥamūya's ontological speculation—no doctrine or dogma, no grand fact, no positive creed to be confirmed or denied. Knowledge of the Real—like the Real Itself—is only accessible through the infinite, dynamic, and incommensurable relationships that arise among created entities. Through performative language, the shaykh brings the underlying qualities—the *kayfiyya* or "howness"—of these relationships to the fore-

front of readers' experiences in order that they too may recognize and engage directly with the Real at all levels of Its manifestation. The knowledge that Saʿd al-Dīn produces is an epistemological sensibility that allows one to see the Real and partake in the dynamic modes of Its Self-Disclosure across each and every context, discourse, and mode of expression. For Ḥamūya, to truly know is to cultivate a unified subjectivity made manifest through an infinite expressive potential; to become a creative nexus through which the Self-Disclosure is continually reenacted. Saʿd al-Dīn is thus writing the world; not as a Platonic *mimêsis*, but as a creative production of reality enacted through the mechanisms of the Divine Self-Disclosure.[158]

1.4. The Science of Letters in Ibn ʿArabī's *Meccan Revelations*

I turn now to Ibn ʿArabī's lettrism, a topic that has already garnered some attention in contemporary secondary literature.[159] The science of letters represents a central feature of Muḥyī al-Dīn's work as the subject of several short treatises and an overture of sorts for his *Meccan Revelations*.[160] Pierre Lory explains:

> If speculations on the spiritual significance of the letters in Ibn ʿArabī's writings are so rich in meaning (*prégnantes*) that he places them as an extensive introduction to his *Meccan Revelations*, it is because they occupy a central role in the process of spiritual transformation that is, when all is said and done, the ultimate

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[158] For Platonic *mimêsis*, see Plato, *The Republic*, Book X, 596e-602c in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 1202-1206.

[159] See e.g., Lory, *Science*, 115-136; Gril, "Introduction"; and Ebstein, *Mysticism*, 77-122. See also Elizabeth Sartell, Mystical Philosophy: Ibn al-ʿArabī's Lettrist Cosmogony," (PhD Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2020).

[160] Denis Gril, "Introduction," 107.

For Ibn ʿArabī's shorter treatises on the science of letters, see e.g., *The Book of the Letter Alif* (*Kitāb al-Alif*), *The Book of the Letters Mīm, Wāw, and Nūn* (*Kitāb al-Mīm wa-l-wāw wa-l-nūn*) and *The Book of the Letter Yā'* (*Kitāb al-Yā'*) in Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī, *Rasā'il Ibn ʿArabī*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Nimrī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2001) and *The Book of the Letter Bā'* (*Kitāb al-Bā'*) in Osman Yahia, *Histoire et Classification de l'oeuvre d'Ibn ʿArabi*, 2 vols.(Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1964), I.180–81.

> goal of the Shaykh al-Akbar's entire *oeuvre*—not mere elaborations of speculative doctrine.[161]

As Lory points out, Ibn ʿArabī deploys the science of letters with a pointed purpose: to affect and even transform his readers. I build upon Lory and others like Denis Gril, Michel Chodkiewicz, James Morris, Michael Sells, and William Chittick, coupling their findings with my own insights in order to sketch the contours of the shaykh's lettrist strategies as a counterpoint for Ḥamūya's work.[162] In what follows, I focus primarily on how Ibn ʿArabī shifts between various conceptual frameworks, organizational schemes, and modes of expression to articulate how the letters of the Arabic alphabet relate to fundamental structures of being.[163] Within each frame of reference, he builds complex worlds whose minutiae proliferate even beyond the point of exhaustion. The shaykh thus performs the endless dynamism of Reality by overwhelming his readers with a re-

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[161] Lory, *Science*, 127. See also Karen Holding's English translation of the passage in Pierre Lory, "The Symbolism of Letters and Language in the Work of Ibn ʿArabī," trans. Karen Holding, *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn ʿArabi Society* 23 (1998): 32–42.

[162] See the introductions written by Gril, Chodkiewicz, Morris, and Chittick in Ibn ʿArabī, *Revelations I* and *Revelations II*. See also Sells, *Mystical Languages*; Chittick, *Self-Disclosure*; and idem, *Sufi Path*; Lory, *Science*; Michel Chodkiewicz, *An Ocean Without Shore: Ibn ʿArabī, The Book, and the Law*, trans. David Streight (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993); James W. Morris, "How to Study the Futūḥāt: Ibn ʿArabi's Own Advice," in *Muhyiddin Ibn ʿArabi: A Commemorative Volume*, ed. Stephen Hirtenstein and Michael Tiernan (Rockport, MA: Element for the Muhyiddin Ibn ʿArabi Society, 1993), 73–123; and idem, "Ibn ʿArabi's 'Esotericism': The Problem of Spiritual Authority," *Studia Islamica*, no. 71 (1990): 37–64. The work of Michael Ebstein and Sara Sviri have also been crucial in this regard. See Ebstein, *Mysticism* and Sviri, "Kun," 35–67.

[163] In my analysis of Ibn ʿArabī's performative modes of expression, I am particularly indebted to Michael Sells' *Mystical Languages of Unsaying*. Sells argues that Muḥyī al-Dīn uses apophatic discourse to produce "meaning events" that perform the fundamental tension at the heart of both creation and mystical union. See e.g., Sells, *Mystical Languages*, 10. As I will argue below, the meaning Ibn ʿArabī's works seeks to provoke is not an "objective fact," but rather an experience of how the Real manifests in the world; a sense of what the world is *like*. In this respect, Sells' unparalleled attention to Ibn ʿArabī's use of language, especially his virtuosic manipulation and subversion of grammatical, semantic, and discursive expectations, is fundamental to my own understanding of the shaykh's writing. Building upon Sells' work, I analyze Ibn ʿArabī's strategies with an eye toward their broader epistemological and social implications. By reading Ibn ʿArabī in conversation with Ḥamūya, I underscore the particularities of each figure's approach, illuminating how these textual performances could be used to cultivate *differing* experiences of Reality and to contest authority among Sufi colleagues. Likewise, by highlighting the embodied dimensions of the two Sufis' strategies, I theorize a way to link textual performances to specific socio-historical stakes and practices.

lentless examination of discrete yet infinitely dense conceptual frames. To highlight the performative complexity and universalizing ambitions of the shaykh's work, my analysis deliberately reproduces some of the onerous technicality that characterizes his lettrist approach. Unlike Ḥamūya, Ibn ʿArabī is eager to demonstrate his facility with the logic internal to diverse fields of learning, deploying a mastery of these technical details as evidence of his totalizing hermeneutical sensibilities.

While Ibn ʿArabī devotes several individual treatises to the science of letters, *The Meccan Revelations* contains some of his most sustained and synthetic lettrist expositions.[164] The opening of the text's second chapter ("On the Knowledge of the Ranks of Consonants and Vowels...") maps an intricate lettrist-astrological cosmogenesis, charting a system of 261 celestial spheres whose rotations and interactions produce the letters of the Arabic alphabet.[165] Muḥyī al-Dīn organizes these letters and spheres into four ranks:

(i) Letters brought into being by seven spheres—*alif, zāy, lām* (three letters)

(ii) Letters brought into being by eight spheres—*nūn*, *ṣād*, *ḍād* (three letters)

(iii) Letters brought into being by nine spheres—*ʿayn*, *ghayn*, *sīn*, *shīn* (four letters)

(iv) Letters brought into being by ten spheres: the remaining eighteen letters of the Arabic alphabet—[*bāʾ*, *jīm*, *dāl*, *hāʾ*, *wāw*, *ḥāʾ*, *ṭāʾ*, *yāʾ*, *kāf*, *mīm*, *fāʾ*, *qāf*, *rāʾ*, *tāʾ*,

[164] For individual treatises on the science of letters, see note 160 on p. 74.

[165] The full title of this chapter is "Chapter 2: On the Knowledge of the Ranks of Consonants and Vowels in the Universe and their Counterparts Among the Divine Names; and on Knowledge of Words and of Knowledge Itself, of the Knower, and of the Object of Knowledge" (*al-bābu l-thānī fī maʿrifati marātibi l-ḥurūfi wa-l-ḥarakāti min al-ʿālam-i wa-mā lāhā min al-asmāʾi l-ḥusnā wa-maʿrifati l-kalimāt wa-maʿrifati l-ʿilmi wa-l-ʿālim-i wa-l-maʿlūm*). See Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt* (OY), I.231 ff. and (SD), I.85 ff. See also Gril's partial translation in Ibn ʿArabī, *Revelations II*, 150 ff.

thā', *khā'*, *dhāl*, *ẓā'*][166]

The shaykh goes on to link each of these levels with a pair of elemental qualities—heat, cold, dryness, and humidity—familiar from such fields as astrology, alchemy, medicine, and natural philosophy.[167] Ibn ʿArabī explores these associations through a series of astrological-mathematical calculations, linking the production of elemental qualities with the movement of 203, 241, 65, and 27 spheres, respectively. He likewise outlines the spherical interactions that bring about the four classical elements, the celestial movements that produce physical qualities in pairs, a series of several-thousand year cycles associated with particular celestial spheres, and the celestial mansions corresponding to the relationship between the final encompassing sphere and those contained within it.[168] While Ibn ʿArabī's discussion may not follow contemporary astrological theories in all of its details, he deploys the language and methods of astrology—celestial spheres, rotational cycles, mansions, mathematical operations—to articulate the genesis of the letters and the upper and lower worlds.

Although this passage operates within an overarching astrological—or at least, quasi-astrological—framework, Ibn ʿArabī colors his account with a range of linguistic and discursive registers. Even before embarking upon his lettrist-astrological cosmogony, the shaykh inaugurates the chapter with a poem that hails the letters as the "imams of verbal expression" (*a'immat al-alfāẓ*), foreshadows the later discussion of celestial spheres, and vaunts his own ability to illuminate the names hidden within them.[169] In his elaboration of elemental qualities, Muḥyī al-Dīn's

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[166] Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, (OY) I.232 and (SD) I.86; idem, *Revelations II*, 150-151.

[167] Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, (OY) I.232-233 and (SD) 86; idem, *Revelations II*, 151.

[168] Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, (OY) I.234-235 and (SD) I.86-87; idem, *Revelations II*, 151-152. Here, Ibn ʿArabī merely alludes to these mansions, promising readers a more detailed exposition in Chapter 60.

[169] Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, (OY) I.231 and (SD) I.85. Gril omits the poem from his translation.

characterization of the *alif* as potentially hot, cold, dry, or humid hints both at Neopythagorean, natural-philosophical, and alchemical theories, as well as the metaphor of Arabic writing deployed by Ḥamūya above. As the primordial source, *alif* contains each of the other letters *in potentia* and thus becomes manifest according to the full range their qualities. While the shaykh's characterization of the *alif* may reflect abstract theoretical principles, he takes another tack with his discussion of *ḥā*, *khā'*, *ʿayn*, *ghayn*, *ha*, and *hamza.* As he outlines elemental qualities, Ibn ʿArabī identifies these six figures as fundamentally cold in nature, exempting them from the hot and dry character of the other nine- and ten-sphere letters. Here, the shaykh operates according to an organizing logic that is primarily phonetic and anatomical, grouping these "cold letters"—also the six pharyngeals (*ḥurūf al-ḥalq*) of Arabic phonology—according to a shared point of articulation in the human body.[170]

After promising to resume his discussion of the letters' astrological qualities in Chapter 60, Ibn ʿArabī augments his four-fold scheme with new principles situated within an explicitly theological framework:

> i) The seven-sphere rank of letters (*al-martaba al-sabʿiyya*)—*alif*, *zāy*, and *lām*—the Divine Presence that imposes the Law (*al-ḥaḍra al-ilāhiyya al-mukallifa*)
>
> ii) The eight-sphere letters (*al-martaba al-thamāniyya*)—*nūn*, *ṣād*, and *ḍād*—the human being (*al-insān*)
>
> iii) The nine-sphere letters (*al-martaba al-tisʿiyya*)—*ʿayn*, *ghayn*, *sīn*, and *shīn*—jinn (*al-jinn*)

[170] See also Gril's note in Ibn ʿArabī, *Revelations II*, 151n166.

iv) The ten-sphere letters (*al-martaba al-ʿashariyya*)—[*bāʾ, jīm, dāl, hāʾ, wāw, ḥāʾ, ṭāʾ, yāʾ, kāf, mīm, fāʾ, qāf, rāʾ, tāʾ, thāʾ, khāʾ, dhāl, ẓāʾ*]—angels (*al-malāʾika*)[171]

As he traces links between these four levels of being, Ibn ʿArabī deploys Qurʾānic allusions, intertextual references, and Sufi technical terminology while also manipulating the graphic, semantic, and numerical qualities of the Arabic letters. The Divine Presence and the human being, for example, each have three letters specific to them since humans are made in the image of God; these letters differ because humans *qua* humans and God *qua* God are distinct in their manifestation. The shaykh extends the comparison with an excursus on the graphic possibilities of the letter *nūn*, demonstrating how *alif*, *zāy*, and *lām*—the letterforms of the Divine Presence and the word eternity (*azal*)—can be identified within its shape.[172] In the right hands, he suggests, the semantic potential of human language and the specific properties of Arabic letters *qua* graphemes offer up real secrets about the nature of being.[173] While we have seen the *ḥurūf* as cosmogonic matrices, ontological principles, and physically articulated sounds, Ibn ʿArabī now takes advantage of the semantic and visual properties of each group of letters to layer new levels of meaning upon his four-tiered metaphysical scaffolding.

Despite the rich complexity with which he articulates this astrological framework, Muḥyī

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[171] See Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, (OY) I.235 ff. and (SD) I.87 ff.; idem, *Revelations II,* 152.

For Chapter 60, see Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, (OY) IV.479 ff and (SD) I.441 ff. The full title of chapter reads, "Chapter 60: On the knowledge of the elements and the power of the higher world over the lower world; In which of the celestial spheres' revolutions does this human world exist? Which spiritual force is particular to us?" (*fī maʿrifati l-ʿanāṣira wa-sulṭāni l-ʿālami l-ʿulwiyyi ʿalā l-ʿālami l-sufliyyi wa-fī ayya dawrati kāna wujūdu hādhā l-ʿālami l-insāniyyi min dawrāti l-aflāki wa-ayyata rūhāniyyati lanā*).

With respect to the ten-sphere rank, Ibn ʿArabī lists these letters in full according to their ascending *abjad* values on *Futūḥāt* (OY) I.241 and (SD) I.89.

[172] Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt* (OY) I.237-240 and (SD) I.87-88; *Revelations II*, 152-155. See Gril's diagrams in *Revelations II*, 148-149.

[173] Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt* (OY) I.239-240 and (SD) I.88.

al-Dīn cuts short his discussion of four-fold lettrist schemes, abruptly shifting gears to let his readers in on a secret. The elementary spheres are only divided into four groups of letters for those who rely primarily on their intellects; for those who understand the reality of things (*al-muḥaqqiqūn*), they are divided into six.[174] Ibn ʿArabī outlines the new structure as follows:

i) The One who imposes the Law, i.e., the Real (*al-mukallif al-ḥaqq*)—*nūn*

ii) The human being (*al-insān*)—*mīm*

iii) Jinn (*al-jinn*)—*jīm, wāw, kāf*, and *qāf*

iv) Animals (*al-baḥā'im*)—*dāl, zāy*, *ṣād*, *ʿayn*, *ḍād*, *sīn*, *dhāl*, *ghayn*, and *shīn*

v) Plants (*al-nabāt*)—*alif*, *hā'*, *lām*

vi) Minerals (*al-jamād*)—*bā'*, *ḥā'*, *ṭā'*, *yā'*, *fā'*, *rā'*, *tā'*, *thā'*, *khā'*, *ẓā'*

Though readers have likely struggled—as I must admit I have—through logical leaps, multi-digit calculations, and visual exercises, Ibn ʿArabī leaves all of this behind, opening up a *terra incognita* in which to chart new cosmic cartographies. Even in categories carried over from the four-fold framework, Muḥyī al-Dīn completely reorganizes his groups of letters, offering little to harmonize these divergent points of view.

These are not the only incongruous lettrist metaphysical hierarchies that Ibn ʿArabī sketches, even in the *Meccan Revelations*. Chapter 2 introduces a few more organizational schemes, including an account of the letters as a "community" (*umma*) of messengers, verifiers, elites, and common folk, as well as a classification based on ontological realms that Ibn ʿArabī associates with Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 996).[175] Chapter 198 ("On Knowledge of the Soul through

[174] Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt* (OY) I.253-259 and (SD) I.93-95; idem, *Revelations II*, 159-160.

[175] Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt* (OY) I.260 ff. and (SD) I.95 ff.; idem, *Revelations II*, 161 ff. These realms include *jabarūt,*

Revelation of the *Fāʾ*") charts yet another lettrist-cosmological framework: a twenty-eight stage Neoplatonic emanation scheme, with each stage corresponding to a level of being, a Divine Name, a lunar mansion, and of course, a letter of the Arabic alphabet.[176] The overlap between the letter-level correspondences in this hierarchy and those presented in Chapter 2 are virtually non-existent.

As with the four- and six-tiered cosmologies outlined above, these new frameworks use the letters as pivot points, so to speak, allowing Ibn ʿArabī to drift back and forth between a variety of discourses and modes of expression, layering each atop a set of dynamic and adaptable cosmic principles. These new frameworks likewise emphasize a key feature of the letters only implicit in our previous discussions. Even at their most abstract, Muḥyī al-Dīn rarely severs the conceptual tether that links letters as cosmic principles or semantic units to letters as graphemes and phonemes—i.e., physically articulated sounds. In his later schemes, the shaykh correlates the unfolding of the Divine Essence with a general progression of letters whose point of articulation shifts from the depths of the chest (*hāʾ*) to the tips of puckered lips (*wāw*). This progression is most pronounced in Chapter 198; as Ibn ʿArabī moves one by one through all twenty-eight letters, he effectively encourages his readers to imagine their bodies as sites for the totality of the Di-

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malakūt, *mulk,* and a few others. For more on Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, see Louis Massignon, "Abū Ṭālib Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Ḥārithī al-Makkī " in *EI2* and Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism*, 121-123.

As Gril mentions in the notes to his translation of *The Meccan Revelations*, Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī does not actually seem to use the terminology of *jabārūt*, *malakūt*, etc. in his famous Sufi manual, *Nourishment for the Hearts* (*Qūt al-qulūb*). Whatever their origins, these ontological realms become important—though never fully explained—to the conceptual vocabularies of both Ibn ʿArabī and Ḥamūya. For their use in Ḥamūya's work, see e.g. Figure 1 and Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 63-64, 72, 81, 87, 98, 112, 121, 123, and 131. In the 14th century, ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla al-Simnānī (d. 1336) would develop a complex metaphysics around these realms; according to Jamal Elias, he was the first Sufi to "apply them consistently in a hierarchical fashion." Elias, *Throne Carrier*, 62n1.

[176] Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, (SD) IV.29 ff. For a brief introduction and partial English translation by William Chittick, see Ibn ʿArabī, *Revelations I*, 50-56. See also Chittick, *Self-Disclosure*, xxviii ff.; Ebstein, *Mysticism,* 94 ff.; and Sara Sviri, "Kun," 49-52.

vine Self-Disclosure.

Though we have considered only a small snapshot of Ibn ʿArabī's lettrist output, a general picture of the dynamism and flexibility of his strategies has begun to emerge. Taken together, the shaykh's discursive bricolage, inspired digressions, poignant allusions, and careful attention to detail offer a sense of infinitely expanding possibilities. He refuses to remain wedded to a single structural or conceptual framework, adopting and discarding concepts and modes of expression in order to subvert the ontological primacy of any single metaphysical structure. Even the exhaustive accounts he has provided, Muḥyī al-Dīn reveals, are but a few examples of his own limitless potential.[177] What type of knowledge, then, is Ibn ʿArabī trying to convey? What is the *point* of all of these letters?

In his introduction to the *Futūḥāt*, the shaykh divides knowledge according to three broad categories: knowledge via the intellect (*ʿilm al-ʿaql*), knowledge via states (*ʿilm al-aḥwāl*), and knowledge via divine secrets (*ʿulūm al-asrār*). It is this third type of knowledge, of course, that he seeks to cultivate through writing the *Futūḥāt*. While Ibn ʿArabī characterizes knowledge via intellect and states as that which is acquired through proof (*al-dalīl*) and spiritual experience (*al-dhawq*), respectively, he describes knowledge via divine secrets as something else entirely:

> وهذا الصنف الثالث الّذي هو علم الأسرار العالم به يعلم العلوم كلّها ويستغرقها وليس صاحب تلك العلوم (الأخرى) كذلك فلا علم أشرف من هذا العلم المحيط الحاوي على جميع المعلومات
>
> Whoever knows this third type of knowledge—i.e., the knowledge of divine secrets—knows all knowledge and is completely immersed in it (*yastaghriquhā*). Those who master the other types of knowledge are not like this. Thus, there is no knowledge more noble than this all-encompassing knowledge that gathers togeth-

[177] Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, (OY) I.255-256 and (SD) I.94. See also Gril's translation in *Revelations II*, 160.

er the totality of knowable things.[178]

With respect to the relationship between this knowledge and its manifestation in the *Futūḥāt*, he explains:

> أمّا التصريح بعقيدة الخلاصة فما أفردتها على التعيين لما فيها من الغموض ولكن جئت بها مُددّة في أبواب هذا الكتاب مستوفاةً مبينةً ولكنّها كما ذكرنا متفرّقة فمن رزقه الله الفهم فيها يعرف أمرها ويميزها من غيرها
>
> As for explicitly stating the doctrine of the quintessence [of the spiritual elite], the abstruseness of this doctrine has prevented me from laying it all out in one place according to its particulars. Instead, I have spread it clearly and in full detail throughout the chapters of this book, albeit in a scattered manner. Whomever God blesses with understanding will recognize it and distinguish it from all the rest.[179]

To truly know, therefore, is to cultivate a subjectivity (or as we suggested above, an epistemological sensibility) that conditions one to experience self and cosmos as infinitely expandable webs of association reaching across any and all forms of thinking, knowing, and being. The ultimate aim of Muḥyī al-Dīn's lettrist exercises is thus not for students to keep a running tally for each letter, nor is it to memorize and recite each and every possible association. This would be physically impossible, for as Ibn ʿArabī continually reminds us, "Creation is renewed with every breath, both in this world and in the afterlife" and "The degrees of the Real have no end."[180] Instead, shaykh's lettrist expositions represent a performative mode of knowledge production that leads readers

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[178] Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, (OY) I.140 and (SD) I.55. See Morris' translation in "How to Study," 77.

[179] Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, (OY) I.173 and (SD) I.55. See also citations, translations, and discussions in Gardiner, "Esotericism," 107-108; Morris' introduction to Ibn ʿArabī, *Revelations I*, 16; Morris, "How to Study"; and idem, "Esotericism," 42.

[180] Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, (SD) IV.85, V.265.

through the infinitely complex and seemingly incongruous mechanisms according to which the Divine Essence becomes manifest in the world. The knowledge that Ibn ʿArabī articulates through the *Futūḥāt* cannot be laid out in a single place because, like the Real, it fundamentally depends on drawing connections and juxtaposing points of view across multiple frames of reference. The letters—and, the shaykh implies, all aspects of reality—become intelligible only through the myriad relationships and frameworks of analysis (semantic, theological, metaphysical, experiential, astrological) according to which they are imagined and articulated. Muḥyī al-Dīn's lettrist analyses perform the relationality of the Divine Self-Disclosure, bringing together opposing attributes, layering multiple meanings, blurring discursive boundaries, and pivoting between ontological realms and modes of revelation that are all paradoxically *real*. Although the meaning and implications of Ibn ʿArabī's operations shift from one point of view to another, the form and sound of the letters always remains constant. Thus, graphic manipulations and the embodied experience of articulating letters links readers to the fundamental ontological principles that express themselves at all levels of being. By conditioning readers to experience the world through the analogizing logics of these principles in all their possible relationships, Ibn ʿArabī prepares them to engage with the Real through Its endless modes of Self-Disclosure: that is, to master all that can be known.

1.5. Dynamism and Difference

As we have seen above, the lettrist strategies developed by Ḥamūya and Ibn ʿArabī suggest a relational ontological framework inextricably linked to an understanding of knowledge as epistemological sensibility. In identifying these shared epistemological presuppositions, however, we must

be careful not to erase difference. First of all, the webs of association that Saʿd al-Dīn and Muḥyī al-Dīn spin are not haphazard or random; they manipulate specific links and allusions to create the sense of infinitely expandable, yet interrelated and self-referential systems. An attention to how each figure forges these connections, moreover, reveals key points of irritation. On the one hand, Muḥyī al-Dīn is prone to feats of Borgesian world-building, crafting intricate realms and frameworks whose inner workings may be explored or expanded *ad infinitum*. As he overlays these worlds with a range of technical details, the shaykh exploits the sense of dissonance that results from moving between these conceptual arenas or layering them on top of one another. Though we have focused on an astrological example above, *The Meccan Revelations* finds Ibn ʿArabī engaging with case studies, theoretical frameworks, and technical terminology from philosophy, medicine, legal theory, ritual practice, Sufi hagiography, and scholastic theology, just to name a few.[181] Despite his often vehement critiques, Muḥyī al-Dīn implicitly legitimizes and reifies how these disciplines imagine and engage with the world, if only to theorize a mode of knowing that subsumes and surpasses them all.[182] As we saw in Section 1.1, for example, the shaykh does not argue that philosophical metaphysical schemes are wrong per se, but rather that the philosophers mistake their methods for certain knowledge and their hierarchies for ultimate reality. Ibn ʿArabī's epistemological sensibility is thus a mode of negotiating infinite, ostensibly in-

[181] For brief discussions of Ibn ʿArabī's engagement with legal theory, for example, see Michel Chodkiewicz, *Ocean*, 54-57; Morris, "Esotericism"; and Cyrille Chodkiewicz, "Introduction to 'The Law and the Way,'" in *Revelations II*, 59–61.

[182] Morris contextualizes these techniques as a means of addressing and converting adepts in each of these fields. See Morris, "Esotericism," 39.

Ibn ʿArabī often demonstrates an understanding of the "ins and outs" of each particular field, so to speak, before presenting strategies to encompass and transcend each. In this way, he follows a method similar to that of Sufi predecessors like al-Ghazālī and rationalist contemporaries like Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. See Frank Griffel, *Al-Ghazali's Philosophical Theology* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) and Shihadeh, "al-Rāzī," 310-311.

commensurable, and paradoxically *real* points of view—the ability to reorient oneself within, above, or between realms according to the exigencies of a particular situation.

If Muḥyī al-Dīn works from the "outside in," Ḥamūya takes the inverse approach. Rather than juxtaposing and undermining relatively stable frameworks to jolt his readers, Saʿd al-Dīn emphasizes pure dynamism and flux—the fundamental interrelation, utter instability, and infinite ontological-semantic potential of all individual entities and disciplines. Unlike Muḥyī al-Dīn, Saʿd al-Dīn rarely engages with particular fields of scholarship in a direct or sustained manner.[183] Ḥamūya's epistemological sensibility thus demands negotiating the world as a network of fractalizing possibilities. Here, true knowledge is the ability to partake in these mechanisms *without* reifying conceptual or disciplinary boundaries. While we have dealt so far with fairly coherent passages, many of the shaykh's treatises amplify the performative and deliberately *alogical* qualities identified above. *The Levels of Joy,* for example, outlines processes in which interpenetrating principles flow in and out of each other as they give rise to new forces and entities. Expounding upon the reality of the resurrection and the afterlife, Ḥamūya explains:

> والإعادة إعادة القلب بعينه مع أجزائه ومع أعضاء القلب إلى وجه الروحيّ [كذا] وبقدر ذلك تصير أجزاء القلب مشروحة فيها وعند ذلك تصير بالقلب مع أجزائه مبثوثة في عين العقل و انشقّ سمع البصر وبصر السمع فيهما وارتفع الحائل بينهما وبهاتين الحكمتين الحاكمتين للتّفرقين والجمعين حصل

[183] The chief exception seems to be the field of *tafsīr*. In a section of *The Book of the Beloved* entitled "The Levels of Divinities," Ḥamūya offers a sustained engagement with forty-four Qurʾānic verses (forty-four subsections are listed, only twenty-seven/twenty-eight are extant), beginning with the Throne Verse (Q. 2:255). For many of these verses, Saʿd al-Dīn begins his discussion with lengthy citations from an exegetical text, which I have identified as Ḥusayn ibn Masʿūd al-Baghawī's (d. 1122) *Tafsīr al-Baghawī*. See Ḥamūya, *Mahbūb* (SBB), fols. 234a ff. and Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn ibn Masʿūd al-Baghawī, *Tafsīr al-Baghawī (Maʿālam al-tanzīl)* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2002).

Saʿd al-Dīn seems to have been fond of (or at least intimately familiar with) al-Baghawī's work. Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ḥamūya's *Goal of the Seekers* notes that a certain ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ʿUmar b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥākim al-Arghiyānī (and several other companions and disciples) audited al-Baghawī's *Book of the Lamps* (*Kitāb al-Maṣābīḥ*) from Ḥamūya in Baghdad's Manṣūr Mosque in 1232. See p. 9 of the Introduction and Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 164.

للقلب والعقل كون بعد كون ولون بعد لون

. . .

وبكمال إعادة العقل وشرحه في القلب يصير نعمة الجنة مجسّماً بالولدان والغلمان ﴿وحور العين كأمثال اللؤلؤ المكنون﴾ وعذاب الجحيم مجسّداً لشجر الزرقوم والحيّات والعقارب نعوذ باللّه العظيم من عذاب الجحيم

. . . .

لأنّ حشر حقيقة العقل في القلب وحشر حقيقة القلب في العقل يكون بفعل اللّه تعالى وتقدّس وفعله دائم لا أنقطاع له في الآخرة

The *iʿāda* is the return (*iʿāda*) of the heart through its essence—but with its parts and its organs—to the spiritual face. In accordance with that, the parts of the heart are laid open within it and from there, [all of that] is sent out to the essence of the intellect via the heart and its parts. So, the hearing of seeing and the seeing of hearing are broken open between the two and the partition rises up from between them. Through these two wisdoms and adjudicators of the two separations and amalgamations, being after being and color after color appear before the heart and intellect.

...

Through the perfection of the intellect's *iʿāda* and its being laid open within the heart, the blessing of heaven is embodied (*mujassam*) through the *wildān*, the *ghilmān*, and "the *ḥūr al-ʿayn* like hidden pearls." (Q. 56:22-23) The punishments of hell are corporealized (*mujassad*) by the *zaqqūm* tree, serpents, and scorpions—we seek refuge in mighty God from the torments of hell!

...

Because, the gathering of intellect's reality in the heart and the gathering of the heart's reality in the intellect occurs through God's action, and His action is eternal—it does not cease in the afterlife.[184]

Rather than one principle giving rise to the another in a logical or temporal sequence, the realities of the heart and the intellect are both containing and contained, co-generating and interpen-

[184] Ḥamūya, *Marātib*, (P) fols. 6a-6b. The passages are also present in (DK) fol. 7a, though the text is too corrupt to read.

etrating for all eternity. By deploying synesthetic language, Saʿd al-Dīn likewise encourages readers to imagine hearing and seeing as interoperable senses, swirling together and breaking apart in concert with abstract cosmic principles. The hidden realities of the world to come, Ḥamūya suggests, can be grasped only through shifting relationships that cannot be grounded in any tangible source.

In *The Book of the Beloved*, lettrist operations break away from logical, narrative, or even semantic coherence altogether. The following passage from a chapter entitled "The Circle of *Nūn*" addresses readers with an account of letters and circles before embarking on an impressionistic play of sound and form. Saʿd al-Dīn writes:

أيّها الناظر إلى النقطة وفي دائرتها و البالغ إلى جملتها والواصل الفاصل بكلمتها جعلك اللّه غالبًا سالبًا مطلوبًا طالبًا أنّ الدائرة النونيّة لمّا انشقّت انفصلت منها نونان تبطّنا واوين وألفين فنزل بين ذلك معنى الألفين المألوفين وانتظم منه في قضيّة الإشارة وقصبة بقاع العبارة وقصة كتب البشارة صورة قول القائل إنّ

انَا فِي النّور انَا وفى انَا النّور انَا وفى انَا انَ وانَا فى الظّهُور انَا وفى انَا الظّهُور انَ انَ فى انَ فى النّور والظّهُور نورٌ على نورٍ فى نور فى صورٍ على طور

يهدي اللّه لنوره من يشاء

> O you who gazes into the point and its circle, who reaches its totality, who unites and divides its word—may God make you victorious and arresting, sought and seeking! When the circle of *nūn* is broken open, two *nūn*s (which encompass two *wāw*s and two *alif*s) split off from it.[185] And so, the meaning of the two familiar *alif*s descends among all of that and becomes arranged therein. The form of the Speaker's speech is in the question of indication (*qaḍīyat al-ishāra*), the pen of the smudges of interpretation (*qaṣabat biqāʿ al-ʿibāra*), and the chronicle of the texts' joyous proclamation (*qiṣṣat kutub al-bishāra*):
>
> I am in illumination, I; in I is illumination, I; in I is *i*; I am in manifestation, I; in I

[185] Here, Ḥamūya analyzes *nūn* according to its constituent letters. *Nūn* is spelled *nūn-wāw-nūn* and *wāw* is spelled *wāw-alif-wāw*. Within two *nūn*s there are thus two *wāw*s and two *alif*s.

> is manifestation, *i*; *i* is in *i*; in illumination and manifestation is illumination upon illumination, in illumination, in clarion orchestration upon an elevated station. God guides whomever He will towards His illumination.[186]

While the first section of the passage deploys lettrist techniques analogous to those we have analyzed in Section 1.3, Ḥamūya slips into a series of cryptic alliterative rhymes—*qaḍīyat al-ishāra*, *qaṣabat biqāʿ al-ʿibāra*, *qiṣṣat kutub al-bishāra*—before delving into an enigmatic word game centered around the juxtaposition of *anā*, *a-na,* and words ending in *-ūr*.[187] Here, Saʿd al-Dīn inverts grammatical relationships (*anā fī l-nūr anā wa-fī anā l-nūr anā*), duplicates syllables (*a na a na fī a na*), and juxtaposes similar sounds (*wa-fī anā a na wa-anā*), leaving readers with a skittering array of phonemes whose parsing remains ambiguous. Although the shaykh repeats key motives, he syncopates their rhythm to disrupt any sense of steady meter. In so doing, Ḥamūya plays with the conceptual structures through which language is conventionally produced, encouraging readers to experience words and letters—and thus entities and attributes—as infinitely rearrangeable forms and sounds.

Just as Ḥamūya and Ibn ʿArabī frame true knowledge as an epistemological sensibility in order to distinguish themselves from philosophers and rationalist theologians, an ability to identify and manipulate infinite webs of association functions as a means through which these two Sufis could negotiate knowledge and authority amongst themselves. In an epistle addressed to Ibn ʿArabī, Ḥamūya takes the shaykh to task over some of his lettrist speculations, writing:

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[186] Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fol. 12b; Nuruosmaniye MS 2577 (NO), fol. 11b; Carullah MS 1078 (CE78), fol. 13b; Ayasofya MS 2058 (AS58), fol. 11b; and Yeni Camii MS 726 (YC), fol. 28b.

[187] In my translation, I have rendered *anā* and *a-na* as I and *i*, respectively, and words rhyming in *-ūr* with the English suffix *-ation*. Though the meanings of some Arabic words have been stretched in the process—e.g., *ṣūr* (horn; trumpet) as clarion orchestration and *ṭūr* (mountain) as elevated station—, I believe these choices emphasize the rhythm and idiosyncratic semantics of the passage.

اكتحلت عيني بمطالعة تصنيفك لطائف الأذكار وانحرف خاطري عن إدراك ما ذكر الشيخ الكبير والبدر المنير في بعض مصنّفاته أنّ الحروف بعضها مركّب مثل الياء من ذالين وأن الباء وجود العقل الخاصّ وهو أوّل مرتبته

والّذي تراءى لهذا الضعيف أنّ الحروف كلّها مركّبة والياء مركّبة من دالين وحروف أخرى والنقطتين عليها ظهرت بطريق العكس والانعكاس والّذي يشهد لذلك أنّ فيها عالم اليدين وأنّ الباء أوّل مرتبة بالنسبة إلى الصورة الباطلة

وأمّا بالنسبة إلى صورته تعالى وتقدّس فهو وجود المرتبة الأولى وقد وجدنا بحمد اللّه ومنّه أنّ لكلّ حرف روحًا وعقلاً وسرًّا وألسنةً وأزلاً وأبدًا وميلاً وطاعةً وظهرًا وبطنًا وحدًّا ومطلعًا وأمزجةً ولو شرحنا ذلك لطال الكلام ولا يفي بشرحه الأقلام وما رأيت في القرآن حرفًا متكرّرًا ثمّ وجدنا علم البياض أقوى من علم الحروف وعلم النقطة

I have blackened my eyes through careful examination of how you classify the subtleties of *dhikr*s and my mind has swerved from what the Great Skaykh and Shining Moon has mentioned in some of his treatises—i.e., that some of the letters are composite, like the *yāʾ* [composed of] two *dhāl*s; and that the *bāʾ* is the existence of the Particular Intellect and that it is His first level.

It seems to this weak one that *all* of the letters are composite! The *yāʾ* is composed of two *dāl*s, but also of other letters.[188] The two points with which it is equipped are apparent by way of inversion and reflection. That to which [this weak one] bears witness, therefore, is that within [*yāʾ*] is the world of the two hands (*ʿālam al-yadayn*), and that the *bāʾ* is [only] a first level with respect to the false form (*al-ṣūra al-bāṭila*).

With respect to His almighty and blessed form—which is the [true] existence of the first level—we have found through God's praise and blessing that each letter has a spirit, an intellect, a secret, languages, an eternity, a sempiternity, an inclination, a submissiveness, a exterior (*ẓahr*), an interior (*baṭn*), a limit (*ḥadd*), a starting point (*maṭlaʿ*) and a mixture (*amzija*). If we were to explain all of that, we would carry on for far too long, for pens cannot exhaust its explanation and I have not seen a repeated letter in the Qurʾān. What's more, we have found that the knowledge of the blank space (*al-bayāḍ*) is more powerful than the knowledge of letters and points.[189]

[188] Both the manuscript and printed edition have *dhāl*s followed by *dāl*s here. See also Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ,* 61 for a discussion of the letter *yāʾ* as composed of two *dāl*s.

[189] Ḥamūya, "Makātīb," 460-461 and idem, *Sharḥ bāl*, fols. 103-104.

While Ḥamūya agrees with Ibn ʿArabī's basic claims, his critique mirrors the latter's own appraisal of the philosophers' methods outlined in Section 1.1. On one level, he explains, Muḥyī al-Dīn is correct—*yāʾ* is composed of two *dāl*s and *bāʾ* does correspond to the Intellect. Ibn ʿArabī's error, however, is that he limits his understanding of these letters to a single interpretation. *Yāʾ* is not only composed of two *dāl*s, but of a host of other letters as well. Likewise, Ḥamūya avers, each and every letter is composite, made up both of other letters and a range of principles and qualities. To analyze a single letter, Saʿd al-Dīn suggests, is to open up a world of ever-expanding possibilities. The association of the letter *bāʾ* with the Intellect, therefore, only holds in a limited capacity—i.e., with respect to the "false form" (*al-ṣūra al-bāṭila*). With respect to the form of the Real upon which the entirety of existence is founded, Ḥamūya avoids definitive claims altogether, directing Ibn ʿArabī instead to the infinite potential of the letters. To underscore his own spiritual authority, Saʿd al-Dīn implicitly equates his insights with Qurʾānic revelation before framing the letters themselves as constraints upon the infinite potential of his knowledge. Although the epistle concludes with note of polite conciliation—"There is no dispute between us with respect to the Reality"—the majority of its contents parochialize al-Shaykh al-Akbar's purportedly universal claims.[190] It is unclear whether Ibn ʿArabī ever penned a rebuttal, but the comparative analyses undertaken throughout this chapter suggest that Ḥamūya got the better end of the exchange.[191]

[190] See Ḥamūya, "Makātīb," 462 and idem, *Sharḥ bāl*, fol. 106.

[191] Although there is no extant evidence of Ibn ʿArabī's direct engagement with Ḥamūya's work, Jāmī reports an incident involving the two shaykhs and Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī in which Muḥyī al-Dīn implicitly asserts his superiority over Saʿd al-Dīn by parochializing his ontological claims. Jāmī's report may reflect the ideals of 15th-century Sufis looking back at a formative period, but the interaction he relates nevertheless supports my argument that an infinite interpretive sensibility functioned as a primary means through which figures like Ḥamūya and Ibn ʿArabī contested questions of knowledge and authority, even among Sufi colleagues. See Jāmī, *Nafaḥāt*, 429.

1.6. Conclusion

As the last section tied together most of the key themes from this chapter, I conclude by teasing out one final thread. Our analysis of the lettrist strategies employed throughout *The Lamp of Sufism*, *The Book of the Beloved*, and *The Meccan Revelations* suggest that engagement with the Real through the medium of text demands a heightened awareness of one's own body and an ability to negotiate meaning fluidly across abstract and phenomenal frameworks. How Ibn ʿArabī and Ḥamūya synthesize embodied and intellectual possibilities reflects the particularities unique to each. While Ibn ʿArabī integrates the phenomenal qualities of letters into systematic elaborations of incommensurable point of view, Ḥamūya skitters across ideas, allusions, and points of articulation with reckless abandon. The latter's deconstructive techniques mark the boundaries between these (and all) phenomena as completely fungible, provoking readers to experence Reality as unbounded abstract-experiential potential.

Circling back to the critiques of philosophers and rational methodologies with which we began this chapter, both Ḥamūya and Ibn ʿArabī agree on a fundamental point: perfect knowledge must become manifest through attitudes, practice, and comportment. That is to say, what one knows is inextricable from how one moves through the world and presents oneself to others. The following chapters take up these themes in full, reading the performative qualities of Ḥamūya's strategies against the ritual and social contexts that made them meaningful. As we will see, the embodied dimensions of knowledge are not limited to the science of letters as a mode of expression; they are fundamental to the broader epistemological worlds built by Ḥamūya and his interlocutors.

Chapter 2
Like a Prayer: Language and Embodied Practice

... This way is walking, seeing, working, and tasting, not [merely] talking, listening, knowing, and not acting. Work, not talk, constitutes action. Knowing about water alone does not sate one or quench one's thirst—one must also drink it.

Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, *Etiquette for Novices*[192]

Do you (you!) *feel* like I do?

Peter Frampton, "Do You Feel Like We Do"[193]

2.0. Knowledge, Bodies, and Experience: A Preface

By way of preface, a few remarks about knowledge and experience are in order here. As we have seen in the previous chapter, both Ḥamūya and Ibn ʿArabī deploy forms of performative language that aim to affect readers in some way; to shape their experiences of self and cosmos. Whether we consider Muḥyī al-Dīn's jarring shifts in perspective, Saʿd al-Dīn's vertiginous transformation of concepts, or the attention both Sufis devote to the embodied dimensions of speech, works like *The Meccan Revelations*, *The Lamp of Sufism*, and *The Book of the Beloved* are designed to make readers *feel* something. But is this as far as our analysis can take us? Are the phenomenological dimensions of these operations so subjective as to be beyond the reach of critical analysis? Finally, is it justifiable to assume our experience of these techniques is the same as that of medieval readers?

At first glance, Ḥamūya and Ibn ʿArabī would seem to answer our first two questions in

[192] Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, *Ādāb al-murīdīn*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya MS 4792, fol. 746b.

[193] Peter Frampton, "Do You Feel Like We Do," *Frampton Comes Alive!* (A&M: 1976).

the affirmative. Time and time again, the two Sufis emphasize that truly grasping the knowledge they produce depends on a spiritual state—often described as elucidation (*tabayyun*), tasting (*dhawq*), or unveiling (*kashf*)—brought about by divine guidance and inaccessible to rational methodologies. In the passage from *The Book of the Beloved* analyzed in Section 1.5, Saʿd al-Dīn concludes his performative play of sound and form in aporia—only God, he implies, can prepare readers for the type of illumination the text purports to reveal. The shaykh's comments following the discussion of form, likeness, shape, and model in *The Levels of Joy* are even more to the point:

> إنّما الشيء تبيّن اللّه إيّاه لمن كان له علم البيان قال الله تعالى إشارةً ﴿ ولنبيّنه لقوم يعلمون ﴾ فمن أراد أن يتبيّن له حقيقة الصورة فلا بدّ له من تعليم علم البيان بعد العبور على ظلمات علم البرهان لأنّ التبيّن أجلى من البرهان . . . فلا بدّ في ذلك من سلوك طريق الحقّ بإسلاكه تعالى وتقدّس
>
> The thing [that we are talking about] is only clear through God's elucidation of it to whomever has knowledge of elucidation. As a sign [of this], God says, "... In order that we make it clear for a people who know." (Q. 6:105) Whoever wants the reality of form to be clarified for him requires instruction in the knowledge of elucidation after crossing over (*al-ʿubūr ʿalā*) the science of demonstrative proof's darknesses, for elucidation is even clearer than demonstrative proof... For that [to happen], it is necessary to travel the path of the Real as a result of Him setting you on your way.[194]

Ḥamūya suggests that despite his best efforts, the strategies he employs are *only* effective with respect to those for whom the truth has already been elucidated, at least on some level. This elucidation, furthermore, is characterized as a form of knowing inaccessible to rational inquiry—i.e., demonstrative proof. In Chapter 6 of *The Meccan Revelations*, entitled "On the Knowledge of Spiritual Creation's Beginning" (*fī maʿrifat badʾ al-khalq al-rūḥānī*), Ibn ʿArabī likewise frames his knowledge of Reality as the result of unveiling. Readers who wish to grasp the true meaning

[194] Ḥamūya, *Marātib*, (P) fol. 18a and (DK) fol. 83a.

of his words cannot do so by means of deduction, but must depend ultimately on God's providence.[195] In these cases, our two Sufis seem to prefigure Rudolf Otto's famous phenomenological challenge: "The reader is invited to direct his mind to a moment of deeply felt religious experience... Whoever cannot do this, whoever knows no such moments in his experience is requested to read no further."[196]

Secondary scholarship on Ibn ʿArabī tends to reaffirm the primacy of ineffable experience. As Gregory Lipton points out, such scholars as Henry Corbin, A.E. Affifi, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Toshihiko Izutsu, James Morris, and William Chittick frame the shaykh through an implicit (or occasionally explicit) Perennialist lens, reading works like *The Meccan Revelations* as maps of the supra-rational dimensions of a timeless and universal human experience.[197] As an example, let us briefly consider Morris' introduction to selected English translations of *The Meccan Revelations*, whose two volumes also include the work of such luminaries as Michel Chodkiewicz, William Chittick, Cyrille Chodkiewicz, and Denis Gril. Expounding upon Ibn ʿArabī's "working assumptions," Morris explains:

> These [assumptions] are not the same as beliefs or teachings that one has to agree with in order to understand and appreciate what is being said. They are on the order of "orientations," or existential possibilities, that each reader needs to be aware of in order to begin to make the indispensable connections between the Shaykh's symbolic language and the universal, experiential realities (themselves in no way dependent on any particular set of beliefs or historical programming) to which those symbols correspond.[198]

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[195] Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt,* (OY) II.239 and idem, *Revelations I*, 37.

[196] Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and Its Relation to the Rational*, trans. John W. Harvey (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), 8.

[197] Lipton, *Rethinking*.

[198] Morris, "Introduction" in Ibn ʿArabī, *Revelations I*, 11.

According to Morris, therefore, though Ibn ʿArabī may deploy recondite technical terminology unfamiliar to modern readers, his work nevertheless forces us to turn inward in order that we may confront our own individual, ineffable, and uniquely personal experiences of a transcendent universal reality. I single out Morris not as emblematic of any particular scholarly inadequacy. On the contrary, his work and that of the scholars listed above develop brilliant interpretations of Ibn ʿArabī's oeuvre without which this study could not exist. Morris' attention to the discursive dynamism, dialogic strategies, and phenomenological features of *The Meccan Revelations,* for example, are foundational for the arguments I set forth in the previous chapter.[199] My aim instead is to theorize experience as a means of situating Saʿd al-Dīn and Muḥyī al-Dīn's strategies more thoroughly within their own intellectual and social context(s).

As Stephen Bush notes, Perennialist readings of experience run up against two theoretical conundrums: the problem of privacy and the problem of power.[200] Taken as uniquely private events impervious to the exigencies of history and culture, experiences become "beetles in boxes," so to speak, completely unobservable and utterly inaccessible to the tools of critical analysis.[201] Consequently, such formulations ignore the ways in which social context, conceptual categories, ideological commitments, embodied practices, and relationships of power inform, engender, or otherwise shape the character of particular experiences.[202] To counter such Perennialist frame-

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[199] See e.g., Morris, "How to Study the *Futūḥāt*: Ibn ʿArabi's Own Advice," in *Muhyiddin Ibn ʿArabi: A Commemorative Volume*, ed. Stephen Hirtenstein and Michael Tiernan (Rockport, MA: Element for the Muhyiddin Ibn ʿArabi Society, 1993), 73–123; idem, "Esotericism"; and idem, "Introduction" in Ibn ʿArabī, *Revelations I*, 3-26.

[200] Stephen S. Bush, *Visions of Religion: Experience, Meaning, and Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 6-7.

[201] In his *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein uses the beetle in a box thought experiment to suggest the impossibility of a completely private language. See Wittgenstein, *Investigations*, 106.

[202] Bush, *Visions*, 145-147, 164-170, 185-188.

works, Bush offers a social-practical theory of experience and concepts, arguing that any type of experience one can recognize as significant depends on the acquisition or performance of socially determined "dispositions to speak, infer, and act in certain ways."[203] In short, he avers, "...Regardless of what is phenomenologically occurring in the experience, cultural particularity is still involved."[204]

It is not only modern theorists, however, who offer a means of situating experiences within specific social contexts. By framing Ibn ʿArabī as an advocate of unmediated universal experience, Perennialist scholars ignore the shaykh's own explicit claims about the relationship between knowledge, practice, and unveiling. The full quotation from "On the Knowledge of Spiritual Creation's Beginning" reads as follows:

> هذا (ثابت) عن كشف عندنا لا عن استنباط من نظر بما يقتضيه ظاهر خبر ولا غير ذلك ومن أراد أن يقف عليه فليسلك طريق الرجال وليلزم الخلوة والذكر فإن الله سيطلعه على هذا كله عينا فيعلم أن الناس في عماية عن إدراك هذه الحقائق
>
> This is confirmed for us through unveiling (*kashf*). It does not occur through deduction; neither through the analysis of what a prophetic report's outer meaning would necessitate, nor through anything else of the like. Whoever wishes to reach it should travel the path of righteous men and hold fast to spritual retreat (*khalwa*) and *dhikr*. Then, God will surely raise him up to all of that as it truly is and he will know that [most] people are blind to perceiving these realities.[205]

According to Ibn ʿArabī, therefore, the type of unveiling necessarily to grasp the realities put forth in the *Meccan Revelations* is not accessible to just anyone. Instead, it depends upon the em-

[203] Bush, *Visions*, 145.

[204] Bush, *Visions,* 146.

[205] Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, (OY) II.239. See also Chittick's translation in *Revelations I*, 37.

bodied practices—specifically, spiritual retreat and *dhikr*—that characterize Sufi training (*ṭarīq*; *ṭarīqa*) and wayfaring (*sulūk*). While Ḥamūya does not mention these specific practices in the passage cited above, his requirement that readers "travel the path of the Real" (*sulūk ṭarīq al-ḥaqq*) suggests a similar context of regulated Sufi praxis.[206]

It is important to keep in mind that our two Sufis and their colleagues did not understand unveiling and spiritual intuition as private experiences that occurred in a social vacuum. On the contrary, Sufi unveiling was premised upon specific embodied practices that had to be socially authorized.[207] To experience tasting or unveiling, one had to prepare oneself through distinct prayers, mantras, spiritual retreats, and ritual practices. To learn these prayers and practices, one had to submit oneself completely to the authority of an established Sufi master, which usually entailed strict adherence to a rule of etiquette (*adab*) and living in the company of other disciples.[208] As they underwent their training, Sufi novices were required to verify the meaning and validity of each and every experience through careful consultation with a qualified shaykh.[209] Even exceptions to the rule are telling—Sufis who deviated from this model in their early training often had to frame their intuitive knowledge or ritual practices as having been transmitted or authorized

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[206] Ḥamūya, *Marātib*, (P) fols. 18a and (DK) fol. 83a.

[207] See e.g., Nile Green, *Sufism: A Global History* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 2.

[208] See e.g., Erik S. Ohlander, "Early Sufi Rituals, Beliefs, and Hermeneutics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Sufism*, ed. Lloyd Ridgeon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 63-71. For a discussion of Ibn ʿArabī's Sufi training, see Addas, *Quest*, 33-110. For Ḥamūya's training, see Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, esp. 9 ff.

[209] See Kubrā's accounts of his training in which he verifies experiences with his shaykh in Chapter 3, Section 3.2 (p. 137). See also Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, *Fawāʾiḥ*, (M) 21-22, 27-28 and idem, *Fawāʾiḥ al-jamāl wa-fawātiḥ al-jalāl* (Z), ed. Yūsuf Zaydān (Kuwait: Dār Saʿād al-Ṣabāḥ, 1993), 155-156, 164. Kubrā also demands that disciples verify visions and unveiled secrets with masters in his *Etiquette for Novices* and *Epistle on Spiritual Retreat.* See Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, *Risāla fī ādāb-i khirqa-pūshīdan* (from *Ādāb al-murīdīn*), Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Hacı Selim Ağa MS 491, fol. 131b and Böwering, "Seclusion."

For accounts of Ḥamūya's visions and Kubrā's verification of the spiritual states they indicate, see Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 13-15.

through contact with prophets, Sufi saints, or other masters in dreams and waking visions.[210]

For Ḥamūya and his colleagues, engaging with Sufi knowledge thus required that students first inhabit a "Sufi body" that was disciplined through advanced ascetic exercises, authorized by specific social relationships, and characterized by distinct modes of comportment. These bodies served as substrates for the epistemological sensibilities outlined in Chapter 1; sites upon which these ways of knowing and being could be cultivated, manipulated, or even contested, as we saw in the case of Ḥamūya's letter to Ibn ʿArabī. Such advanced theoretical texts as *The Book of the Beloved* and *The Meccan Revelations* contributed directly to how individuals experienced their transformed bodies, encoding them, for example, with the primordial letters underlying visible reality. By framing these "Sufi bodies" as prerequisites for certain knowledge, Ḥamūya and Ibn ʿArabī sought to distinguish themselves and their colleagues as a social group superior to rationalist competitors who might lay claim to real knowledge about the world.[211]

2.1. Introduction

This chapter reads *The Levels of Joy in the Fountains of Power* and *The Book of the Beloved* alongside medieval manuals, situating Ḥamūya's performative strategies within contemporary discussions of knowledge and embodied practice. I begin with an overview of manuals penned by Najm al-Dīn Kubrā (d. 1221), Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1240), and Shihāb al-Dīn ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī (d. 1234),

[210] See e.g., Ibn ʿArabī's accounts of his own early experiences in Addas, *Quest*, 33-73.

[211] We should point out that these Sufis *did* face stiff competition, as rationalist knowledge production enjoyed the support of political elites across the Islamic (and Christian) world. Powerful dynasties including the Īlkhānids, the Khwārazmshāhs, the Ghūrids, and the Ismāʿīlīs vied with one another not only through military means, but also through their patronage of Peripatetic and Peripatetic-leaning thinkers like Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 1274) and Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 1210). See Meisami, *Philosopher* and Frank Griffel, "On Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Life and the Patronage He Recieved," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 18, no. 3 (2007): 313–44.

illuminating how each frames a meticulous attention to the movements and sensations of one's body as a prerequisite for the transformative experiential knowledge associated with spiritual accomplishment. By reading Saʿd al-Dīn's work against this broader landscape, I explore how the shaykh manipulates the generic conventions of Sufi manuals to exploit the mechanisms through which they make meaning.

Ḥamūya's avant-garde techniques operate in dialogue with the manuals of his contemporaries, deconstructing their rules in a way that leaves his work radically open to the subjective states of his readers. With subtle allusions and a creative use of language, the shaykh situates his texts firmly within the discursive field of his Sufi colleagues and produces meaning through implicit juxtapositions between generic conventions and his own idiosyncratic formulations. The dense intertextuality of the shaykh's strategies restricts the interpretation of his work to an audience of advanced readers familiar enough with Sufi literature and practice to recognize his allusive references and playful manipulation of forms. At the same time, his deconstructive engagement with established conventions reflects a creative approach to inter-Sufi competition. While his contemporaries attempt to prove their superiority by subsuming a diversity of embodied practices and metaphysical frames within their manuals, Ḥamūya recruits his readers to imagine and expand these possibilities for him.

The fifth appendix to *The Levels of Joy* uses techniques of structural allusion to situate its abstract discourse within the generic conventions of Sufi handbooks. Ḥamūya models the text's progression of themes according to contemporary and classic manuals, priming readers to receive his discussion as a conventional elaboration of the Sufi path in all its phenomenal, spiritual, and intellectual dimensions. Conventional manuals paired meticulous bodily instructions with

dynamic theoretical frameworks, transforming embodied sensation into meaningful experience. Against this horizon of expectations, Ḥamūya twists embodied practices to the point of utter abstraction, thus opening up *The Levels of Joy* to an endless realm of interpretation.[212] As readers double back through his labyrinthine text in search of familiar embodied and experiential cues, they continually reconfigure ontological and phenomenological relationships to enact the infinite possibilities of Divine Self-Disclosure within themselves.

While the fifth appendix to *The Levels of Darkness* engages Sufi praxis through allusion and ironic erasure, *The Book of the Beloved* incorporates practices of prayer and supplication directly into the body of its text. Here I read Ḥamūya in conversation with Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī's (d. 996) *Nourishment of the Hearts* (*Qūt al-qulūb*) and al-Ghazālī's (d. 1111) *Revival of the Religious Sciences* (*Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*), as well as 13th-century manuals and litanies penned by al-Suhrawardī, Kubrā, Ibn ʿArabī, and Bākharzī. For Ḥamūya and his interlocutors, supplication was more than just a means of seeking God's favor; it was a regimented and divinely ordained *askēsis* through which individuals disciplined particular spiritual and emotional states.[213] Sufi manuals and litanies demanded that prayers be recited aloud, prescribing specific instructions for posture, intonation, repetition, and reflection that focused scrupulous attention to one's body

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[212] My approach to generic conventions aligns closely with Jonathan Culler's structuralist approach to literature. According to Culler, "To read a text as literature is not to make one's mind a *tabula rasa* and approach it without preconceptions; one must bring to it an implicit understanding of the operations of literary discourse which tells one what to look for." See idem, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics, and the Study of Literature* (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2002), esp. 131-152 ("Literary Competence"), quote on 132. I thank Jason Protass for this reference.

I borrow the term "horizon of expectations" from James Secord, whose use refers to the textual conventions through which particular texts become meaningful. He explains, "We write as though the author speaks to us directly ('Einstein says,' 'Descartes says') when we know perfectly well that what we are actually reading is a narrative voice aimed at a particular horizon of expectations." Secord, "Knowledge," 661.

[213] Here, I follow Hadot in his definition of *askēsis* as a physical, discursive, or intuitive exercise designed to enact a transformation in the participant. See Pierre Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?*, trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2002), esp. 6, 163-168.

and affect. The affective states generated by these prayers—humility, fear, longing, sincerity, etc.—were framed both as prerequisites for and markers of advanced experiential knowledge. Ḥamūya writes supplication directly into *The Book of the Beloved*, yet weaves Sufi liturgical language into a swirl of chaotic abstraction. While his contemporaries composed manuals, liturgies, and diaries devoted exclusively to prayer practices, Ḥamūya recontextualized them as vehicles for advanced Sufi theory. In so doing, the shaykh puts the affective tools of Sufi *askēsis* towards abstract speculation, encouraging readers to use his text as a catalyst for new experiential and existential possibilities.

2.2. Mind, Body, and Soul: The Sufi Manuals of Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī, and Shihāb al-Dīn ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī

Saʿd al-Dīn's 13th-century interlocutors dedicated considerable time to delineating, explaining, and justifying the embodied practices and social performances of the Sufi path. In so doing, they engaged with handbooks produced by earlier renunciants, pietists, and Sufis, reworking a rich archive of material to suit their own programs. The texts they produced not only offered disciples models to guide their physical practices; they also sketched frameworks through which these practices and their effects could be made meaningful. While it is possible to trace recurring thematic centers, technical terminology, and organizational principles across 13th-century Sufi treatises, Ḥamūya's colleagues tend to play fast and loose with details. What was important was that seekers learned to use their bodies to interface between a plurality of interrelated realms, negotiating corporeal and spiritual realities in whatever form they appeared.

Ḥamūya's master Najm al-Dīn Kubrā penned several treatises for novices and Sufis ac-

tively engaged in spiritual training.[214] *The Epistle on Spiritual Retreat* exemplifies recurring elements of the shaykh's *modus operandi*, merging embodied practice, spiritual experience, and abstract theory into a brief but pithy guide.[215] The text includes detailed instructions for students, outlining rules for where they should undertake their practices, how they should sit to remain wakeful, when they should repeat their ritual ablutions, and how they should break their fasts. Kubrā urges wayfarers to cultivate a steadfast focus on their bodies, engaging each movement and posture with mindful awareness and disciplined control. Such regimented physical training and fastidious attention to the body encourages a heightened perception of corporeal sensations, which the shaykh uses as starting points for abstract interpretations.[216] As the epistle progresses, Najm al-Dīn presents his readers with a detailed spiritual itinerary replete with visions and sensations to be encountered, theoretical frameworks through which to understand these phenomena, and specific exercises with which to gauge their validity.[217] Along with visions of elemental and cosmological phenomena, for example, wayfarers are taught how to parse impressions of flashing colors, identifying specific hues as indications of the dominance, interaction, or transformation of subtle forces within one's inner being.[218] Molded under the practices and postures of Kubrā's

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[214] See e.g., *The Epistle on Spiritual Retreat* (*Risāla fī al-khalwa*) in Böwering, "Seclusion";

[215] For *The Epistle on Spiritual Retreat*, see Böwering's edition and translation of the text in idem, "Seclusion." See also *Etiquette for Novices* (*Ādāb al-murīdīn*) in Kubrā, *Ādāb*, as well as *The Ten Fundamentals* (*al-Uṣūl al-ʿashara*) and *The Epistle to the Bewildered, Fearful of the Censurer's Censure* (*Risāla ilā al-hā'im al-khā'if min lawmat al-lā'im*) in idem, "Traités mineurs de Naǧm al-Dīn Kubrà," ed. Marijan Molé, *Annales Islamologiques* IV (1963), 15-22 and 23-37. *The Ten Fundamentals* has also been translated into English in Cyrus Ali Zargar, "The Ten Principles: Theoretical Implications of Volitional Death in Najm al-Dīn Kubrā's *al-Uṣūl al-ʿAshara* (A Study and Translation)," *The Muslim World* 103 (2013): 107–30.

[216] See e.g, Böwering, "Seclusion," 283-286 (English) and 289-291 (Arabic).

[217] For imaginative exercises, visionary experiences, and interpretive frameworks, see e.g. Kubrā's differentiation between true vision (*wāqiʿa*) and imaginary apparition (*khayāl*), as well as his explanation of the colors to be experienced by wayfarers after moving beyond the realm of imagination and representation in Böwering, "Seclusion," 283-284 (English) and 289-290 (Arabic).

[218] Böwering, "Seclusion," 283-284 (English) and 289-290 (Arabic).

training, therefore, the body becomes a laboratory in one can explore the wonders of Reality and progress along an ascending hierarchy of spiritual stages.

In his *Essence of What the Novice Needs* (*Kitāb Kunh mā lā budda li-l-murīd minhu*), Ibn ʿArabī teaches would-be Sufis to engage with the body as a site of both corporeal and emotional discipline.[219] His discussion of Qurʾānic recitation brings together a close focus on bodily sensations—the position of the text in one's lap, the movement of one's fingers across the page, the feeling and sound of one's voice—with exercises rooted in affect and imagination. Alongside touching, reading, and reciting words from the Qurʾān, Ibn ʿArabī asks novices to question themselves, take heed, call out to God, and take stock of their characters.[220] He demands that his readers *feel* what they recite, both physically and emotionally. Throughout the text, Ibn ʿArabī encourages novices to continually regulate their emotions, exhorting them to suppress anger and cultivate compassion.[221] He likewise prescribes specific imaginative exercises to treat spiritual stubbornness, entreating readers to meditate on death with each passing breath and offering them a script through which to admonish their souls.[222] Because Ibn ʿArabī directs this particular text to novices, he eschews advanced theoretical principles in favor of corporeal and affective proaedeutics. Nevertheless, the shaykh's point is clear: even from the earliest stages of the path,

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[219] Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī, *Kitāb Kunh mā lā budda li-l-murīd minhu*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehid Ali Paşa MS 1342, fol. 217b-220a. See also Jeffrey Arthur's translation in Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī, "Instructions to a Postulant," in *A Reader on Islam: Passages from Standard Arabic Writings Illustrative of the Beliefs and Practices of Muslims*, ed. and trans. Arthur Jeffrey (The Hague: Mouton, 1962), 644-645. Based on Arthur's translation, it seems his source text—a 1962 Cairo edition of the text, edited by Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Kurdī and appended to al-Ghazālī's *Risāla al-laduniyya*—diverges from our manuscript in several places.

[220] Ibn ʿArabī, *Kunh*, fol. 218a.

[221] For suppressing anger, see Ibn ʿArabī, *Kunh*, fol. 219a and idem, "Instructions," 649. For compassion, especially towards slaves and animals, see idem, *Kunh*, fol. 218b and idem, "Instructions," 647.

[222] See Ibn ʿArabī, *Kunh*, fol. 219a and idem, "Instructions," 651.

the body and all of its senses are central to the Sufi project.

Ibn ʿArabī's *Epistle on the Lights* (*Risālat al-Anwār*) offers Sufi adepts a more advanced guide to spiritual retreat that begins with precise instructions for how to shut oneself up in a cell, perform *dhikr*, and regulate the intake of food.[223] Muḥyī al-Dīn urges readers to strike a middle ground between utter fullness and extreme hunger, prescribing a diet of high-calorie vegan meals to maintain a steady humoral equilibrium. Such a balanced approach, he explains, will ensure that altered sensations are the result of genuine spiritual experiences and not feverish phantasms brought about by the effects of starvation.[224] As Ibn ʿArabī sketches the contours of the wayfarer's spiritual ascent, it becomes clear why such sensory clarity is paramount. The heavenly ascension that occurs during spiritual retreat is a turn into one's own body, an illumination of all the Real's qualities within one's own self.[225] During the initial stages of one's ascent, spiritual experiences become manifest along with particular embodied sensations—coolness and pleasure; the crushing of one's limbs; pain, distress, and confusion.[226] Wayfarers can only gauge the quality of their progress through a careful regulation of the body and acute awareness of the phenomena that occur within it.

The Epistle on the Lights outlines a full spiritual itinerary for the wayfarer, mapping a microcosmic journey that proceeds from the lowest ontological realms to the majesty of the Divine Presence. As he moves beyond the sensory and imaginal realms, Ibn ʿArabī leaves behind his dis-

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[223] Ibn ʿArabī, *Rasā'il*, 125. The epistle was likely composed in response to a colleague (likely a Sufi master himself) who had reached a considerable degree of spiritual attainment, yet needed help conceptualizing and communicating the stages of the path to his own disciples. See Ibn ʿArabī, *Rasā'il,* 123 and James Winston Morris, "The Spiritual Ascension: Ibn ʿArabī and the Miʿrāj Part I," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 107, no. 4 (1987), 632.

[224] Ibn ʿArabī, *Rasā'il*, 125.

[225] See also Morris, "Ascension I," 630.

[226] Ibn ʿArabī, *Rasā'il*, 125-126.

cussion of bodily sensations and overwhelms readers with wondrous worlds and abstract qualities. Despite this shift in the epistle's narrative focus, however, the wayfarer's disciplined body continues to operate from its darkened cell, powering the entire ascent through the infinite repetition of God's name. The loftiest stage of the microcosmic journey likewise represents a transformation of the wayfarer's body: a return to the material and social world as the embodiment of universal Muḥammadan sainthood.[227] Upon unlocking the most profound secrets of being, the newly minted Muḥammadan saint manifests perfect knowledge through perfect action, adapting to the exigencies of each and every moment with perfect decorum.[228] Thus, the spiritual ascent and the practices that drive it not only require use of human bodies; they also change how those bodies move through the world.

Apart from guides to spiritual retreat and Sufi praxis, Ḥamūya's colleagues also outlined instructions for religious duties they shared with other Muslims. Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī's comprehensive *Kind Gifts of Knowledge* (*ʿAwārif al-maʿārif*) not only touches upon such topics as the essence of Sufism, Sufi technical terminology, and the performance of forty day spiritual retreats; it also includes sections on obligatory religious practices like fasting, pilgrimage, and prayer. A chapter entitled "Describing the Prayer of the People of Closeness" (*fī waṣf ṣalāt ahl al-qurb*) couples a meticulous rehearsal of *ṣalāt* with a loose metaphysical framework rooted in unseen realms and the complex interplay between interior and exterior principles.[229] During such charged moments as divinely ordained ritual prayer, each and every move-

[227] Ibn ʿArabī, *Rasā'il*, 129-131. For more on Ibn ʿArabī's notion of Muḥammadan sainthood, see Chodkiewicz, *Seal*.

[228] Ibn ʿArabī, *Rasā'il*, 131.

[229] During his discussion of the initial *takbīr*, for example, Suhrawardī couples minute details of one's physical posture—palms at shoulder height; thumbs aligned with earlobes; fingertips parallel to ears; fingers pressed together (though fingers spread is permissible too)—with an extended discussion exploring interface between the physical body and the realm of the unseen. See Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ al-Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif al-maʿārif*, ed. Muḥammad

ment, posture, and attitude shapes phenomena in the realm of the unseen. An act as simple as the folding of one's hands after the *takbīr* becomes a struggle between heaven and earth, faith and nature, spirit and soul, angel and demon.[230] To unlock the true transformative potential of ritual prayer, therefore, Suhrawardī suggests that one must cultivate a disciplined attention to one's body and mind, a keen understanding of diverse metaphysical principles, and an imaginative capacity to negotiate between these worlds in real time.

Like Kubrā's *Epistle on Spiritual Retreat*, "Describing the Prayer of the People of Closeness" forgoes a stable theoretical framework through which to situate the various metaphysical principles it introduces. By bringing together material from the Qurʾān, *ḥadīth*, pious forefathers, and Sufi masters, Suhrawardī presents readers with a bricolage of language games and theoretical concepts. When read in polyphonic harmony, these voices generate an overarching worldview centered around the human being as a locus for fundamental ontological principles. What matters here is that readers learn to engage in a specific set of prescribed practices and experience their bodies a battlegrounds for opposing forces across all level of being. Suhrawardī implicitly deploys the universalizing hermeneutical range of his methods to present himself and his Sufi colleagues as the arbiters of the revelation as communicated to Muḥammad. The dynamic flexibility of his approach allows him to encompass a plurality of interpretive possibilities, subsuming a variety of diverse positions within his own exegetical vision. For Suhrawardī, only the embod-

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ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Khālidī (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2016), 182-183.

Minute descriptions of shared religious practices are characteristic of older Sufi manuals as well. See e.g., Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb fī muʿāmilat al-maḥbūb wa-waṣf ṭarīq al-murīd ilā maqām al-tawḥīd*, ed. Maḥmūd Ibrāhīm Muḥammad al-Riḍwānī, 3 vols. (Cairo: Maktabat Dār al-Turāth, 2001). See also al-Ghazālī's *Revival of the Religious Sciences* (*Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*) and Persian *Alchemy of Happiness* (*Kīmīyā-yi saʿādat*), both of which also contain rich descriptions of Muslim ritual practice. Idem, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-Dīn*, 10 vols. (Jedda: Dār al-Minhāj, 2011) and idem, *Kīmīyā*.

[230] Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif*, 183.

ied sensibilities of Sufism can fully realize the generative potential of Muslim practice. The Sufis are thus the real *ʿulamāʾ* of the Muslim community: the inheritors of the Prophet and the only individuals truly qualified to understand, perform, and teach fundamental religious rites.[231]

2.3. Body, Text, and Allusion

Ḥamūya's work engages with the Sufi guidebooks of his contemporaries, but deconstructs their generic conventions to open up new experiential and intellectual possibilities. The shaykh identifies the principal theme of his *Levels of Joy in the Fountains of Power* as uncovering the reality of darkness and driving it away, which, he elaborates, refers generally to stripping oneself of the veils that obscure the light of the Real.[232] The treatise's fifth appendix takes the form of an *arbaʿīniyyāt* text, outlining the contours of the Sufi path through an exegesis of forty *ḥadīth*s.[233] Although the shaykh's introduction to the appendix is characteristically difficult, a perusal of its contents demonstrates a considerable thematic and structural overlap with both contemporary and classic Sufi handbooks.[234] In order to strip away the darkness of one's particularity, Ḥamūya

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[231] Such claims about the role of Sufis vis-à-vis the broader Muslim community are characteristic of the *Kind Gifts of Knowledge* as a whole. See Ohlander, *Sufism*, 142.

[232] For more on *The Levels of Joy*, see note 108 on p. 49.

[233] For *arbaʿīniyyat* texts, see Muḥammad Zubayr Ṣiddīqī, *Ḥadīth Literature: Its Origin, Development and Special Features* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1993), 12-13 and 141n95.

In what follows, I focus my attention on cases that highlight the radical deconstructive potential of Ḥamūya's writing. Even when operating in a more conventional mode, however, the shaykh's work disrupts generic expectations. As Sārā Kashfī argues, the shaykh's *Repose of the Righteous*—his only extant manual—stands out for its unique remarkably synthetic approach to Sufi praxis, visionary experience, and ontological principles. She writes, "One could say... that Ḥamūya struck upon something new and succeeded in it." See Ḥamūya, *Sakīna*, 30-31. Ḥamūya's *Mirror of Spirits and Signs on Tablets* likewise offers detailed instructions for a Sufi liturgy, but couples these prayers with a series of talismanic diagrams and lettrist operations absent from other texts of the same genre. See Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Sajanjal al-arwāḥ wa-nuqūsh al-alwāḥ*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Fatih MS 2645 (F) and Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Carullah MS 1541 (CE).

[234] For a table of contents, see Ḥamūya, *Marātib* (P), 87b-117a. In its progression of themes, the text bears a close affinity to Suhrawardī's *Kind Gifts of Knowledge* and classical manuals like al-Ghazālī's *Revival of the Religious*

implies, wayfarers must hold fast to obligatory acts of worship, engage daily norms with proper etiquette, turn away from the moral vices, and progress through the various states and stations of the Sufi path.

While the themes and structure of Saʿd al-Dīn's appendix locate him within the discursive field outlined above, his discussion frames the human body and its senses in completely abstract terms. The text's entire discussion of prayer, for example, runs as follows:

الفصل الثالث في باب الصلوة

قال عليه الصلوة والسلام ما افترض اللّه تعالى على خلقه بعد التوحيد أحبّ إليه من الصلوة ولو كان شيء أحبّ إليه منها لتعبّد به ملائكته فمنهم راكع ومنهم ساجد وقائم وقاعد

اعلم وفّقك اللّه تعالى أنّ صفة اتصال صفات[235] السمع والقدرة القويّة والقوّة القادرة بمحلّ الكلام في الملائكة الّذين يعبّدهم اللّه تعالى بالصلوة وجعل منهم راكعًا وساجدًا وقائمًا وقاعدًا وصفة اتصال صفات الركوع والسجود والقيام والقيود من الملك بصفات نفس البشر وهي الأمّاريّة واللواميّة والمطمئنّية فإذا اتّصلت تلك الصفات بعدها ببعض وبرز القلب بحال الملك وآدم عليه الصلوة والسلام وتجمع عليه حال الملك وحال آدم في صورة واحدة فيكون حال آدم عليه الصلوة واللام نقطة دائرة الأحياء وحال الملك نقطة دائرة الأموات فيكون القلب بين الدارين مورد السرّ[236] ومحلّ نزوله وكلّ قلب هذا شأنه فإذا نهض للّه وهجم على شيء كرهته نفسه ورضيته يقيم الربوبيّة هناك وهو أن يرى صنائعه هو الّذي صنعها قبل كلّ صانع

Section 3: The Chapter on Prayer

Sciences and *Alchemy of Happiness*. The similarities between the contents of Ḥamūya's appendix and the forty chapters of the *Revival* are particularly striking, reflecting the shaykh's broader engagement with al-Ghazālī's work. As Sārā Kashfī has noted, for example, Ḥamūya's *Repose of the Righteous* quotes liberally from both the *Revival* and the *Alchemy* in its section on Sufi conduct. See Ḥamūya, *Sakīna*, 30.

[235] There is a marginal note that corrects صفات to صفة. In light of the parallel construction that follows, I have chosen to adopt the original reading.

[236] Reading السرّ for الشرّ.

> The Messenger of God said, "After *tawḥīd*, God has not made anything obligatory for His creation that is more beloved to Him than prayer. If there were anything more beloved to Him than [prayer], the angels would worship Him in that way instead. But, among them there are those who bow, prostrate, stand, and sit."
>
> Know that one Attribute links the [Divine] Attributes of hearing, powerful capacity (*al-qudra al-quwwiyya*), and all-capable power (*al-quwwa al-qādira*) with the locus of speech about the angels whom God makes worship through prayer and whom God makes bow, prostrate, stand, and sit. Another Attribute links the attributes of the angels' bowing, prostrating, standing, and sitting with the attributes of the human soul, which are commanding [evil], blaming, and being at peace. When these Attributes are joined, the heart emerges through the angelic and Adamic states (*bi-ḥāli l-malaki wa-Ādam*). The angelic and Adamic states are brought together within a single form, such that the Adamic state becomes the point in the circle of the living and the angelic state becomes the point in the circle of the dead. Between the two circles, the heart becomes the site of the secret's arrival and the locus of its descent. For each heart in this state, when it rises up to God and forces out whatever the soul hates and desires, it erects lordship (*al-rubūbiyya*) there [in its place]. This is to witness [in] His crafts Him who crafts them before any craftsman.[237]

Ḥamūya imagines the four primary postures of prayer—bowing, prostrating, standing, and sitting—as an angelic tetrad entangled in a series of connections across multiple levels of being. This tetrad mediates between divine and human realms, forging a link between a triad of Divine Attributes and the three primary states of the human soul. While each of these realms may be imagined as it own distinct ontological level, Ḥamūya frames the human being as their ultimate point of intersection: the stage at which all qualities may be perfected to reveal the unified Reality that undergirds them. Through the proper negotiation of angelic and human principles, wayfarers can annihilate the inclinations and qualities characteristic of created beings, transforming themselves (and their bodies) into vessels for the Real.

Although the section on prayer is one of the clearer passages from the appendix, its con-

[237] Ḥamūya, *Marātib*, (P) fol. 89b.

tents are characteristically slippery. The divine, angelic, and human realms are dynamic in their interactions: they merge, transform, split open, and give rise to new principles. These new principles, in turn, move spatially—emerging, descending, ascending, driving out, erecting—though without any clear point of orientation. When one attempts to map any of these referents to the cosmogonic myth with which Saʿd al-Dīn introduces the appendix, one encounters only etymological experiments, shifting frameworks, obscure terminology, subtle allusions, and interpenetrating principles.[238] Despite similarities with the tripartite realms of *lāhūt*, *malakūt*, and *mulk* from *The Book of the Point* and *The Lamp of Sufism* (see e.g., Figures 1-3), the triads and tetrads introduced in the section on prayer from Appendix 5 cannot be easily correlated with the principles outlined in those texts.

The abstract quality of Ḥamūya's style become even more apparent when his work is read against that of his teachers and colleagues. In the Sufi texts analyzed above, dynamic theoretical frameworks are grounded in concrete physical practices, teaching readers to navigate the shifting tempest of Reality through a careful attention to their own embodied experiences. While Suhrawardī stretches exhaustive accounts of the postures, sequences, attitudes, and utterances of prayer across three chapters of his *Kind Gifts of Knowledge*, Ḥamūya offers only a cursory mention of four basic forms. What's more, his specific references to bowing, prostrating, standing, and sitting have to do primarily with the attributes and activities of angels, not the fleshy bodies of human beings. Whereas Kubrā and Ibn ʿArabī employ training programs and narrative structures that anchor experiential knowledge of the unseen in the sensations of the disciplined Sufi body, Ḥamūya unmoors his readers from any explicit reference to such programs or practices.

[238] For the introduction to Appendix 5, see Ḥamūya, *Marātib*, (P) 82b-87b.

Without references to concrete physical cues, it is difficult to ascertain how—or even if—the embodied performance of ritual prayer enacts the metamorphoses Ḥamūya describes. The delicate balance between theory and practice seems to have been disrupted in Saʿd al-Dīn's text, shutting him off from the usual strategies through which his colleagues seek to transform the subjectivities of their readers.

I argue that it is precisely by priming and subverting these generic conventions Saʿd al-Dīn's texts produce their transformative effects. The thematic flow of Ḥamūya's appendix is almost identical to the structure of al-Ghazālī's 12th-century *Revival of the Religious Sciences*, a practical handbook that brings together *fiqh*, philosophical ethics, and extensive material from such earlier Sufi manuals as Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī's *Nourishment of the Hearts*.[239] By the 13th century, both al-Ghazālī and Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī's texts had become "classic" points of reference, even outside Ḥamūya's immediate circle. A document of investiture (*taqlīd*) from the Ayyūbid-cum-Mamlūk-funded Saʿīd al-Suʿadāʾ *khānaqāh* in Cairo, for example, describes the office of the institution's highest ranking Sufi with the following words: "He searches in the *tafsīr* and the *taʾwīl* in order to make the secrets of the the [Qurʾān] clear. He speaks of [al-Ghazālī's] *Revival of the Religious Science*, and obtains from it *The Nourishment of Hearts*."[240] Ibn ʿArabī and Suhrawardī likewise rework material from these classics to suit new ideological goals, intellectual frameworks, and social contexts, drawing as much from technical terminology and metaphysical

[239] See note 234 on p. 108. For a brief description of the *Revival* and its use of earlier manuals, see Griffel, *al-Ghazālī*, 48.

[240] Hofer, *Popularisation*, 46-47. The specific *taqlīd* quoted here refers to Shams al-Dīn al-Aykī (d. 1298), who became Chief Sufi at the Saʿīd al-Suʿadāʾ in 1286. Though the document itself does not survive, it is preserved in both Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir's (d. 1293) *Tashrīf al-ayyām* and Ibn al-Furāt's (d. 1405) *Tārīkh*. I have relied on Hofer's translation, with minor modifications.

frameworks as from the authors' careful attention to embodied practice.[241]

By deploying such overt thematic and conceptual allusions to what had become fundamental and oft-cited texts, Saʿd al-Dīn situates his work within contemporary conversations on the nature of the Sufi path and frames his discussions within a specific set of generic conventions. Although Ḥamūya does not explicitly inscribe Appendix 5 of *The Levels of Joy* with the minutiae of embodied practice, his structural and thematic allusions nevertheless presume—or perhaps even *demand*—a thorough familiarity with classic Sufi literature and the practical realities of Sufi training. We could say that the shaykh plays free jazz to the bebop of his contemporaries, using strategic bursts of shared vocabulary to evoke established conventions while simultaneously deconstructing the forms expected to accompany them. Like Coltrane's *Meditations* (1966), each skittering phrase or abrasive texture from Ḥamūya's *Levels of Joy* becomes meaningful not only through the cacophonous blur in which it is immediately situated, but also through the familiar frameworks it twists, warps, exaggerates, or negates through implication. That is to say, the full import of Ḥamūya's avant-garde meditations on these forty *ḥadīth* is almost impossible to grasp without an advanced understanding of the material with which he is in dialogue. To continue with our *Meditations* analogy, the meaning that emerges from such a juxtaposition is not reducible to a set of propositions that can be decoded and mapped to more conventional forms. While a well-trained musician or critic recognizes particular melodic motives and harmonic allusions in Trane's lines, such a discerning listener understands that mapping, say, "The Father And The Son And the Holy Ghost" according to the familiar changes of bebop standards alone does

[241] As Addas notes, Ibn ʿArabī mentions al-Ghazālī by name and quotes his work quite often. See Addās, *Quest*, 102-103. Both Ibn ʿArabī and Suhrawardī also make frequent reference to Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī. See e.g., Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, (OY) I.260 and (SD) I.95 and Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif*, 24.

not offer a satisfying analysis of what the piece is actually *doing*. Returning to the matter at hand, I argue that reading Ḥamūya's fifth appendix to the *Levels of Joy* is not simply a question of unlocking a normative matrix of theory and practice within which his claims would suddenly click into place. A more productive approach is to ask how the shaykh's conspicuous omission of embodied practice could have been produced and received in light of contemporary expectations and generic possibilities.

As we have seen above, medieval manuals couple meticulous bodily instructions with imaginative exercises and dynamic theoretical frames, teaching readers to frame their own experiences of Sufi practice through the subjective, epistemological, or existential realities articulated by a particular master. Though the classical form and thematic progression of Ḥamūya's appendix prime readers to forge links between his words and their own embodied experiences, he denies them the corporeal tethers with which they would typically ground their readings. At the same time, the shaykh continually reorganizes the conceptual frameworks through which he articulates his abstract discourse, disrupting all sense of interpretive stability. Ḥamūya's manipulation of shared conventions thus provokes readers to double back upon his labyrinthine passages in search of familiar embodied cues, forcing them to map and remap tentative correlations across shifting abstract and phenomenal realms. His approach targets advanced readers intimately familiar with Sufi discourse and exploits their knowledge of established conventions to generate an endless array of spiritual, existential, and experiential possibilities. It is thus in dialogue with the generic conventions of his contemporaries that the shaykh's words emerge as radically open to interpretation and, implicitly, as the ultimate articulation of Sufi practice vis-à-vis a boundless Self-Disclosure.

Ḥamūya's approach to the diverse possibilities of Sufi practice locates him squarely within the competitive field of his contemporaries. In Kubrā's *Etiquette for Novices* (*Ādāb al-murīdīn*), for example, the Khwārazmī shaykh offers a range of complementary yet incommensurable interpretations that link Sufi garb and accoutrements to inner spiritual states, deploying several lettrist operations in the process.[242] As Meier notes, "... Surely, Kubrā's list... is only one possibility which he himself could replace at any time with another."[243] By writing these diverse possibilities and interpretations into his text without attempting to harmonize them, Kubrā frames himself as privy to a dynamic way of knowing capable of encompassing an infinite number of embodied Sufi possibilities. At other points, Najm al-Dīn evokes the infinite possibilities of Sufi practice, synthesizing them into broader trends and adjudicating their relative merits before highlighting his own particular approach as the most efficient and effective.[244] Suhrawardī and Ibn ʿArabī take a similar tack in their discussions of Sufi practice. Shihāb al-Dīn's *Kind Gifts of Knowledge* outlines a range of possible *dhikr* practices and their theoretical justifications, while Ibn ʿArabī's *Epistle on the Lights* suggests that the dimensions of the Sufi path differ in accordance with diversity of wayfarers' states.[245] In short, each of these Sufis evokes and orders an infinite diversity of practice within their work to demonstrate mastery of the Sufi field and the relative superiority of their own methods. Read against his colleagues, therefore, we may understand Ḥamūya's use of allusion and his refusal to outline a specific program of embodied practice in Appendix 5 of the *Levels of*

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[242] See Kubrā, *Ādāb-i khirqa-pūshīdan*, fols. 131b-134a and Fritz Meier's "close paraphrase" in Fritz Meier, "A Book of Etiquette for Sufis," in *Essays on Islamic Piety and Mysticism*, ed. Bernd Radtke, trans. John O'Kane (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 49–92.

[243] Meier, "Book of Etiquette," 59.

[244] See e.g., Kubrā, "Traités mineurs," 15, where the shaykh explains that the paths to God are equal to the number of created souls.

[245] See Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif*, 127 ff. and Ibn ʿArabī, *Rasāʾil*, 123.

Joy as creative approach to a legible strategy of Sufi competition. The shaykh essentially turns the techniques of his contemporaries against them, deconstructing their strategies to parochialize the universalizing pretensions of their claims.

2.4. Intimate Reading

If the fifth appendix to Ḥamūya's the *Levels of Joy* operates through an ironic erasure of the body, *The Book of the Beloved* deconstructs established conventions through its performances of embodied Sufi practice in text. In addition to the introductory encomia that were a standard feature of medieval Arabic and Persian texts, Saʿd al-Dīn's text invokes God directly, interspersing prayers and supplications amongst dizzying lettrist investigations, esoteric diagrams, and intimate conversations (*munājāt*) expressed in poetic language. The shaykh's invocations typically begin with the vocative formula *Allāhumma* ("O God!"), followed by requests for knowledge, protection, forgiveness, or transformation, and general words of exaltation and praise. The form of these prayers mirrors that of the supplications transmitted by Sufi classics like *The Nourishment of the Hearts* and *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*, as well prayer books penned by 13th-century Sufis like Ibn ʿArabī and Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī.[246] While modern readers may be tempted to ignore such passages as incidental to the primary ontological and hagiological concerns of *The Book of the Beloved*, I read Ḥamūya's invocations as performative strategies that provoked Sufi audiences to interpret his abstract discourses through the experiential frames of their own sub-

[246] See Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, *Qūt*, e.g. 28-37; al-Ghazālī, *Ihyāʾ*, e.g. II.341-451, translated as idem, *Invocations and Supplications (Kitāb al-adhkār waʾl-daʿawāt): Book IX of the Revival of the Religious Sciences* (*Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*), trans. Kojiro Nakamura, 4th ed. (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2016); Ibn ʿArabī, *The Seven Days of the Heart: Prayers for the Nights and Days of the Week*, trans. Pablo Beneito and Stephen Hirtenstein (Oxford: Anqa Publishing, 2008); and Bākharzī, *Majmūʿa*, 45-52. For an example of Ḥamūya's supplications, see the discussion below (p. 122 ff.).

jective states.

As noted above, such Sufi classics as Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī's *Nourishment of the Hearts* and al-Ghazālī's *Revival of the Religious Sciences* uphold the fundamental importance of supererogatory supplications, especially for individuals engaged in Sufi training. Apart from specific instructions and examples, Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī makes sure to establish the Qurʾānic foundation of these practices. He devotes a chapter of the *Nourishment* to verses that command believers to remember, praise, and supplicate God, focusing in particular on pericopes that allude to programs of daily and nightly offices.[247] Al-Ghazālī dedicates the entire ninth book of his *Revival*'s first quarter, "On Acts of Worship" (*Rubʿ al-ʿibādāt*), to invocations and supplications, framing them as the paradigmatic acts of worship performed with one's tongue, second only to Qurʾānic recitation.[248] Tracing invocation and supplication back to the prophets, Muḥammad, and the community of early Muslims, al-Ghazālī records countless prayers from the *ḥadīth* and other reports as exemplary models for his readers.[249]

Ḥamūya's 13th-century colleagues continued to uphold supplication and supererogatory prayer as fundamental Sufi practices. Kubrā's *ijāza* to Saʿd al-Dīn makes reference to a broader program of daily offices, assigning specific hours for remembrance of God, charging his disciple with supplications in his memory and alluding to particular moments during which these supplications are most effective.[250] While Kubrā's extant works shy away from the specifics of these dai-

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[247] Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, *Qūt*, 10.

[248] al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, II.343 and idem, *Invocations*, 2.

[249] al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, II.408-435 and idem, *Invocations*, 63-104. In another example of the intertextual relationship between al-Ghazālī's *Revival* and Abū Ṭalib al-Makkī's *Nourishment*, the former specifically names the latter as a key source for the supplications recorded in the fourth chapter of "On Invocations and Supplications." See al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, II.432 and idem, *Invocations*, 87.

[250] Kubrā, *Ijāza* and Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 18. Kubrā characterizes this itinerary as *dhikr Allāh*, a technical term often deployed in reference to a specific type of spiritual exercise centered around repeated ritual formulae. Despite

ly offices, other Sufis close to Ḥamūya penned litanies elaborating their own programs in great detail. Suhrawardī's *Kind Gifts of Knowledge* outlines a twenty-four hour program of supplications, Qurʾān recitations, *dhikr* formulas, and supererogatory prayers, transmitting a host of litanies directly from Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī's *Nourishment*.[251] Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī produced an analogous itinerary of devotions in Persian, known in manuscript collections as *Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī's Prayers* (*Awrād-i Sayf al-Dīn-i Bākharzī*).[252] Apart from the daily exercises mentioned in *The Essence of What the Novice Needs*, Ibn ʿArabī composed a collection of prayers—known variously as *Daily Prayers* (*al-Awrād al-yawmiyya*), *Prayers for the Week* (*Awrād al-usbūʿ*), *Prayers for Days and Nights* (*Awrād al-ayyām wa-l-layālī*), and *A Devotional Prayer* (*Wird*)—that prescribe a cycle of petitions and supplications to be performed morning and evening for each day of the week.[253]

In classic manuals like *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*, these prayers of supplication were both tools through which Sufis could call upon God for favors and spiritual technologies intended to discipline supplicants' subjectivities. Al-Ghazālī clarifies the etiquette (*adab*) of supplication in "On Invocations and Supplications" (*Kitāb al-adhkār wa'l-daʿawāt*), outlining a series of embodied practices with which to inculcate an attitude of humble submission. He instructs read-

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the specialized connotations of the word, Kubrā's usage suggests a broader matrix of daily practice—supplications, supererogatory prayers, and *dhikr* in the more restricted sense—intended to direct an individual's attention toward God. Nakamura's introduction to al-Ghazālī's book of invocations and supplications confirms a similarly expansive use of the *dhikr* in the *Revival* as well. See al-Ghazālī, *Invocations*, xxxii-xxxviii.

[251] Ohlander, *Sufism*, 219 and Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif*, 216-235.

[252] See Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī, *Awrād-i Sayf al-Dīn-i Bākharzī*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehid Ali Paşa MS 1382, fols. 34-38 and idem, *Majmūʿa*, 45-52.

[253] See Ibn ʿArabī, *Seven Days*. See also other collections of Ibn ʿArabī's prayers, including idem, *A Prayer for Spiritual Elevation and Protection: Al-Dawr al-Aʿlā (Ḥizb al-Wiqāya)*, trans. Suha Taji-Farouki (Oxford: Anqa Publishing in Association with the Muhyiddin Ibn ʿArabi Society, 2006).

Ibn ʿArabī's *Meccan Revelations* includes instructions for supplications as well, e.g., the *istikhāra* prayer, a petition performed to help with decision making. See idem, *Futūḥāt*, (OY) VIII.125 and (SD) II.235.

ers to petition God quietly while facing the *qibla*, urging them to lower their eyes and raise their arms or else to prostrate themselves completely.[254] Al-Ghazālī likewise forbids supplicants from expressing their petitions in an ornate rhymed prose (*sajʿ*), arguing that such showy language and affected performance contradict the self-abasement that the act of prayer is supposed to cultivate.[255]

Apart from these physical prescriptions, al-Ghazālī demands that supplicants undertake their prayers while channeling specific affective or emotional states. He requires humility, submissiveness, longing, and fear; firm belief and sincere hope for a response; earnestness; and an inner decorum characterized by repentance, rejection of wrongdoing, and turning towards God with the utmost zeal.[256] For al-Ghazālī, therefore, supplication is a holistic regimen of physical and emotional discipline. The goal of such a practice is to cultivate proper etiquette with respect to God—i.e., states of attentive humility and yearning hopefulness which are, in turn, *prerequisite conditions* for experiential Sufi knowledge.[257]

For Saʿd al-Dīn's contemporaries, etiquette and supplication could also function as a manifestation of experiential knowledge. Ibn ʿArabī's chief disciple and Ḥamūya's close friend Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī composed treatises that integrated supplications and intimate dialogues with God as a means of articulating specific experiential dimensions of the Sufi path and the realities unveiled therein. In an epistolary exchange between Qūnawī and the Peripatetic philosopher Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 1274), Qūnawī's messenger erroneously included such a text—entitled

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[254] al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, II.379-381 and idem, *Invocations*, 36-38.

[255] al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, II. 382-384 and idem, *Invocations*, 38-41.

[256] al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, II. 384-393 and idem, *Invocations*, 41-54.

[257] al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, VIII.560-561.

Expectoration of an Ailing Breast and Gift of One who is Thankful (*Nafthat al-maṣdūr wa-tuhfat al-shakūr*)—along with the Sufi's initial letter critiquing the epistemological capacities of the intellect.[258] Ṭūsī is bemused by the treatise and questions why his interlocutor would produce such a mawkish composition. While he acknowledges the utility of supplication and intimate conversation for novices, Ṭūsī suggests that these practices should be unnecessary for an accomplished Sufi shaykh like Qūnawī.[259]

In his rejoinder to Ṭūsī, Qūnawī explains that the supplications and intimate conversations contained in the *Expectoration* articulate divine revelations (*nafaḥāt ilāhiyya*) that he received during moments of spiritual retreat, expressing Attributes of the Real—necessity and contingency, lordship and servanthood—as they became manifest to/through him.[260] Qūnawī frames spiritual retreat as a journey in which wayfarers traverse the entirety of the microcosm within their own selves and explore the Divine Self-Disclosure as a series of stages and states that alternate between two primary poles of Being. On one side, there is necessity and lordship; on the other, contingency and servanthood.[261] Qūnawī explains that each of these states and stages has a language and etiquette through which it is to be experienced and expressed. Despite being recognized as an accomplished shaykh, he argues that the Real continues to unfold Itself to him

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[258] For an edition of the exchange (which does not include the *Expectoration*), see Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī and Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *al-Murāsalāt bayna Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī wa-Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī / Annäherungen: Der Mystisch-Philosophische Briefwechsel zwischen Ṣadr ud-Ḍīn-i Qōnawī und Naṣīr ud-Dīn-i Ṭūsī*, ed. Gudrun Schubert (Beirut: Franz Steiner, 1995). For a full discussion of the exchange, see William C. Chittick, "Mysticism versus Philosophy in Earlier Islamic History: The al-Ṭūsī, al-Qūnawī Correspondence," *Religious Studies* 17, no. 1 (1981): 87–104.

For the *Expectoration*, see Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, *Nafthat al-maṣdūr wa-tuhfat al-shakūr*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Amcazade Hüseyin MS 447, fols. 1-17. For a brief description of the text, see Todd, *Sufi Doctrine*, 39-49, 188.

[259] al-Qūnawī and al-Ṭūsī, *al-Murāsalāt*, 89-90.

[260] See al-Qūnawī and al-Ṭūsī, *al-Murāsalāt*, 135-136.

[261] Ḥamūya characterizes these poles as conquering (*qahr*) and kindness (*luṭf*). See e.g., idem, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fol. 23b ff.

through all of it Its dynamic and affective qualities. Articulating the knowledge revealed to him at this particular moment of spiritual retreat—i.e., a specific Attribute of lordship from the perspective of a corresponding Attribute of servanthood—thus demands a language of humble supplication. Anything else would not only breach the rules of etiquette; it would be clear evidence against the veracity of his experience.

With this context in mind, let us return to Ḥamūya's *Book of the Beloved*. Unlike the examples found in Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī's *Nourishment*, al-Ghazālī's *Revival*, al-Suhrawardī's *Kind Gifts*, and Bākharzī and Ibn ʿArabī's *Prayers*, Ḥamūya's petitions are not transmitted within a context of self-conscious liturgical instruction or elaboration. He does not locate his prayers within broader discussions of ritual practice, nor does he explicitly mark them as paradigmatic models for performance.[262] Unlike Qūnawī's *Expectoration*, furthermore, Ḥamūya does not frame *The Book of the Beloved* as a diary of his own supplications and experiences. Saʿd al-Dīn's prayers only occur at key sections of the text, scattered amongst ecstatic poetry and intimate conversations, arcane diagrams, spiritual visions, and lettrist investigations into range of themes including hagiology, ontogenesis, apocalypticism, prophetic lore, and Qurʾānic exegesis.

By excising the language of prayer from its conventional contexts and grafting it into the abstract discourses of *The Book of the Beloved*, Ḥamūya manipulates Sufi supplication to generate new interpretive possibilities. The shaykh retools Sufi technologies to explore the affective dimensions of Reality, encouraging readers to interpret his words through their own dynamic subjective states. Such strategies divorce the meaning of his words from a single authorial vision while simultaneously restricting their ideal audience to readers with advanced knowledge of Sufi

[262] Cf. e.g., Bākharzī, *Majmūʿat*, 45.

practice.

To give a clearer sense of Ḥamūya's invocations, I transcribe and translate a brief example from *The Book of the Beloved* here:

اللّهمّ بحُرمة محبوبك وبما كشفت علينا من آثار محبوبك وأنوار مربوبك وطفل لطفك وضيف فضلك ودرّة بحر جودك وقوّة سلطان عساكرك وجنودك أن تُخرجِنا إلى سعة رحمتك وعلمك وكرسيّك من مضائق إطلاقك وإمساكك وقيودك تمسّكْنا بذيل المحبوب فاجعلْنا منه في العقول والقلوب والغيوب لا شكّ ولا إخلاج ولا ريب فيه اخرجْ من وجودنا منافيه وما ينافيه نحن الضيّاع في بوادي الطلب والهلكي على أمت الغلب فأدركْنا به وبما فيه منك وخلّصنا من مواطن السلب

O God—by the sanctity of Your Beloved and his traces You have uncovered for us; by the lights of Your scion, the child of Your kindness, the recipient of Your virtue, the pearl from the Your generosity's sea, the power from Your armies and soldiers' might—bring us out to the expanse of Your mercy, knowledge, and throne from the narrow straights of your loosing, seizing, and binding. Make us grasp the Beloved's skirts, and thereby make us without doubt, trembling, or misgivings with respect to him in [our] hearts, intellects, eyes, and hidden aspects. Remove incompatibility with him and whatever contradicts him from our existence. We are lost in the deserts of seeking—perishing, too weak to overcome. Make us perceive him and whatever is Yours within him. Liberate us from the lawless lands of denial.[263]

This particular prayer occurs near the beginning of *The Book of the Beloved*, following Ḥamūya's preliminary discussion of the Beloved's "ten faces" (sing. *wajh*) and his relationship with the Real. After continuing his supplication for about another folio, the shaykh concludes by naming God the true speaker of the text's words and beseeching Him to clarify their meanings for readers who have undergone the proper preparation.[264] From here, Ḥamūya launches into a discussion of the fifteen lettrist circles that make up the bulk of the treatise.

[263] Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fol. 9a; (CE78) fol. 9a; (NO) fol. 8a; (AS58) fol. 7b; (YC) fols. 17b-18a.

[264] Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fol. 9b; (CE78) fol. 9b; (NO) fol. 7b; (AS58) fol. 8a; (YC) fol. 19a.

A surface reading of Ḥamūya's petitions sensitizes readers to key themes that will be explored later in the text. At this level, his supplications mirror the elaborate introductory encomia found in both Sufi and non-Sufi texts written in Arabic and Persian. The prayer translated above, for example, foreshadows many of the themes that follow: the intimate relationship between the Real and the Beloved, the equation of true knowledge with recognition of the Beloved, and the intellectual, sensory, phenomenal, and spiritual aspects of this recognition. At the same time, by embedding his supplications amidst arcane, often incomprehensible passages that engulf readers in a swirl of letters, discourses, and allusions, Ḥamūya inscribes the relationship between prayer, invocation, and revelation at the heart of Sufi practices directly into his text. *The Book of the Beloved* thus becomes a model for the humble supplications of the Sufi aspirant and the divine outpourings that follow, rendering Ḥamūya's dizzying analyses and poetic outbursts textual manifestations of experiential knowledge—i.e., the direct words of God. As he states explicitly, "O God, truly *You* are the One Who speaks in what is spoken; You are the One Who knows what I say."[265] In this way, it is possible to discern certain affinities between the *Book of the Beloved* and Qūnawī's *Expectoration*. Though their forms may differ, each text uses prayer as a means of expressing the dynamic interplay between the Real's Attributes as they become manifest within one's own self.

Ḥamūya's supplications offer more than just a two-dimensional map or objective model for the relationship between Sufi knowledge and practice. Following the widespread Sufi notion that individuals only receive revelation in accordance with their spiritual capacity, Saʿd al-Dīn suggests that the meaning of his words—themselves instantiations of revealed knowledge—is

[265] Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fol. 9b; (CE78) fol. 9b; (NO) fol. 7b; (AS58) fol. 8a; (YC) fol. 19a.

likewise dependent upon the capabilities of his readers. At the end of the prayer translated above, he asks, "O God, uncover the secret truth of what is written here of *The Book of the Beloved* for the lovers of Your Beloved *inasmuch as they have stepped into the circle of the one You seek*."[266] Ḥamūya frames stepping into the circle of [the Beloved] as a manifestation of spiritual achievement, thus rendering full knowledge he articulates accessible only to accomplished Sufis. For these advanced readers—who would be well-versed in the exigencies of Sufi training and the generic conventions of Sufi texts—I suggest that Ḥamūya's supplications function as ritual cues that catalyze phenomenal and affective effects. For sections in which supplications are inscribed, readers may have been expected to perform Saʿd al-Dīn's prayers according to the conventions outlined above, coupling his words with specific embodied and affective practices to produce the feelings of humility, submissiveness, longing, fear, or sincere hopefulness intrinsic to (or necessary for) particular kinds of knowledge.[267]

Read according to Ḥamūya's epistemological framework, I argue that these supplications orient readers toward spiritual stages and stations through which his words may be interpreted. It is here that we can sharpen our distinction between Ḥamūya text and Qūnawī's *Expectorations*. I suggest that the prayers recorded throughout the *Expectorations* offer readers a means of cultivating spiritual states linked to realities *as Qūnawī experienced them*. The meaning of the text's words become legible only to the degree that one can perform Qūnawī's prayers and achieve the specific experiential states he aims to communicate. Such an interpretation is well suited for Qūnawī's *Expectoration*, which purportedly binds its supplications and intimate conversations to a

[266] Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fol. 9b; (CE78) fol. 9b; (NO) fol. 7b; (AS58) fol. 8a; and (YC) fol. 19a.

[267] Diagrams, for example, seem particularly prone to occur near supplications throughout the text. See e.g., Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fols. 1b-2a, 8a-8b (the prayer is from Q. 3:26-27), 80a.

distinct spiritual event. The expansive form and diverse thematic range of *The Book of the Beloved*, however, resists such a particularized reading. In a characteristically deconstructive move, Ḥamūya removes Sufi supplications from manuals, liturgies, and spiritual diaries, then recontextualizes them within the disorienting twists and turns of the *Beloved*.[268] In their new context, the shaykh's prayers do not project his spiritual experiences onto his audience; they provoke readers to produce meaning by bringing his arcane words into dialogue with their own ever-changing subjective states.

To understand how *The Book of the Beloved* might have brought together knowledge and individual readers' experiences through the language of prayer, I read Ḥamūya's supplications in accordance with the practices of Sufi petition outlined throughout this chapter. The particular prayer translated above binds the process of knowing God's Beloved to specific affective states triggered by humility in the face of utter perfection. Located near the beginning of the *Book of the Beloved*, the prayer draws upon contemporary Sufi practices of supplication, enabling readers to cultivate the attitude of humble longing necessary to engage with the onto-epistemological transformation the text aims to enact. Paradoxically, it is only by performing the etiquette of total servanthood that one becomes able to realize the totality of Real's Attributes.[269] As a dynamic and relational dimension of Reality, however, the proper performance of servanthood is not static in its manifestation. That is to say, *how* one should perform this servanthood depends on the exigencies of one's spiritual state in a particular context and point in time.

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[268] For more on the deliberately disorienting strategies of *The Book of the Beloved*, see Chapter 4.

[269] Such a paradox is common in medieval Sufi manuals. In a section of his *Kind Gifts of Knowledge* entitled "On the Etiquette of the Divine Presence for the People of Closeness" (*fī adab al-ḥaḍra al-ilāhiyya li-ahl al-qurb*), for example, Suhrawardī explains that it was Muḥammad's perfect humility that allowed him to ascend beyond all other prophets and into the Divine Presence. See idem, *ʿAwārif*, 169.

While the prayer above links the Beloved to God's kindness, virtue, generosity, and power, it imagines the reader to be lost, perishing, and veiled from the perfect manifestation of these Attributes. Just as Ibn ʿArabī demands that worshipers take stock of their own characters through litanies composed of Qurʾānic verses, Ḥamūya's supplication—and, in fact, his text as a whole—presents the Beloved's perfect qualities and intimate relationship with God as points for meditative contemplation. What I propose here is a historically conditioned "technology of the self" made manifest through the embodied practices and ethical injunctions of 13th-century Sufi supplication. Such practices would not have imagined the dialogic relationship between the reader's spiritual state and the perfect qualities of the Beloved as a series of static characteristics to be tabulated and compared in sequence. Instead, the distance separating the reader from God and His Beloved would be dynamic and affective in nature, intimately linked with one's own level of spiritual attainment and progression along the Sufi path.

By forcing readers to juxtapose their own dynamic states with the shifting qualities of the Beloved's perfection as articulated throughout *The Book of the Beloved*, Ḥamūya's prayers articulate a relational vision of human perfection. In other words, how one is to assimilate the Beloved's qualities—i.e., to "remove incompatibility with him"—depends on one's relationship with those qualities at a specific point in time. As each reader's subjective state changes, his or her relationship with the words of the text must be continually reoriented and reinterpreted. Prayer, according to this reading, is a both a tool that calibrates the experimental conditions of one's experiential laboratory and a catalyst that drives specific experiential reactions. Ḥamūya's use of prayer and supplication thus leave the interpretive possibilities of his text open to the full range of experiential phenomena generated by Sufi training and ritual practice.

From a social perspective, Ḥamūya's prayers serve to mark his ontological and metaphysical claims as distinctly Sufi. Thinking back to the Qūnawī-Ṭūsī correspondence, we may read their quibbles over the role of prayer as a reflection of their broader disagreement vis-à-vis the intellect, experiential knowledge, and Reality. Put most simply, while the two agree on technical terminology and key metaphysical structures, they disagree over the capacity of the intellect to perceive the realities things as they are in themselves.[270] Because Qūnawī frames experiential knowledge as the only means of grasping these realities, he emphasizes the fundamental importance of the Sufi practices (and modes of expression) through which this knowledge is achieved and argues for their continued relevance even at most advanced levels. (We might also suggest the corollary—i.e., that Ṭūsī's focus on the epistemological scope of the intellect leads him to champion intellectual strategies and embodied practices over which rationalist philosophers claimed sole authority.) Ḥamūya's integration of petitions and supplications throughout his advanced theoretical expositions on the nature of being likewise underscores the inextricable relationship between embodied Sufi practice and ultimate knowledge. Such a strategy leaves his words radically open to a plurality of interpretive possibilities, but marks his knowledge as the exclusive intellectual property of the elite cadre of readers authorized to perform these transformative practices.

2.5. Conclusion

The arguments developed above historicize the relationship between knowledge, practice, and experience amongst 13th-century Sufis. We have seen how interrogating phenomenological

[270] See Chittick, "Mysticism versus Philosophy," esp. 98 ff. and Todd, *Sufi Doctrine*, esp. 35-39, 73-78.

claims as historically-contingent elements of knowledge production renders them important evidence for social- and intellectual-historical analysis. In medieval Sufi handbooks, abstract-experiential knowledge is produced through performative textual strategies keyed to the embodied and affective practices that mark Sufi identity. Here, the corporeal, cognitive, affective, and social are not neatly separable.

Against this shared epistemological landscape, Ḥamūya's textual strategies operate through subtle reference and play, manipulating, reconfiguring, or even subverting the very conventions through which they become meaningful. The fifth appendix of *The Levels of Joy* plays with representations of the body to deconstruct ubiquitous Sufi forms. While contemporary and classic manuals bind abstract metaphysical speculation to concrete bodily instructions, Ḥamūya's ironic erasure of flesh forces readers to continually remap constellations of practice, experience, and metaphysics. The effectiveness of the text's strategies rely on readers' advanced training and familiarity with the conventions of Sufi literature, manipulating these expectations to bring the infinite permutations of the Real to the forefront of their experiences. The *Book of the Beloved* peppers theoretical exposition with performative cues, evoking a broader context of Sufi praxis to explore the affective dimensions of experiential knowledge. On the one hand, Ḥamūya depends on shared conventions of supplication that bind embodied practice and affective experience to the language of Sufi liturgy. On the other, he excises prayer from manuals and spiritual diaries, setting this potent technology of the self in service of the abstract heterotopia that is *The Book of the Beloved.* Within this new structure, prayer brings Ḥamūya's words into dialogue with the dynamic subjectivities of his readers, generating endless intersections of abstract and affective possibilities.

Chapter 3
Genealogies of Knowledge: Shaykhs, Sufis, and Spiritual Inheritance

...The individual of sound origins belongs to a good and pure stock, which has individuals, offspring, and numbers of the utmost power and furthest refinement.

Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Letter to ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ʿAṭā-Malik Juwaynī (d. 1283)*[271]

What's your name? Who's your daddy? Is he rich like me?

Zombies, "Time of the Season"[272]

Before they could be disciplined into the embodied practices and relational epistemologies of medieval Sufism, would-be Sufis had to cultivate interpersonal relationships that would bind them to a network of masters, colleagues, and disciples in the past, present, and future. Ḥamūya focuses in particular on the immediate link between shaykhs and their students, framing this bond as the *sine qua non* of the Sufi path. In such texts as *The Lamp of Sufism* and *The Levels of Joy*, he prescribes a rigid dyad with distinct roles, urging students to submit unconditionally to their shaykhs, whose charismatic authority and boundless knowledge would mold them into vessels worthy of the Real's Self-Disclosure. Here, master and disciple are mirror images—one entirely reliant, the other absolutely free. As Ḥamūya elaborates the qualities and duties of each pole, he implicitly places himself in the position of the ideal shaykh; his own textual output evidence of an infinitely generative approach to Reality.

Though Saʿd al-Dīn grounds the acquisition of knowledge in the relationship between these fairly generic types, a comparative analysis of his narrative strategies suggests a more com-

[271] Ḥamūya, "Makātīb," 468.

[272] Zombies, "Time of the Season," *Odessey* [*sic*] *and Oracle* (CBS, 1968).

plicated interplay between knowledge, power, and the social world. By comparing Saʿd al-Dīn's claims with those put forth by his master Najm al-Dīn Kubrā (d. 1221) and close friend Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 1274), I explore how even the most accomplished shaykhs must legitimate their knowledge by forging links of *dependence* across social worlds past and present. Both Kubrā and Qūnawī articulate their authority through recourse to their own spiritual masters, recounting complete submission in the past as evidence and justification for an elevated rank in the present. Such texts as *The Effusions of Beauty and Revelations of Majesty* (*Fawāʾiḥ al-jamāl wa-fawātiḥ al-jalāl*) and *The Divine Breaths* (*al-Nafaḥāt al-ilāhiyya*) thus present their authors simultaneously as masters and disciples, with each role dialogically informing the other. The specific relationships these thinkers deploy and how they choose to narrate them work in tandem with the distinct social goals and idiosyncratic modes of knowledge production put forth in their work. For Kubrā, accounts of the unbreakable bond between him and his training shaykh (*shaykh al-khalwa*) work to legitimate his pedagogical practices and distinctive exegeses of visionary experiences. Likewise, Qūnawī's reports of his meetings with a deceased Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1240) in the unseen world emphasize the relative importance of spiritual over biological ties in an attempt to secure his place as principal inheritor of his master's legacy.

Unlike Kubrā and Qūnawī, Saʿd al-Dīn is almost completely silent on the issue of his own spiritual masters. When read against his colleagues' narratives, however, the faint specters that Ḥamūya conjures suggest a keen awareness of the social and material constraints through which his knowledge and authority as a shaykh could be legitimated and received. Although his propositional claims focus explicitly on the link between master and disciple as the primary means for cultivating authoritative knowledge, Saʿd al-Dīn's conspicuous citations of his illustrious forefa-

ther Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya highlight the fundamental importance of another kind of social dependence—family and genealogy. The "Sufi lord of Baḥrābād" implies that it is not only training and initiation, but also blood, land, and birth that mold one's body into a vessel for the Real's Self-Disclosure.

Coupling the shaykh's citations with evidence from his personal correspondences, this chapter illuminates the stakes of his rhetorical strategies and tracks their discursive possibilities across a range of contexts: social, intellectual, political, Sufi, Ayyūbid, and Mongol. While we have focused so far on how Ḥamūya's performative writing could produce endless meanings for Sufi readers, I explore here how he manipulated established genealogical conventions to generate a range of social possibilities for himself. Here, familial ties are just as plastic as initiatic lineages. Just as Kubrā and Qūnawī shape past spiritual relationships to suit their contemporary goals, Ḥamūya manipulates a range of initiatic, interpersonal, and biological ties to navigate diverse networks of actors across the medieval Islamic world.

Rather than binding himself to the legacy of his immediate masters, Saʿd al-Dīn's laconic references to Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya could mean different things to different audiences. In Ayyūbid territories, Saʿd al-Dīn's assertion of a direct spiritual bond between himself and his forefather stakes an implicit claim in the Ḥamūya family hierarchy, co-opting and subverting the authority of his politically ascendant cousins, the famous Chief Sufis (sing., *shaykh al-shuyūkh*) of Egypt and Syria. In Khurāsān, on the other hand, the shaykh's arguments in favor of familial prestige and tacit nods to his own illustrious lineage reflect a nuanced engagement with new models of genealogical authority catalyzed by Mongol rule. Understanding how Ḥamūya negotiates these diverse contexts, relationships, and discourses demands that we read Sufi knowledge as

fundamentally entangled with the world(s) that produced it: a dynamic response to the messy realities of human life.

3.1. Master of Puppets: Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya and the All-Powerful Sufi Shaykh

For Saʿd al-Dīn, no matter how strong their innate ability or conviction, a wayfarer cannot achieve ultimate knowledge without the guidance of an accomplished shaykh. While traversing the Sufi path, Ḥamūya explains, seekers inevitably succumb to a state of hopeless confusion, overwhelmed by the chaotic interplay of entities and principles. In *The Lamp of Sufism*, he writes:

> سالک چون به منزلی می رسد که فهم و ادراکش نمی رسد و حیرت حجابت خیالش می گردد و شب جهل به روز علمش می افزاید و سحاب جنون آسمان عقلش را همی پوشند و باد هو در نفس به حرکت می آید و آتش در آبش می زند و بر خاکش می اندازد تلاطم امواج اشکال مختلفه در شب ظلمت حیرت برهم می زند درویش در اضطراب می آید و متقلّب و متحیر می شود
>
> When the wayfarer reaches the station where his understanding and perception do not reach; where confusion veils his imagination; where ignorance's night falls over the day of his knowledge; where the clouds of madness cover his intellect's sky; where the winds of *huwa* whip up in his soul; where fires are struck up in his water and cast upon his earth; where the roaring waves of disparate likenesses clash together in the dark night of confusion; this dervish enters a world of agitation, becoming disoriented and confused.[273]

Here, the wayfarer begins to experience the fundamental interrelation, utter instability, and infinite ontological potential of being. Plunged into the unfathomable depths of the Divine Self-Disclosure, the dervish panics, thrashing about recklessly, grasping for a stable point of reference. Only the steady hand of a skilled Sufi master can pull the disoriented student from the "dark

[273] Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 105.

night of confusion," teaching them to recognize and navigate the unity underlying the tempest of opposing forms. Because the wayfarer's frantic efforts merely serve to exacerbate their bewilderment, their salvation depends on entrusting themself unconditionally to the will of the shaykh. Directly addressing the reader, Ḥamūya continues:

این معنی وقتی بدانی که روی به صادقان آوری و پشت بر کاذبان کنی و از منافقان معرض شوی و خدمت مشایخ از سر ادب کنی و تواضع پیش گیری در خضرت ایشان تشیّخ ننمایی و وعظ نگویی که محروم شوی از سرّ معانی و در روی ایشان گستاخی نکنی و گستاخ ننگری و قول و فعل ایشان را منکر نشوی از منکرات و معروفات و سؤالات مشکل نپرسی که بوقت خود آن مشکل حلّ شود ببرکت صحبت پیر

و مدد کن در معاش پیر را از هر چه در بایست باشد از مطعم و ملبس و مشرب و منام و منکح و در حضرت پیر با ادب نشینی [و] متوجه به حضرت شیخ [باشی] و به قلب و قالب و به یمین و شمال ننگری و با کس سخن نگویی

و همچون صدف دهان قابلیّت باز کنی و قطره باران که از سحاب کلمات و حروف بواسطه ریاح نفس شیخ که از آسمان حضرت ولایت نازل می شود آن را قابل شوی و در صدف صدر نگهداری و از وسواس نفس امّاره نگهداری و به آب ذکر و آتش محبّت آن را می پروری تا بمرور ایّام دُرّ معنی شود و جواهر حکمت گردد

You will know this meaning when you turn towards the sincere (*ṣādiqān*), turn your back to the liars, and steer clear of the hypocrites; when you serve the shaykhs with the highest etiquette (*adab*); when you humble yourself before them; when you do not feign learnedness in their presence; when you do not preach if you are cut off from the secret of meanings; when you are not rude (nor stare rudely) in their presence; when you do not disavow their speech or actions vis-à-vis what is forbidden or lawful; and when you do not ask difficult questions that will be solved in their own time through the grace (*barakat*) of the master's companionship (*ṣuḥbat-i pīr*).

Assist the master in his livelihood—i.e., food, clothing, drink, sleep, or marital concerns—in whatever way is necessary. Sit in the presence of the master with proper etiquette and face his presence without turning your body to the left or right and without speaking with anyone.

Be receptive like an open oyster and accept the drop of rain from the clouds of

> [his] words and letters, which descend from the sky of sainthood's presence through the winds of the shaykh's breath. Keep this in the oyster of your heart; keep it safe from the whispers of soul that commands [evildoing]. Nourish it with the water of *dhikr* and the fire of love until, with the passing of days, it becomes a pearl of meaning and gems of wisdom.[274]

Ḥamūya focuses on the social relationships that pertain between master and disciple, emphasizing the embodied practices and rules of etiquette to which students must adhere.[275] What allows the dervish to transcend the suffocating angst brought about by the chaotic interplay of forms is not necessarily a cache of intellectual arguments, but a particular type of social interaction. Ḥere, Ḥamūya implies that the abstract knowledge to which he devotes hundreds of folia is a product of embodied social practices and must be engaged as such. Difficult questions that perplex the disciple are understood in due time through the charismatic grace (*barakat*) of his companionship (*ṣuḥbat*), so long as one adheres to proper modes of conduct. Likewise, when the shaykh *does* lecture on points of theoretical or practical import, students are to internalize them through *dhikr* and intense emotional attachment.

Immediately after highlighting the practices and attitudes proper to students, Saʿd al-Dīn offers a brief outline of a worthy master's qualities, implicitly casting himself as a paradigmatic model. The Sufi shaykh sees beyond opposing qualities—up is like down, knowledge is like ignorance, light is like darkness, nearness is like distance, known is like unknown, and so on and so forth. Rather than experiencing a world of discrete binaries, Ḥamūya explains:

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[274] Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 105-106.

[275] See also Ḥamūya, *Marātib*, (P) fols. 13a-14b for a testament (*waṣīya*) outlining the duties of students to their masters.

شیخ بر مرکب رفرف راکب است از رفرف به رفرف حیث یشأ یمیناً و شمالاً و تحتًا و فوقًا

...

یونس در قعر بحر در ظلمت بطن ماهی همان می یافت که سیّد المرسلین در سدره منتهی می یافت و ماه را می شکافت در عرصه اجتلای قدرت نه برّ باشد و نه بحر و نه حیات و نه موت و نه جهات و [نه] پنج حواس و نه چهار ارکان و نه هفت دوزخ و نه هشت بهشت و نه نُه فلک و نه کواکب کلیّات و نه قمر ولایت و نه شمس رسالت و نه نجوم نبوّت و نه مقامات و نه طامات و نه طاعات و نه مناجات ولا أنا و أنت ولا قُرب ولا بُعد واحد فرد صمد نیز منزّه عن العدد و مقدّس عن الولد ألوهیّة في لاهوتیّه دائم

The shaykh rides the mount of fluttering (*rafraf*), from fluttering to fluttering, wheresoever he pleases—right, left, down, or up.

...

Jonah experienced the same in the darkness of the whale's belly at the bottom of the sea as the chief of the apostles did at the furthest lote tree [in the seventh heaven]—likewise when he split the moon. In the court of power's revelation, there is neither forest nor sea, neither life nor death. There are neither directions, nor five senses, nor four elements. There are neither seven hells, nor eight heavens, neither nine spheres, nor the planets in their entirety. There is neither the moon of sainthood, nor the sun of apostleship, nor the stars of prophethood. There are neither stations nor calamities, neither acts of devotion nor intimate prayers. There is neither I nor you, neither closeness nor farness. [Only] one, unique and eternal, stripped of all number, sanctified beyond parturition, divinity in divineness, eternal.[276]

The shaykh dances across all levels of reality, recognizing that no principle exists in and of itself, for at the most fundamental level, the Real undergirds them all. For our purposes, what is important is that the point of view that is ascribed to Sufi masters is part and parcel of the cosmic vision central to *The Lamp of Sufism*, *The Book of the Beloved*, and other treatises analyzed in Chapters 1 and 2. As the rhythm of the passage builds in intensity, Saʿd al-Dīn's language underscores his

[276] Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 106-107.

self-aggrandizing claims. Drifting in and out of Arabic and Persian—even within a single clause—he implies that linguistic boundaries, like all other modes of division, are of no real consequence to him. Thus, while disciples may depend on shaykhs to cultivate their minds and bodies, the ultimate expression of shaykhliness occurs through a performance of the dynamic modes of knowledge that Ḥamūya develops in his own work.

By blurring the distinction between Jonas, Muḥammad, and Sufi masters, Saʿd al-Dīn not only vaunts himself as the perfect shaykh, he lays claim to prophetic knowledge as well. In the opening lines of *The Lamp of Sufism*, Ḥamūya foreshadows these strategies, foregrounding the association between his text and prophetic wisdom. After praising God and His qualities, Saʿd al-Dīn introduces a *ḥadīth* about Jesus, an ignorant schoolteacher, and knowledge of the Arabic letters. He writes:

> قال رسول اللّه صلّى اللّه عليه و سلّم
> إنّ عيسى بن مريم اسلمته أمّه إلى الكتّاب لتعلّمه فقال له المعلّم اكتب فقال ما أكتب قال بسم اللّه الرحمن الرحيم فقال له عيسى ما بسم اللّه فقال المعلّم لا أدري فقال له عيسى صلوات اللّه عليه الباء بهاء اللّه والسين سناؤه والميم ملكه و اللّه إله إلهة الرحمن رحمن الدنيا والرحيم رحيم الآخرة
>
> The Messenger of God, peace be upon him, said:
> Jesus son of Mary was handed over by his mother to the schoolteacher in order that he be educated. The instructor told him, "Write." He asked, "What shall I write?" The instructor said, "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate." Jesus asked, "What is [the meaning of] 'In the name of God'?" The instructor replied, "I don't know." So, Jesus, peace be upon him, told him—"The *bāʾ* is God's splendor; the *sīn* is His brilliance; and the *mīm* is His supreme authority. Allāh means that He is the god of gods; the Merciful means He is merciful with respect to the world; and the Compassionate means He is compassionate with respect to the afterlife."[277]

[277] Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 57.

Although Jesus has been endowed with perfect knowledge *ab initio*, he enrolls in a local grammar-school and submits to the instruction of his new schoolteacher. During the course of the lesson, however, it becomes clear that his schoolteacher knows nothing at all.[278] Despite having mastered reading, reciting, and writing the outer form of the *basmala*, the instructor is completely unaware of the phrase's real significance. Here, the role of master and disciple are inverted. Jesus now assumes the role of authoritative shaykh, breaking the *basmala* into its constituent parts and relating them to attributes of the Real. Not only does the young prophet deploy Saʿd al-Dīn's lettrist strategies; many of the same associations he uncovers are reproduced verbatim throughout the body of the treatise that follows.[279] By placing this anecdote at the beginning of the *Lamp of Sufism,* Ḥamūya implicitly correlates the lettrist methodologies he outlines in his text with the highest degrees of prophetic understanding. While Jesus may speak the word of God, he does so through the language of *Miṣbāḥ*.

3.2. The Strongest Bond: Najm al-Dīn Kubrā and ʿAmmār al-Bidlīsī

In theorizing an inviolable link between Sufi shaykh, student, and knowledge, Saʿd al-Dīn sets his work in conversation with a broader network of teachers, colleagues, and disciples. His own shaykh Najm al-Dīn Kubrā enjoins novices to attach themselves in mind and body to a capable master, outlining guidelines, methods, and justifications for these relationships in such pedagogi-

[278] As Hirschler notes, grammar school instructors were generally paid low salaries, as their posts were considered to be beneath the station of leading scholars or elite families. The stereotype of the foolish *maktab* instructor becomes a trope repeated across a wide range of written material, from Ibn Ḥawqal's (fl. 10th c.) travelogues to the *1001 Nights*. See Konrad Hirschler, *The Written Word in the Medieval Arabic Lands: A Social and Cultural History of Reading Practices* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 111.

[279] E.g., for *mīm* as *mulk*, see Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 101; for *sīn* as *sanā'*, see idem, *Miṣbāḥ*, 60.

cal treatises as *Epistle to the Bewildered, Fearful of the Censurer's Censure* (*Risāla ilā al-hā'im al-khā'if min lawmat al-lā'im*), *The Epistle on Spiritual Retreat (Risāla fī al-khalwa)*, and *The Ten Principles* (*al-Uṣūl al-ʿashara*).[280] This latter text, for example, emphasizes complete and utter submission—students must become "like a corpse in its washer's hands" in order that the shaykh may "wash them with the waters of sainthood, cleansing them of the impurity [brought about] by estrangement and the filth [that accumulates on account of] everyday life."[281]

As a counterpoint to Ḥamūya's abstract ontological frameworks and lettrist metaphors, Kubrā makes repeated use of personal anecdotes to advance distinct social and epistemological claims.[282] Throughout *The Effusions of Beauty and Revelations of Majesty*—a longer work considered to be his magnum opus—Najm al-Dīn underscores the close spiritual bond he shared with his master ʿAmmār al-Bidlīsī (d. between 1194 and 1207/8), whether that be through al-Bidlīsī's perfect knowledge of his spiritual state, their shared visionary experiences, or his own heightened awareness of al-Bidlīsī's presence.[283] While we may read the *Effusions* as a testament to Kubrā's status as an accomplished Sufi guide in his own right, the narratives he deploys emphasize his obedience and dependence vis-à-vis al-Bidlīsī. Unlike Ḥamūya, who presents himself primarily in the role of the all-powerful shaykh, Najm al-Dīn makes frequent recourse to his past as a re-

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[280] For *Epistle to the Bewildered*, see Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, *Risāla ilā al-hā'im al-khā'if min lawmat al-lā'im*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Ayasofya MS 2058, fol. 70a and idem, "Traités mineurs," 23-37. For *The Epistle on Spiritual Retreat*, see Böwering, "Seclusion," English 280 ff. and Arabic 287 ff. For *The Ten Principles,* see Kubrā, "Traités mineurs," 17-18 and Zargar, "Ten Principles."

[281] Kubrā, "Traités mineurs," 17-18. For a translation of *The Ten Principles* and a study of "volitional death" therein, see Zargar, "Ten Principles."

[282] Kubrā does include a fair amount of lettrist and metaphysical speculation in works like *The Effusions of Beauty and Revelations of Majesty.* Even in these cases, however, he tends to rely heavily upon personal anecdotes to advance his points. See e.g., Kubrā, *Fawā'iḥ*, (M) 65 ff. and (Z) 223 ff.

[283] For al-Bidlīsī's knowledge of Kubrā's spiritual state, see Kubrā, *Fawā'iḥ*, (M) 21-22 and (Z) 155-156; for their shared visionary experiences, see idem, *Fawā'iḥ*, (M) 27 and (Z) 164; and for Kubrā's heightened awareness of al-Bidlīsī's spiritual presence, see idem, *Fawā'iḥ*, (M) 75 and (Z) 237.

liant student. In one such narrative, he recounts:

كنت منقطعًا إلى اللّه في الخلوة بذكره فجاء اللعين وأكثرَ عليّ الحيل ليشوّش الخلوة والذكر فظهر في يدي سيف الهمّة مكتوب عليه من ذنابته إلى قبضته اللّه اللّه فكنت أنفي به الخواطر المشغلة عن الله فخطر على قلبي أن أصنّف كتابًا في الخلوة أسمّيه حيَل المريد على المريد

فقلت لا يصحّ إلا بإذن الشيخ فشاورت الشيخ في الغيب فسمعت كلامه لصحّة رابطة كانت بيني وبينه أن انته عن هذا الخاطر إنّ اللّه بريئ من هذا الخاطر فإنه خاطر الشيطان لاطفك في الحيلة و سمّى نفسه مريدًا أفحسبت أنّه لا يشتم نفسه واستبعدت عنه ذلك وغرضه من ذلك أن يشغلك عن ذكر الحقّ فيتخبط عليك الأمر فانتهبت وانتهيت

فإذا خطر خاطر بقلبك أو فضاء صدرك فشاورْ فيه الشيخ فإن قال هذا خاطر الحق فاعلم أنّه كذلك وإن قال هذا خاطر النفس أو كيت وكيت فاعلم أنه كذلك وهذا ضابط لك ما لم تصل إلى الذوق فإذا وصلت إلى الذوق ذقت الخاطر فعرفته وميزته عن غيره

I was completely occupied with God, engaged in His *dhikr* during a spiritual retreat. The Cursed One arrived, stirring up tricks in order to disorient my retreat and *dhikr*. [Suddenly,] the sword of spiritual energy (*himma*) appeared in my hand, with "Allāh Allāh" written on it from tip to hilt. After using it to the annihilate thoughts that distracted me from God, I had the idea to compose a book on spiritual retreat and to name it *The Tricks of the Insolent Against the Aspirant*.

Then I said, "[Wait—]this is not proper without my shaykh's permission!" I consulted my shaykh in the unseen world—such was the soundness of the bond between us—and listened to what he told me, i.e., "Abandon these thoughts! God has nothing to do with this; it is a thought that stems from the devil, who flatters you and calls himself insolent. Did you think he wouldn't curse himself? Do you think him above that? By doing this, he aims to distract you from the Real's *dhikr* in order to harm you." So, I took heed and let [the thought] go.

When a thought comes to your heart or the expanse of your chest, seek advice about it from your shaykh. If he says that the thought comes from God, then know that this is the case. If he says it comes from the soul or such and such else, then know that this is the case. This will keep you in check so long as you have yet to reach [a state of] tasting. When you do, then you will taste a thought and [immediately] know and distinguish it from others.[284]

[284] Kubrā, *Fawā'iḥ*, (M) 15-16 and (Z) 143-145. Kubrā offers a slightly different account of the events in *The Epistle to the Bewildered*. See Kubrā, *Risālat ilā al-hā'im*, fol. 68b and "Traités mineurs," 33.

Kubrā's anecdote takes part within the context of ritual retreat, recitation, and contemplation, presumably in accordance with a regimented program outlined by al-Bidlīsī.[285] After summoning the resolve to resist the devil's distractions, Najm al-Dīn feels inspired to compose a treatise outlining what he has discovered as an aid to his fellow wayfarers. Before he sets out on the endeavor, however, he submits these intuitions to his master in order to gauge their veracity. Although the entire exchange occurs in the unseen realm, the passage nevertheless underscores an ideal of complete submission according to which the disciple must lay bare all movements, thoughts, and feelings for the shaykh's careful scrutiny. As the narrative implies, the legitimacy of Najm al-Dīn's experiential knowledge (and his authority to share it with others) is utterly dependent upon his master's interpretation and endorsement. What Kubrā experiences as a productive epiphany is analyzed and ultimately rejected by his master; this is *not* real knowledge, but another one of the devil's ruses.

It is important to recognize that the experiences presented in the *Effusions* are not straightforward accounts recorded by Kubrā the disciple; they are highly stylized narratives projected into the past by Kubrā the fully realized shaykh. The shape and emphases of the text's anecdotes, therefore, reinforce Najm al-Dīn's authority as an accomplished Sufi master and promote the social and epistemological ideals that undergird this legitimacy. While individual Sufis cultivate experiences of reality, the *knowledge* that stems from these experiences—even in its normative or theoretical ideal—is inextricable from the social world. Rather than an admission of in-

[285] While al-Bidlīsī is not mentioned by name here, the context of the passage with respect to the rest of the *Effusions* suggests that he is the shaykh Kubrā has in mind. Despite having also trained with Rūzbihān al-Wazzān al-Miṣrī (d. 1188) and Ismāʿīl al-Qaṣrī (d. 1193), al-Bidlīsī is the only one of Kubrā's masters that he mentions by name in the *Fawā'iḥ*. See note 313 on page 152 and Algar, "Eponym."

adequacy, Kubrā thus deploys his narratives of dependence as rhetorical tools with which to certify the validity of knowledge he produces. Najm al-Dīn's continued emphasis on the close relationship he shared with al-Bidlīsī—stronger than that of any other disciple, he avers—foregrounds his Sufi credentials, marking him not only as a graduate of the path, but as a star pupil and rightful heir of his master's legacy.[286] Along these lines, we can read the *Effusions* as a textual performance of the ideal shaykhliness that Kubrā illustrates via biographical anecdotes. Read in the context of the aforementioned narrative, the very fact of the text's existence stands as an implicit testament to Kubrā's success on the Sufi path. As Meier notes, "The *Fawā'iḥ* seems, in a sense, like a belated fulfillment of this desire. What was forbidden for him as a novice he later allowed himself [looking out] from a higher vantage point as an independent shaykh."[287] Just as al-Bidlīsī enables, interprets, and authorizes Najm al-Dīn's visions throughout the *Fawā'iḥ*, the text itself offers practical guidelines; onto-psychological interpretive frameworks; narrative accounts of the visual, auditory, and emotional experiences to be encountered by wayfarers on the Sufi path; and detailed analyses of these experiences.

We may pause here to note that Kubrā *does* allow for the possibility that particular individuals may achieve full sainthood and knowledge of the Real without having traversed the Sufi path. In *The Epistle to the Bewildered*, for example, he includes the following caveat—"Among the saints, there are those whom the exalted Real leads [directly] to the levels of certainty through attraction to Him (*bi-l-jadhbi ilayh*); this is also possible."[288] Nevertheless, despite presenting these

[286] For Kubrā's bond being stronger than that of al-Bidlīsī's other disciples, see *Fawā'iḥ*, (M) 75 and (Z) 237.

[287] "Das Buch *Fawā'iḥ* mutet in gewisser Weise wie eine nachträgliche Erfüllung dieses Wunsches an. As ihm als Novizen verboten war, hat er ich später als selbständiger Scheich, von einen höheren Warte aus, elaubt." Kubrā, *Fawā'iḥ* (M), 243.

[288] Kubrā, *Risāla ilā al-hā'im*, fol. 70b and "Traités mineurs," 35.

saints as a theoretical possibility, Kubrā bars them from becoming shaykhs or instructing disciples, effectively excluding them from the social economy of Sufi knowledge.[289] Because the *majdhūb*'s knowledge has been achieved outside the social networks, embodied practices, and language games of legitimate Sufi masters, it is neither communicable nor socially replicable in any form. Ironically, though these saints may rank among the upper echelons of humanity, they only become legible through the work of Najm al-Dīn and other socially authorized shaykhs.

3.3. Dream a Dream: Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī and Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī

Perhaps the difference between Ḥamūya and his master's narrative strategies emerges from a divergence in their primary methodological concerns. As Najm al-Dīn focuses on the minutiae of Sufi practices and their epiphenomena, we might conjecture that personalized accounts of training and submission under qualified teachers would simply make more sense in his work than they would in Saʿd al-Dīn's highly abstract accounts of absolute knowing and being. If we turn our attention toward Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 1274), a close friend of Saʿd al-Dīn and star pupil of Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī, this hypothesis becomes less convincing.[290] Like Ḥamūya and Kubrā, Ṣadr al-Dīn emphasizes the fundamental role of the Sufi shaykh, rooting experiential knowledge in the spiritual bond between master and disciple. Though Qūnawī's penchant for abstract metaphysical speculation favors Saʿd al-Dīn's approach, his rhetorical deployment of Ibn ʿArabī's lega-

[289] Kubrā, *Risāla ilā al-hā'im*, fol. 70b and "Traités mineurs," 35. See also idem, *Fawā'iḥ*, (M) 91 and (Z) 257-258.

[290] For the most recent study of Qūnawī's life and work, see Todd, *Sufi Doctrine*. William Chittick has worked extensively on the topic as well. See e.g., William C. Chittick, "The Last Will and Testament of Ibn ʿArabī's Foremost Disciple, Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī," *Sophia Perennis* 4, no. 1 (1978): 43–58; idem, "The Circle of Spiritual Ascent According to al-Qūnawī," in *Neoplatonism and Islamic Thought*, ed. Parviz Morewedge (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992); idem, "Mysticism versus Philosophy"; and idem, "Central Point."

cy mirrors Najm al-Dīn's narratives in the *Effusions.* Despite their esoteric qualities, Ṣadr al-Dīn's accounts also make implicit references to specific contemporary concerns. A close attention to the shaykh's rhetoric sharpens our understanding of how Sufis could deploy accounts of social relationships in the past and in the unseen world to intervene in negotiations of power actively unfolding in the material realm. Coupled with our reading of Kubrā's *Effusions*, an analysis of Qūnawī's visions and the stakes of his claims opens up comparative perspectives from which we might productively approach Ḥamūya's solipsistic language.

Though a creative and theoretically complex thinker in his own right, Ṣadr al-Dīn has been read primarily as an exegete and systematizer of his master's work. Despite (or perhaps, because of) his master's renown, Qūnawī's work demonstrates an eagerness to assert his own spiritual prowess and the inspired nature of his knowledge; he takes pride in his ability to unveil fundamental spiritual truths without recourse to the words of Ibn ʿArabī or other shaykhs, past or present.[291] Even a quick perusal of Ṣadr al-Dīn's oeuvre reveals a marked departure from Muḥyī al-Dīn's style, perhaps most noticeable in his systematic modes of exposition and strong grasp of Aristotelian philosophy.[292] Even so, Ṣadr al-Dīn's authority as an independent shaykh *depends* on the intimate bond he shares with Muḥyī al-Dīn, even after the latter's death. While Qūnawī may not often quote Ibn ʿArabī directly in his own original compositions, he nevertheless recounts their relationship as a means of underscoring his own spiritual legitimacy.

Qūnawī frames *The Divine Breaths* as a diary of visions and experiences in the unseen world, recorded over a period of thirty years and punctuated with abstract theoretical exposi-

[291] Todd, *Sufi Doctrine*, 29.

[292] For a detailed discussion of the points of overlap and departure between Qūnawī and Ibn ʿArabī, see Todd, *Sufi Doctrine*, 45-51. For a brief take, see Chittick, "Last Will."

tions. At the end of the text's introduction, he explains, "Know that in this book I mention the merciful fragrances and fruit of specially appointed and divine Self-Disclosures, some of which the Real bestowed upon me in this [station of] closeness, and whose mention the Real facilitated."[293] As Richard Todd notes, later Sufis would read the work as direct evidence of Qūnawī's advanced spiritual accomplishments, prompting Jāmī to profess, "Anyone who wishes to be acquainted with his perfection on this [Sufi] path needs only study a little bit of that [book]."[294] Throughout *The Divine Breaths,* Qūnawī articulates his ontological claims through a precise, philosophically-informed, and perhaps deliberately onerous jargon, creating the impression of an impossibly complex, yet meticulously ordered metaphysical system. At the same time, he frames his technical expositions not as products of his own mind, but rather as faithful exegeses of the spiritual experiences revealed to him directly by God.[295]

As we dive deeper into the *Divine Breaths,* however, it becomes clear that Qūnawī draws upon more than just divine inspiration to legitimize his theoretical claims. At what is perhaps a narrative climax of the text, Ṣadr al-Dīn recounts a vision in which he experiences the Self-Disclosure of the Essence, the most advanced spiritual state after which there are neither veils nor stations. He narrates his acquisition of ultimate knowledge not as an unmediated gift from God, but as an encounter with his shaykh Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī in the unseen world. He writes:

رأيت الشيخ رضي الله عنه ليلة السبت سابع عشر شوال سنة ثلاثة وخمسين وست مائة في واقعة

[293] Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, *al-Nafaḥāt al-ilāhiyya*, ed. Muḥammad Khwājawī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Mawlā, 1996), 5. For Khwājawī's modern Persian translation of *The Divine Breaths*, see Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, *Tarjuma-yi Nafaḥāt-i ilāhiyya yā Mukāshafāt-i ilāhī*, trans. Muḥammad Khwājawī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Mawlā, 1996), 6.

[294] Jāmī, *Nafaḥāt*, 556 and Todd *Sufi Doctrine*, 42.

[295] See e.g., Qūnawī, *Nafaḥāt*, 11-12. For Khwājawī's Persian translation, see Qūnawī, *Tarjuma-yi Nafaḥāt*, 12-13.

طويلة وجرى بيني وبينه كلام كثير وكنت أقول له في أثناء ذلك الكلام آثار الأسماء من الأحكام والأحكام من الأحوال والأحوال تتعيّن من الذات بحسب الاستعداد والاستعداد أمر لا يعلّل بشيء سواه

فأعجب رضي اللّه عنه بهذا البيان إعجابًا عظيمًا وجعل وجهه يتهلّل ويهز رأسه يعيد بعض الكلام ويقول مليح مليح فقلت له يا سيّدي أنت المليح حيث تقدر أن تبلغ الإنسان إلى حيث تدرك مثل هذا ولعمري إن كنت إنسانًا فمن سواك من هؤلاء كلا شيء

ثم جئت ودنوت منه وقبلت يده وقلته له بقيت لي حاجة واحدة اطلبها فقال سل فقلت إنّي أريد التحقّق بكيفية سهودك التجلّي الذاتيّ الدائم الأبديّ وكنت أعني بذلك حصول ما كان حاصلاً له من شهود التجلّي الذاتيّ الّذي لا حجاب بعده ولا مستقرّ للكمل دونه

فقال نعم وأجاب إلى ذلك ثم قال لي هذا مبذول لك مع أنّك تعلم أنّه قد كان لي أولاد وأصحاب وخصوصاً ولدي سعد الدين ومع هذا ما تيسر هذا الّذي تطلبه لأحد منهم وكم قد قتلت وأحييت من الأولاد والأصحاب ومات من مات وقتل من قلت ولم يحصل له هذا

فقلت يا سيّدي الحمد للّه أعني على اختصاص بهذه الفضيلة أعلم أنّك تحيي وتميت وكلام آخر بعد هذا لا يمكن إفشاؤه واستيقظت والمنّة للّه

I saw the Shaykh [i.e., Ibn ʿArabī]—may God be pleased with him—on the night of Saturday, 17 Shawwāl, AH 653 (November 19, 1255) during a long vision. We had a long back and forth in the middle of which I told him, "The effect of the Names stems from judgements and judgements [stem] from states. The states in turn become entified (*tataʿayyinu*) out of the Essence in accordance with predisposition, and predisposition is something that is not caused by anything other than itself."

The shaykh—may God be pleased with him—was extremely delighted with this explanation. He beamed with joy and nodded his head, repeating some of my words and saying, "Wonderful, wonderful!" I responded, "O master, it is you who are wonderful, since you were able to make someone reach such a place that they could perceive something like this. I swear, if you are but a human being, then the rest of us are like nothing at all!"

Then, I drew close to him and took his hand, saying, "I still need to ask you one more thing." He answered, "Ask." I said, "I'd like to verify how you witness the Self-Disclosure of the Essence eternally and perpetually." By that I meant his attainment of the Self-Disclosure of the Essence, after which there is no veil and before which there is no stable resting place for the perfect.

> He said, "Of course," and answered me. Then he told me, "I give this freely to you. You know full well that I had children and companions, especially my son Saʿd al-Dīn. Despite all of this, what you have reached has not been possible for any of them. How many of my children and companions have I killed and brought to life?[296] Whoever has died has died and whoever has been killed has been killed—yet none of them have achieved [what you have]."
>
> I said, "O master, praise be to God that I have been singled out for this virtue! I know that you give life and that you take it." There was more that was said after this, but it cannot be divulged. Then I came to. All grace belongs to God.[297]

As Ṣadr al-Dīn states, this particular encounter with Ibn ʿArabī occurred in November 1255, fifteen years *after* the latter's death in November 1240. Qūnawī's vision of his master mirrors Kubrā's conversations with ʿAmmār al-Bidlīsī in the unseen world—both reinforce the unbreakable bond between shaykh and student. Just as Najm al-Dīn's attachment to al-Bidlīsī knows no geographic bounds, the link between Ṣadr al-Dīn and Ibn ʿArabī reaches past the limits of life itself. According to Qūnawī's account, it is precisely this intimate connection that affords him access to the highest degrees of spiritual and epistemological stations. Although their meeting unfolds primarily through abstract theoretical discourse, Qūnawī's narrative reflects social ideals analogous to those expressed by Kubrā. Ṣadr al-Dīn's recognition of Ibn ʿArabī's ability to give life and take it, for example, parallels Kubrā's injunction that disciples submit to their shaykhs like corpses in the hands of washers. Likewise, when Qūnawī the disciple beseeches his master for a taste of ultimate knowledge, Qūnawī the narrator establishes a point of corporeal contact (the image of shaykh and student holding hands), underscoring the interpersonal transmission of the

[296] I take this to be a reference to the training programs Ibn ʿArabī imposed upon these individuals, analogous to Kubrā's notion of the Sufi disciple's volitional death at the hands of a shaykh.

[297] Qūnawī, *Nafaḥāt*, 125-126. For Khwājawī's Persian translation, see Qūnawī, *Tarjuma-yi Nafaḥāt*, 131-132. For Todd's English translation of the passage see Todd, *Sufi Doctrine*, 21n43.

ultimate knowledge he is about to receive.[298]

Ṣadr al-Dīn's rhetorical emphasis on his passivity as a disciple must be read in conjunction with his active role as a narrator. While Qūnawī's spiritual and epistemological legitimacy are bound to the figure of his master, his narrative accounts of Ibn ʿArabī shape the shaykh's legacy in a way that is congenial to his own particular goals and claims. Just as Ḥamūya puts the text of the *Miṣbāḥ* into the mouth of a young Jesus, the *Nafaḥāt* finds Muḥyī al-Dīn expressing his endorsement of Qūnawī's idiosyncratic formulations through explicit verbal approval and a literal repetition of his words. Ibn ʿArabī confesses that none of his other companions or relatives—not even his son Saʿd al-Dīn—are worthy of the spiritual gifts that he is prepared to bestow upon his disciple Ṣadr al-Dīn.[299] As the narrative makes clear, Muḥyī al-Dīn grants Qūnawī the privilege of experiencing the Divine Essence *in the exact same way* that he does. At stake here is not merely a question of abstract spiritual abilities, but the inheritance of a powerful figure's rank and authority in a highly contested social realm. By recounting this vision, Qūnawī outlines an explicit epistemological claim and preempts a genealogical challenge to his own authoritative position as inheritor of his master's legacy. To rebut this hypothetical objection, Ṣadr al-Dīn articulates an implicit relationship between initiatic and familial relationships, placing spiritual inheritance squarely in the realm of the former. While biological and intiatic lines may converge in a single individual—here, Ibn ʿArabī's second son Saʿd al-Dīn Muḥammad—Qūnawī argues (through his

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[298] For a brief account of the analytical possibilities afforded by an attention to quotidian acts like handshakes and handholding in Sufi hagiographical narratives, see Bashir, *Sufi Bodies*, esp. 4-8.

[299] Biographical details are scarce with respect to Ibn ʿArabī's second son Saʿd al-Dīn. Addas mentions that his name is present in several *samāʿ* records and that he is reported (by Qūnawī) to have been a disciple of certain Kamāl al-Dīn Tilfīsī, a Sufi master who became grand *qāḍī* of Damascus in 1260. See Addas, *Quest*, 266-267.

As Addas notes, one of the letters included in Qūnawī's *Divine Breaths* addresses Saʿd al-Dīn directly, complaining that the latter has not kept up contact, adding, rather ominously, "I see you wherever you are; I know how you go about your business." See Addas, *Quest*, 233 and Qūnawī, *Nafaḥāt*, 230.

shaykh) that a strong bond between master and disciple is enough to override any other type of genealogical claim.[300]

3.4. Family Matters: Spiritual Inheritance and the Politics of Citation

In Section 3.1, we suggested that Ḥamūya sketches master-disciple bonds in order to present himself as an ideal shaykh and his texts as vehicles for authoritative knowledge. Nevertheless, our discussion of the social relationships outlined in his work remained fairly abstract and impressionistic. Read by himself, Ḥamūya simply does not offer us a clear point of entry from which to uncover the immediate stakes of his claims. Like Qūnawī, Saʿd al-Dīn generally avoids quoting other Sufi shaykhs, preferring instead to offer his own formulations bolstered with direct evidence from the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth*.[301] Unlike his Anatolian colleague and confidant, however, Saʿd al-Dīn's references to his own masters and training are exceedingly rare. Carefully crafted

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[300] The exact nature of Qūnawī's social relationship with Ibn ʿArabī remains unclear. As Addas explains, evidence from *samāʿ* records suggest that Ibn ʿArabī met Qūnawī's father Majd al-Dīn in 1204—about half a decade before Qūnawī's birth in 1208/1209. The two became close friends, traveling together from the Ḥijāz to Anatolia. Though there is no mention of the event in either Ibn ʿArabī or Qūnawī's writings, a range of contemporary sources and later biographies suggest that when Majd al-Dīn died (most likely between 1214 and 1218), Muḥyī al-Dīn married his widow, incorporating the young Ṣadr al-Dīn into his household as a stepson. See Addas, *Quest*, 227-233 and Todd, *Sufi Doctrine*, 13-15. Whatever the case, contemporary sources favorable to Qūnawī emphasize the close bond between him and Ibn ʿArabī while also attempting to subvert rival genealogical claims to the latter's legacy.

[301] Although a certain *Epistle on Sufism* (*Risāla dar taṣawwuf*) preserved in Serez MS 3931 mentions Kubrā alongside Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī and Shihāb al-Dīn (ʿUmar) al-Suhrawardī as the "pillars of the shaykhs" (*asāṭīn-i mashāyikh*), the text's frequent yet uncredited citation of the later Sufi poet Awḥad al-Dīn ibn Awḥadī Marāghaʾī (ca. 1274/1275-1338) suggests a spurious attribution. See Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Risāla dar taṣawwuf*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Serez MS 3931, e.g. fols. 34b and 36a. For more on Awḥad al-Dīn Marāghaʾī, see Khaleghi-Motlagh, "AWḤADĪ MARĀḠAʾĪ" in *EIr*.

Ḥamūya *does* quote other Sufis occasionally. The *Book of the Beloved*, for example, offers a few lengthy quotes from al-Hakīm al-Tirmidhī (d. ca. 910). See Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fol. 21a (where he cites al-Tirmidhī explicitly) and fol. 22b (where he paraphrases him). Likewise, the *Sea of Meanings* (*Baḥr al-maʿānī*) recounts the words Junayd (d. 910), Abū Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmī (d. 848 or 875), al-Tirmidhī, and a host of Sufi shaykhs. See Ḥamūya, *Baḥr al-maʿānī*, Istanbul Süleymaniye Library, Fazıl Ahmed Paşa MS 706, fols. 1a-92a. Relative to such other contemporaries as Kubrā, ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī, or even Ibn ʿArabī, however, Saʿd al-Dīn's references to the words of other Sufis are generally few and far between.

master-disciple narratives of the type analyzed above are entirely absent in his work. Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, the famous "saint maker" of Khwārazm—whom later sources almost unanimously name as Ḥamūya's master and whose *ijāza* to Saʿd al-Dīn is preserved both in multiple copies—is rarely (or perhaps never) mentioned.[302]

What should we make of this apparent omission? Given the fundamental role that he ascribes to Sufi shaykhs, how could Saʿd al-Dīn neglect to mention his own master? Should we read him as a notable exception—a Sufi master who articulates his authority without recourse to his immediate social world? As the reader may have already suspected, I posit that the answer is no. Despite Kubrā's conspicuous absence from Saʿd al-Dīn's oeuvre, there is another figure whom he does claim as his master: a shaykh whom he had never met in person, but to whom he nevertheless remained socially bound. After outlining a testament (*waṣīya*) emphasizing the etiquette of serving Sufi shaykhs in the *Levels of Joy*, Saʿd al-Dīn explains, "Know that some of this testament comes from the words of the shaykh of Islam, Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya (d. 1136), who was my forefather (*jaddī*) and my shaykh (*shaykhī*)."[303] A text entitled *The Epistle on Compulsion and Kindness* (*Risālat al-Qahr wa-l-luṭf*) likewise mingles quotations from the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth* with those gleaned from this Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya, introducing him as "my forefather, the shaykh of Islam" and "the shaykh, my forefather."[304] Though these references may be few and far between, I argue that their inclusion in Saʿd al-Dīn's theoretical work presents generative opportunities for situating his life and thought within its immediate socio-political context. Tracing the

[302] See e.g., Kubrā, *Ijāza*, fols. 57b-58a and Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 17-19.

[303] Ḥamūya, *Marātib*, (P) fol. 14b.

[304] Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Risālat al-Qahr wa-l-luṭf*, Bursa, İnebey Kütüphanesi, Hüseyin Çelebi MS 442, fols. 48b and 94b. The epistle also includes a host of anonymous citations, introduced merely as *qīla* or *yuqāl* (i.e., "it was said" or "it is said").

possible resonances of these citations leads us down a trail of Ḥamūya's family history, personal correspondences, and his links with a range of non-Sufi teachers, dignitaries, governors, and *amīr*s. Such an approach allows us to pry open a window into Saʿd al-Dīn's world, illuminating myriad possibilities and implications for knowledge, genealogy, and inheritance in the diverse circles through which he traveled.

3.5. The Ḥamūya Clan

In order to understand Saʿd al-Dīn's strategic citation of his ancestor, we must first take a detour through the illustrious Ḥamūya family tree. Our sources report that Saʿd al-Dīn's great-great-grandfather, the aforementioned Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya Juwaynī, was a renowned shaykh in his own right, celebrated for his mastery of *ḥadīth* and performance of saint-ly miracles.[305] In *The Breaths of Intimacy*, Jāmī praises the 12th-century Sufi for his facility with the exoteric and esoteric sciences, singling him out alongside Aḥmad al-Ghazālī (d. 1123 or 1126) as one of ʿAyn al-Quḍāt al-Hamadānī's (d. 1131) primary associates.[306] By the 13th century, the Ḥamūya clan had become a household name, so to speak, having spawned powerful and well-connected Sufi shaykhs across Iran, Syria, and Egypt. ʿImād al-Dīn Abū Fatḥ ʿUmar ibn ʿAlī (d. 1181)—Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya's grandson—was appointed by the Zangid ruler Nūr al-Dīn (d. 1174) as the first Chief Sufi to preside over Greater Syria.[307] After ʿImād al-Dīn ibn ʿAlī's death,

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[305] See Nafīsī, "Khāndān," who quotes biographical information on Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya from Samʿānī (d. 1166), ʿAyn al-Quḍāt (d. 1131), Ibn Athīr (d. 1233), al-Yāfiʿī (d. 1367) and Jāmī (d. 1492).

[306] Jāmī, *Nafaḥāt*, 414.

[307] Hofer, "Origins and Development," 12; Nafīsī, "Khāndān," 11-12; and al-Yāfiʿī, *Mirʾāt*, III.408. For "Chief Sufi" as an official role, see Hofer, "Origins and Development." While Hofer's piece focuses on Egypt, he touches briefly on Baghdad and Syria as well.

Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb (Saladin, d. 1193) appointed the shaykh's son Ṣadr al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad (d. 1220) as Chief Sufi in Damascus before transferring him to Cairo, instating him as the head of the Saʿīd al-Suʿadāʾ *khānaqāh* and the first Chief Sufi to preside over all of Egypt.[308] Ṣadr al-Dīn's immediate family maintained a close relationship with the Ayyūbid dynasts over several generations, such that his post was passed down to all four of his sons, the famed "Sons of the Shaykh" (*awlād al-shaykh*)—ʿImād al-Dīn ʿUmar ibn Muḥammad (d. 1238-39), Kamāl al-Dīn Aḥmad (d. 1242), Muʿīn al-Dīn Ḥasan (d. 1246), and Fakhr al-Dīn Yūsuf (d. 1249)—and then to a few of his grandsons.[309] ʿImād al-Dīn ʿUmar ibn ʿAlī's other son, Tāj al-Dīn ʿAbd Allāh (d. 1244), assumed the rank of Chief Sufi in Syria after his brother relocated to Egypt, then passed the post along to his own children.[310]

According to Ghiyāth al-Dīn and Faṣīḥ Khwāfī (d. 1445), it was Ṣadr al-Dīn Abū Ḥasan Muḥammad—a cousin of Saʿd al-Dīn's father (*ibn ʿamm wālid*) and the *shaykh al-shuyūkh* of Egypt—who initially bestowed the *khirqa* upon Saʿd al-Dīn, initiating him into the study of Sufism and the illustrious line of Ḥamūya family shaykhs.[311] As Ghiyāth al-Dīn explains, Ṣadr al-Dīn was the shaykh from whom Ḥamūya took his Sufi genealogy, Najm al-Dīn Kubrā was the shaykh with whom he engaged in spiritual retreat and intimate companionship, and Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī was the shaykh who taught him *dhikr*. Saʿd al-Dīn simply declined Kubrā's

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[308] Hofer, *Popularisation*, 64; idem, "Origins and Development," 15-19; and Nafīsī, "Khāndān," 12-13. For Ṣadr al-Dīn's *nisbat al-khirqa*, see note 16 on p. 7. For more on the relationship between the Saʿīd al-Suʿadāʾ (founded in 1173), the office of Chief Sufi in Egypt, and Ayyubid and Mamlūk states, see Hofer, *Popularization*, esp. 35-60. In brief, as Hofer explains, "...During those 150 years of Ayyubid and early Mamluk rule, Saladin's *khānaqāh* was the center of state-sponsored Sufism in Egypt..." idem, *Popularization*, 36.

[309] Hofer, "Origins and Development," 15 ff.

[310] Hofer, "Origins and Development," 14.

[311] Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 9-11 and Faṣīḥ Khwāfī, *Mujmal*, II.290. Faṣīḥ Khwāfī erroneously refers to Ṣadr al-Dīn as Saʿd al-Dīn's first cousin (*pusar-i ʿamm-i khūd*), rather than his father's cousin, i.e., his first cousin once removed.

certificate of investiture (*nisbat al-khirqa*) because he *already had* a Sufi lineage through Ṣadr al-Dīn.[312] At this point, then, it seems we have made much ado about nothing.

There are two key points that challenge such a straightforward reading. First, relationships between 13th-century Sufis and their masters were not always as typologically determined as Ghiyāth al-Dīn's account would suggest. Even in *The Goal of the Seekers*, Kubrā teaches Ḥamūya *dhikr* before the latter meets ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī, complicating Ghiyāth al-Dīn's neat tripartite scheme. Moreover, as we have seen above, Kubrā legitimates his authority as a shaykh through accounts of his time with ʿAmmār al-Bidlīsī, the only one of his masters he mentions by name throughout the entirety of the *Effusions*. Although our sources present conflicting information with regard to Najm al-Dīn's exact program of study, it is fairly certain that al-Bidlīsī was not the shaykh from whom he received his *khirqa* of initiation, but rather the shaykh with whom he sat *khalwa*.[313] Kubrā may have bestowed his *khirqa* to Saʿd al-Dīn and other disciples on the authority of Ismāʿīl al-Qaṣrī, but he drew upon the legacy of ʿAmār al-Bidlīsī to authorize his own

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[312] Ghiyāth al-Dīn *Murād*, 11.

[313] As recorded by his disciple Iqbāl-i Sīstānī (fl. 14th c.), ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla Simnānī (d. 1336) explains that Kubrā was a difficult and haughty student who required the aid of multiple shaykhs to tame his unruly ego. Thus, while Najm al-Dīn began his training with Ismāʿīl al-Qaṣrī (d. 1193) in Dezful (western Iran), he was sent first to ʿAmmār al-Bidlīsī (whose location is not specified), then to Rūzbihān al-Wazzān al-Miṣrī (d. 1188) in Cairo—who quite literally slapped the arrogance out of him—before returning to al-Bidlīsī to continue his training in earnest. See Simnānī, *Chihil majlis*, 227-230. Jāmī relates the same tale, citing the *Chihil Majlis* as his source. See Jāmī, *Nafaḥāt*, 421-423.

Ḥusayn Khwārizmī (d. 1551) reverses Kubrā's program of study, having him begin his training with Rūzbihān before later stints with al-Bidlīsī and Ismāʿīl al-Qaṣrī. See Böwering, "Seclusion," 269-270 and Algar, "Eponym."

Modern scholars have offered their own arguments with respect to the plausibility of these narratives—Trimingham, for example, sides blithely with Ḥusayn Khwārizmī, while Meier tentatively deems Iqbāl-i Sīstānī's account more probable. Böwering takes a more agnostic approach; he notes the merit of Meier's claims, but ultimately presents Sīstānī and Khwārizmī's narratives side by side without attempting to resolve them. See Trimingham, *Orders*, 55; Kubrā, *Fawāʾiḥ*, (M) 14-40, esp. 34-37; and Böwering, "Seclusion," 269-270.

Given that Najm al-Dīn's *ijāza* to Ḥamūya lists Ismāʿīl al-Qaṣrī as the shaykh from whom he received his *khirqa*, I am more inclined to follow Meier and Böwering.

ability to lead disciples and navigate visual experiences encountered in the unseen world.[314] The second point, perhaps even more fundamental, is that Saʿd al-Dīn does *not* name Ṣadr al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan as his shaykh, but reserves this honorific for the patriarch of the Ḥamūya Sufis, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad.

3.6. The Ayyūbid Context: Ḥamūya and the Chief Sufis of Egypt and Syria

I argue that the internal dynamics of the Ḥamūya clan and the political ascendency of its Syrian and Egyptian branches represent a crucial context through which to situate Saʿd al-Dīn's claim to his forefather's legacy. Reading the shaykh's citations in light of his relationship with his powerful cousins, we are able to uncover how competition among Sufis was fundamentally intertwined with a range of political, pedagogical, and institutional networks that stretched across the medieval Islamic world. Although Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī (d. 1257) suggests that Saʿd al-Dīn refused to associate with his well-connected cousins during his sojourn in Greater Syria and Egypt, Ḥamūya's own epistle to ʿImād al-Dīn ʿUmar ibn Muḥammad tells a different story.[315] Writing to the *shaykh al-shuyūkh* soon after his arrival to Egypt in 1235/1236, Saʿd al-Dīn laments:

> وليعلم الشيخ دامت سعادته ولزمت عبادته أنّ تفقّد الإخوان وزيارة الخلان عادة الصاحين بل سنّة المرسلين قال الله تعالى حكاية عن سليمان ﴿ وتفقد الطير فقال ما لي لا أرى الهدهد ﴾ وذلك ما كان يخلّ بجلالة قدره ونباهة أمره وعلوّ شأنه ورفعة ملكه ومكانه
> [...]
> والشيخ مدّ الله في عُمره وزاد جلالة قدره نبذ هذه السنّة وراء ظهره واشتغل بتمشية أمره وخالف

[314] See Kubrā, *Ijāza*, fol. 58a and Ghiyāth al-Dīn *Murād*, 18-19.

[315] Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt*, XXII.424.

سيرة المتقدّمين من السّلف وعادة المتأخّين من الخلف في رعاية حقوق القرابة والأخوّة وإعلاء راية المروّة حيث حرمني من إكرامه وما شرّفني بسلامه منذ وصل هذا الضعيف من خمسة أيّام وما طلبني لا برسوله ولا بغلامه

> Let the shaykh know—may his felicity continue and his devotion persevere—that seeking after brethren and visiting sincere friends is the custom of the righteous. Nay, it is the *sunna* of the messengers! Speaking of Solomon, God says, "He sought after all of the birds and said, 'Why do I not see the hoopoe?'" (Q. 27:20) That did not make a dent in the majesty of his power, the eminence of his rank, the sublimity of his state, or the elevation of his authority or rank.
>
> [...]
>
> The shaykh—may God extend his life and increase the majesty of his power—has cast this *sunna* behind his back and has busied himself instead with the advancement of his own affairs. [He has acted] contrary to the comportment of the *salaf*s that came before and the customs of those who came after them—i.e., attention to the demands of kinship and brotherhood and raising the flag of manliness—to the point that he has cut me off from his hospitality. He has not honored me with his salutations—even though it has been five days since this humble one has arrived—nor has he sent any messengers or servants in search of me.[316]

Ḥamūya's epistle suggests a tense relationship with ʿImād al-Dīn, whom he accuses of poor hospitality and a breach of the rules of *adab* prescribed for Sufis, relatives, and pious Muslims. As head of the Saʿīd al-Suʿadāʾ and Chief Sufi of Egypt, ʿImād al-Dīn presided over a prestigious state-sponsored *khānaqāh*, whose generous endowment (*waqf*) provided daily rations, small stipends, and even travel grants for the Sufis housed within.[317] The *khānaqāh*'s residents, moreover, were made up primarily of itinerant dervishes from Syria, Iraq, and Khurāsān—a near perfect fit, it would seem, for the Baḥrābādī shaykh.[318] Given ʿImād al-Dīn's distinguished post and

[316] Ḥamūya, "Makātīb," 463. The epistle is also preserved in Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 169-172. For the passage quoted above, see idem, *Murād*, 169-170.

[317] Hofer, *Popularisation,* 35.

[318] Hofer, *Popularisation,* 68-80.

familial ties to Saʿd al-Dīn, his refusal to send so much as a message of welcome points to a deliberately antagonistic—or at the very least, disrespectfully aloof—attitude.

It seems that advertising the former *shaykh al-shuyūkh* as his primary master would have linked Saʿd al-Dīn to a powerful Sufi lineage and afforded him with the distinct social status these bonds entailed in Ayyūbid and neighboring ʿAbbāsid territories. At the same time, however, such ties would have forced him to negotiate a relationship of dependence with his cousin, who enjoyed the institutional and material support of the ruling elites. Whether or not the two ever reached a reconciliation, it is clear that Ḥamūya had less of a right to Ṣadr al-Dīn's legacy than ʿImād al-Dīn, who was his biological son, spiritual inheritor, and institutional successor.[319] By citing Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya as both his forefather and his shaykh, Saʿd al-Dīn could broadcast his ties with a renowned Sufi master and illustrious genealogy while simultaneously subverting—or at least bypassing—rival claims to this same social capital.

Contextualizing the shaykh's rhetorical strategies vis-à-vis the internal politics of the Ḥamūya clan helps us understand the stakes of his citational politics in their immediate context. Such an approach intervenes against a myopic focus on Sufism *qua* mysticism, revealing that the genealogical claims—both familial and spiritual—through which medieval Sufis contested authority were fundamentally interwoven with the broader mechanisms of knowledge and power in which they were embedded. Saʿd al-Dīn, Ṣadr al-Dīn, and ʿImād al-Dīn were not only Sufi shaykhs who concerned themselves Sufi things; they were also scions of a prestigious trans-regio-

[319] At the end of his letter, Ḥamūya leaves open the possibility for rapprochement. Khāmih-Yār's collection of Saʿd al-Dīn's epistles also includes a second letter to ʿImād al-Dīn (apparently unknown to Ghiyāth al-Dīn), but it is difficult to judge the tone of the exchange. Although Ḥamūya lauds the Chief Sufi in accordance with the demands of the genre, he also treats ʿImād al-Dīn to what amounts to a lecture on the merits of turning away from wealth, status, and the trappings of power. See Ḥamūya, "Makātīb," 465-466.

nal clan who took part in the social strategies of cultural elites, negotiating family ties and networks of association as they navigated questions of influence, reputation, and legitimacy. Moreover, as multidimensional actors, the Ḥamūyas and their interlocutors drew upon these shared social strategies *even* when they concerned themselves with things explicitly marked "Sufi".

Other examples from within Ḥamūya's network of colleagues point to the importance of overlapping familial, political, and initiatic lineages for the negotiation of Sufi knowledge and authority. Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī—purported to be Saʿd al-Dīn's *shaykh al-dhikr*—hailed from the Banū ʿAmmūya, a prominent family of Sufi shaykhs and Shāfiʿī scholars who traced their lineage back to the first caliph Abū Bakr (d. 634).[320] ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī's uncle Abū al-Najīb (d. 1168)—initiated into the study of Sufism by his own uncle Wajīh al-Dīn (d. 1137)—was a renowned *ḥadīth* transmitter, preacher, Shāfiʿī jurist, and Sufi shaykh. Abū al-Najīb was remembered as a gifted and well-connected Sufi, having associated with the circle of Aḥmad al-Ghazālī in Isfahan and trained a host of successful shaykhs, including all three of Najm al-Dīn Kubrā's masters.[321] He maintained close ties with both the ʿAbbāsid court and Saljūq sultanate, preaching a sermon at the inauguration of the caliph al-Muqtafī (d. 1160) in 1136 and accepting a prestigious teaching post at the Niẓāmiyya in 1150.[322] Like Abū al-Najīb, Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī spent his youth training in *ḥadīth*, Shāfiʿī jurisprudence, and other exoteric sciences before being initiated into the study of Sufism by his uncle.[323] Despite their close bond, however,

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[320] Ohlander, *Sufism*, 66 ff.

[321] Ohlander, *Sufism*, 76-78.

[322] Ohlander, *Sufism*, 77-79. As Ohlander explains, Abū al-Najīb's appointments were tied up in the power struggles that played out between the Saljūq sultans and ʿAbbāsid caliphs. After the Sultan Masʿūd died in 1152, al-Muqtafī and his vizier Ibn Hubayra regained control of Baghdad and cleared house, ousting Abū al-Najīb from his post at the Niẓāmiyya. See idem, *Sufism*, 79.

[323] Ohlander, *Sufism*, 81.

ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī did *not* inherit Abū al-Najīb's post as head of the family *ribāṭ*, the Saʿādat al-Khādim. In a familiar turn of events, the position was passed on to at least one of Abū al-Najīb's three sons, who appeared to have a greater claim to their father's institutional legacy than their cousin.[324] ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī nevertheless became an influential and politically connected shaykh in his own right, securing a place at the center of the caliph al-Naṣīr li-Dīn Allāh's (d. 1225) retinue and posts at the head of five Baghdādī *ribāṭ*s.[325]

As the Ḥamūyas and ʿAmmūyas negotiated trans-regional networks of politics and cultural capital, they did so as privileged members of a select social class. These individuals began their careers traveling in search of exoteric knowledge, bolstering their ties with other scholarly elites as they rubbed shoulders with imāms, shaykhs, and students across the Islamic world. The strategies through which they contested knowledge and authority—including when they wrote as Sufi shaykhs—reflected the dominant tendencies of this interconnected world. With respect to the legitimating strategies of cultural elites in late 12th- to early 14th-century Damascus, Chamberlain explains:

> ... In addition to learning law and other fields, [these elites] wanted their young to master ritual practices and an often innovative style of deportment and manners. The bonds created by interactions with their shaykhs and others in the ritualized environment of the production of knowledge forged this elite's useful intimacies. Their social and cultural capital—as they themselves expressed it—became the dominant currency in *fitna* [here, social competition]—both in their struggles for *manṣab*s and their rivalries for eminence more generally.[326]

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[324] Ohlander, *Sufism*, 85.

[325] See Ohlander, *Sufism*, 89-112. Even a quick perusal of ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī's *Kind Gifts of Knowledge* uncovers copious citations, particularly in the form of *ḥadīth* narrations, from his uncle Abū al-Najīb, to whom he refers as "our shaykh." See *inter alia* al-Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif*, 168, 169, 187, and 189.

[326] Chamberlain, *Knowledge*, 178.

The social and embodied pedagogical ideals championed by Ḥamūya, Kubrā, and Qūnawī were thus not unique to mystics, but ubiquitous epistemological and social values. Even for those scholars who would not become Sufis, learning consisted just as much in acquiring useful sets of data as in cultivating interpersonal bonds through *suḥba* and developing modes of comportment that conformed to an idealized shaykhliness. Although Ḥamuya and his colleagues advertised esoteric learning as a *sui generis* phenomenon set apart by complex metaphysical frameworks and a distinguished cadre of Sufi shaykhs, the socio-epistemological strategies and ideals they reproduced bound together exoteric- and esoteric-minded thinkers alike.

For his part, Ḥamūya appears to be acutely aware of these shared social mechanisms, deploying them adroitly to navigate the Ayyūbid institutional context. While he may be reticent to claim contemporaries as his primary shaykhs, his exchange with ʿImād al-Dīn nevertheless demonstrates a nuanced understanding of key social ties and their contextual significance. After upbraiding ʿImād al-Dīn for his cold welcome, Saʿd al-Dīn asserts his rights as a member of the Ḥamūya clan, as a Sufi, and as a distinguished member of the Shāfiʿī *ʿulamāʾ* through the citation (and suppression) of specific interpersonal relationships he has cultivated over the course of his career. He explains:

قد علم الشيخ أدام الله علوّه بشفقة الشيخ الكبير السعيد الشهيد شيخ الشيوخ صدر الملّة والدين تغمّده الله بغفرانه والتفات خاطره الخطير وميل ضميره المنير إلى رعاية حقّ هذا الضعيف وكذلك سائر الأيمة والمشائخ خصوصاً الإمام العالم المحقّق شهاب الدين الخيوقي رحمة الله عليه كان يذكر الدرس في خوارزم ويعقد في درسه مائة وخمسون فقيهاً من أهل التصنيف والتدريس والمناظرة والنحو واللغة والتفسير وكان أكثر التفاته وكلامه وبحثه مع هذا الضعيف وكان يراعي جانب [هذا] الضعيف أكثر ما يُراعي الأب الشفيق جانب الولد الرشيد الرشيق

وهذا الضعيف ما جاء إلى هذا المدينة من خراسان بضيق[327] له في مطمع أو ملبس أو مسكن بل جاء بإشارة من اللّه ورسوله وترك المدارس والمساكن والرباط للّه تعالى

...

وقد عوّضني اللّه تعالى خير ما تركتُ أعطاني اللّه تعالى معرفة و علم بصفاته وذاته وأخلاقه وأسمائه ومُلكه وملكوته وعالم جبروته حتّى لو شرعتُ في تفسير حرف من حروف كتابه لأدرجتُ فيه علم الأولين والآخرين ولو كتبت أسماء العلوم التّي علّمني ربّي والبحار التّي غوّصت فيها لطال الكلام ولا يفي بشرحه الكلام

فيكيف يجوز الشيخ أن لا يلتفت إلى هذا الضعيف وينظر إليه بعين الإذلال

The shaykh—may God extend his sublimity—must surely know about the compassion of the great and blessed shaykh and martyr (*al-shahīd*), the Chief Sufi Ṣadr al-Milla wa-l-Dīn—may God envelop him with His forgiveness—and how he turned his mighty thoughts and inclined his luminous heart toward what this humble one deserved. This was the case as well with the rest of the imāms and shaykhs, especially the learned and verifying imām Shihāb al-Dīn [Abū Saʿd ibn ʿImrān] al-Khīwaqī—God's mercy upon him! He used to teach in Khwārazm; 150 jurists—including writers, teachers, and masters of debate, grammar, lexicography, and exegesis—would attend his lessons. In spite of all this, he would direct most of his attention, speech, and inquiry to this humble one, watching over him more than a compassionate father would watch over a just and comely child.

Nevertheless, this humble one didn't turn toward any of that. He did not come to this city from Khurāsān out of a need for finery, clothing, or even a place to stay. Instead, he came following a sign from God and His messenger, leaving [the issue of] schools, housing, and *ribāṭ*s to God almighty.

...

God almighty has compensated me with something better than what I left behind. He has given me gnosis and knowledge of His Attributes, His Essence, His Nature, His Names, His *mulk* and *malakūt*, and the world of His *jabarūt*—if I were to begin to explain [even] a single letter from His book, I would fill up [that exegesis with all] the knowledge of the ancients and the moderns. If I were to write down the names of the sciences that my Lord has taught me and the seas in which He has immersed me, the words would go on and on and pens could not contain

[327] Reading ما جاء ... بضيق from Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 171 for Khāmih-Yār's لما جاء ... لضيق.

their explanation.

So, how is it possible that the shaykh has paid no attention to this humble one, [going so far as to] gaze upon him with the eye of contempt?[328]

If Ḥamūya's reference to Ṣadr al-Dīn establishes familial bonds and Sufi credentials, his account of his relationship with Shihāb al-Dīn al-Khīwaqī (d. after 1218) reflects the demands of the Saʿīd al-Suʿadāʾ and its institutional character. According to Hofer, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's state-sponsored *khānaqāh* was not indiscriminate in its recruitment of itinerant dervishes, but rather courted a particular *kind* of eastern Sufi. To buttress their ideological claim as guardians of Sunnī Islam, the Ayyūbids patronized a distinct brand of Sufism oriented towards legal scholarship, particularly that of a Shāfiʿī-Ashʿarī bent.[329] While the exact mechanisms of selection remain unclear, the Chief Sufi and dervishes who resided in the *khānaqāh* were almost always educated members of the *ʿulamāʾ* and primarily Shāfiʿī "juridical Sufis" whose engagement with the exoteric sciences and generation of *baraka* through ritual practices dovetailed with the interests of the state.[330] Shihāb al-Dīn al-Khīwaqī—a Khwārazmī Shāfiʿī *faqīh* famous for his mastery of the legal and linguistic sciences—epitomizes the specific type of scholarly knowledge that Salāḥ al-Dīn and his viziers sought to import and cultivate within Ayyūbid territories.[331] By recounting his privileged position among al-Khīwaqī's students and colleagues, Saʿd al-Dīn thus asserts his credentials not

[328] Ḥamūya, "Makātīb," 463.

[329] Hofer, *Popularisation,* 37.

[330] Hofer, *Popularisation*, 38-49; 77-80.

[331] On Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Saʿd ibn ʿImrān al-Khīwaqī, see al-Nasawī, *Sīrat al-sulṭān*, 109-113 and Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-taʾrīkh*, X.402 ff. (under AH 617).

Al-Khīwaqī was the dedicatee of an epitome to Euclid's *Elements* and an introduction to Ptolemaic astronomy—both composed by a certain Maḥmūd al-Jaghminī—suggesting a familiarity with the mathematical and astrological sciences as well. See Sally P. Ragep, *Jaghmīnī's Mulakhkhaṣ: An Islamic Introduction to Ptolemaic Astronomy* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2016), 21-25.

only as a Sufi, but as a member of this elite cadre of trans-regional Shāfiʿī scholars.[332]

At the end of this passage, Ḥamūya lays claim to an infinite esoteric knowledge, bolstering his allegations with references to Sufi technical terms (e.g., *mulk, malakūt,* and *jabarūt*) and the endless possibilities of the letters. Mirroring Qūnawī's strategies in the *Divine Breaths*, he makes rhetorical use of divine inspiration, then recounts social relationships with past teachers to legitimate these claims. What is interesting here is that Saʿd al-Dīn draws upon his association with al-Khīwaqī—whom he explicitly identifies as a master of the *exoteric* sciences—to contextualize his *esoteric* modes of knowing.[333] On the surface, Saʿd al-Dīn plays down his relationship with al-Khīwaqī, claiming to have turned away from the comfort and renown of institutional prestige in favor of an infinite and unmediated knowledge bestowed upon him by God. Nevertheless, it is precisely these interpersonal bonds that introduce and frame his unique knowledge; *they* are the legitimating qualifications that distinguish the shaykh as a certified scholar worthy of association and attention in this milieu. Saʿd al-Dīn's rhetoric thus belies a careful attention to the relationships of dependence in which he was embedded and a willingness to articulate his knowledge accordingly. While the basic content of Ḥamūya's lettrist claims may be consistent across genres, the textual strategies and social networks into which his letters are woven modulate in accordance with the expectations of his presumed audience.

Najm al-Dīn's absence here and in Ḥamūya's theoretical treatises may strike contemporary readers as puzzling, but it is important to keep in mind that in the first few decades of the

[332] For the Shāfiʿī orientation of the Ḥamūya clan, see Nafīsī, "Khāndān," 19 ff. and Ḥamūya, "Makātīb," 452.

[333] As Hofer notes, it is also likely that Ṣadr al-Dīn, as Chief Sufi under the Ayyūbid authorities, would have directed his scholarly output primarily towards Ashʿarī theological and Shāfiʿī legal pursuits, rather than abstract modes of metaphysical speculation. Hofer, "Origins and Development," 15-19.

13th century, the shaykh had not yet assumed his hagiographical reputation as the all-powerful "saint-maker" (*walī-turāsh*) whose charismatic presence could turn even dogs into blessed guides.[334] In fact, many such hagiographies are *premised* upon the distinguished careers of his disciples, especially the famous "saints of the age" that included Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī (d. 1219), Raḍī al-Dīn ʿAlī Lālā (d. 1244), Najm al-Dīn Dāyā Rāzī (d. 1256), Sayf al-Dīn Bākhārzī (d. 1261), Bābā Kamāl Jandī (d. 1273), and several others. Only in hindsight did the students of these figures mold them and their teacher Kubrā into legendary saints that could in turn be put to use as independent sources of legitimacy.[335] Although disciples like Ḥamūya and Majd al-Dīn Baghdādī hailed from powerful families, Kubrā himself does not seem to have boasted a noble genealogy; he likely depended upon his initiatic lineage, scholarly abilities, and students for social esteem.[336] Perhaps reflecting the limited scope of the shaykh's notoriety, the 13th-century preacher and historian Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī—himself an elite with close ties to both ʿAbbāsid and Ayyūbid courts—makes no mention of Kubrā when discussing Saʿd al-Dīn in his *Mirror of the Age in the History of the Notables* (*Mirʾat al-zamān fī taʾrīkh al-aʿyān*).[337] In the context of Ḥamūya's correspondence with ʿImād al-Dīn, it may be that the theoretical and methodological frameworks associated with Kubrā and his circle were at odds with the institutional focus of the

[334] For the story of Kubrā and the dog saint, see Jāmī, *Nafaḥāt*, 419-420 and Devin A. DeWeese, "Dog Saints and Dog Shrines in Kubravī Tradition: Notes on a Hagiographical Motif from Khwārazm," in *Miracle et karāma: Hagiographies médiévales comparées*, ed. Denise Aigle (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2000), 459–97.

[335] For accounts of Kubrā and his disciples, see e.g. Jāmī, *Nafaḥāt*, 419 ff.

[336] See Algar, "Eponym"; idem, "Order"; and Böwering, "Seclusion," 268-275. For more on Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī, his relationship with Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, and the antagonism between him and the Ḥamuya clan, see Eyad Abuali, "The Genesis," 38-53. As Abuali explains, al-Baghdādī seems to have found himself in a struggle between the Khwārazmshāh (with whom the Ḥamūyas were aligned) and his mother (with whom al-Baghdādī was aligned), eventually leading to his execution.

[337] Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, *Mirʾāt*, XXII.424. For more on Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, see Alex Mallett, "Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī," in *Medieval Muslim Historians and the Franks in the Levant* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 84–108.

Saʿīd al-Suʿadāʾ and thus irrelevant (or perhaps even detrimental) as a personal reference. On the other hand, it could simply be the case that in Ḥamūya's correspondences and treatises, his name and elite family connections outweighed the possible benefits of explicitly incorporating himself into Kubrā's spiritual genealogy.

With all of this in mind, let us circle back to expand our original question. If Saʿd al-Dīn cites his forefather directly as a way of co-opting the renown of his noble lineage, how might this claim have been received, given the contextual importance of *interpersonal* relationships for the transmission of knowledge and legitimacy? In *The Epistle on Compulsion and Kindness* and *The Levels of Joy*, Saʿd al-Dīn cites Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya not only as his forefather, but as his shaykh as well, deploying the genealogical link between him and his ancestor as direct evidence for his Sufi credentials. As we have seen with Kubrā and Qūnawī, 13th-century Sufis often deployed dream narratives or waking visions to underscore intimate bonds with their spiritual masters. While these narratives took place in the unseen world, they highlighted interpersonal relationships of association and training; these social bonds were so powerful, they could transcend time and space. Even in cases where individuals claimed initiation through prophets or long-dead shaykhs, accounts of meetings in the unseen world—usually emphasizing points of corporeal contact—worked as legitimating strategies that reproduced an ideal of Sufi knowledge as embodied and social.[338] In light of this broader context, it is curious that Saʿd al-Dīn does not deem it necessary to justify his spiritual links with the Ḥamūya patriarch through any narrative or ar-

[338] Ibn ʿArabī, for example, narrates a complex relationship between the living saints with which he trained and the prophets whom he claims initiated him and endowed him with authoritative knowledge. See Addas, *Quest*, 33-73.

For corporeal contact in dreams, see the example of Qūnawī and Ibn ʿArabī in Section 3.3. In the *Effusions of Beauty*, Kubrā likewise presents a vision in which he shakes hands with ʿAlī, guaranteeing himself a place in paradise and, as the following discussion suggests, affords him access with an authoritative knowledge. See Kubrā, *Fawāʾiḥ*, (M) 12 and (Z) 138-139.

gument whatsoever. Ḥamūya's unadorned citations of his forefather suggests that in his immediate context, genealogical links *did* matter and *could* be deployed to advantageous effect, even beyond direct personal connections. To put it another way, Saʿd al-Dīn's laconic references to Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya presume that the connection between forefather and spiritual master, even across multiple generations, would make sense (and be convincing) to his readers even without further argument or explanation.

As noted above, 13th-century scholars and Sufis competed for state-sponsored posts primarily through the cultivation of interpersonal relationships with distinguished teachers and authorities. At the same time, however, select families were able to circumvent the "continuous play of seizing, resigning, increasing, trading or passing on, and defending" through the strength of a patriarch's renown, unmarked expectations vis-à-vis patrilineal inheritance, and of course, strong political connections.[339] In each of these cases, family posts were not legally inherited per se, but rather appointed at the discretion of particular rulers, who upheld *de facto* lines of succession. The interpersonal cultivation of social knowledge may have reflected rhetorical or theoretical ideals, but questions of genealogy and family connections continued to play important roles in the reproduction and contestation of elite knowledge and power.[340] Likewise, though father-son bonds seem to have been the dominant mode of genealogical legitimacy, there appears to have been a recognition of other types of ancestral claims in practice. In his *Mirror of the Age*, for

[339] Chamberlain, *Knowledge*, 94-95.

[340] Here, we could draw an analogy with the practice of legacy admissions at modern American colleges and universities. In theory—and perhaps in the majority of cases—competition and individual merit are upheld as fundamental ideals. In a few specific cases, families are afforded with a distinct advantage on account of their reputation, connections, and material capital, all compounded, in turn, by a continued history of admission and success. Though there are important differences between the modern university and the medieval *madrasa*, I maintain that such an analogy helps to illuminate and familiarize how questions of individual merit and genealogical reputation are negotiated in practice.

example, Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī's entry on Saʿd al-Dīn underscores his unique ties to Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya and, in particular, his shrine in Baḥrābād. At the end of his brief biographical notice, the historian writes:

> فقال في بعض الأيّام أريد أن أروز جدّي محمّد بن حمّوية ببُحَيْراباذ [كذا] فمضى إليه وزاره وأقام عنده أسبوعًا فمات ودفن إليه جانبه
>
> One day he said, "I wish to make a pilgrimage to my forefather Muḥammad ibn Ḥammūya in Buḥayrābādh [*sic*]." He set off to make a pilgrimage to him and stayed there with him for a week. Then, he died and was buried next to him.[341]

Reading *The Mirror of the Age* as narrative rather than as positivist history, we see that Ibn al-Jawzī fundamentally intertwines the lives of the shaykh and his forefather, binding them together through blood, name, and death. Though he offers no theoretical explanation or justification as to why, the historian suggests that there is *something* about the shaykh's ancestral ties that is particularly relevant or meaningful to his audience. Even in this contemporary Ayyūbid-affiliated source, therefore, Ḥamūya's relationship with his illustrious ancestor is considered an essential part to his character and thus worthy of special attention.

We must remember, however, that Saʿd al-Dīn did not spend his entire career in Ayyūbid and ʿAbbāsid territories. Though his time in Arabo-Islamic lands put him in touch with such luminaries as Ibn ʿArabī, Qūnawī, and Suhrawardī, he was unable to secure a steady source of income and was forced to return to Persianate territories, which by then had come under the rule of the Mongols.

[341] Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt*, XXII.424.

3.7. The Mongol Context: Ḥamūya and the "Golden Kin"

In Mongol territories across Eurasia, appeals to genealogical authority were even more pronounced than they were in Egypt and Syria. After Chinggis Khān's death in 1227, leadership of his vast empire was premised upon lineage; only the so-called "golden kin" (*altan orugh*) could inherit knowledge of the divine mandate that guaranteed the spread of absolute Mongol rule to the ends of the earth.[342] Judith Pfeiffer has demonstrated that Muslims living under the Mongols articulated their legitimacy through analogous political discourses, deploying prestigious genealogical claims of their own to secure the support of their new overlords.[343] Twelver Shīʿīs, for example translated confessional boundaries into a language of lineage, inheritance, and religio-political authority, vaunting themselves as the Mongols of the Muslim community.[344] These arguments framed the Prophet Muḥammad and Chinggis Khān as parallel founding fathers, each

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[342] On the Mongols, genealogical authority, and Chinggisid legitimacy, see Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), II.405-410; Michal Biran, *Chinggis Khan* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2007), 102 ff.; Anne F. Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 6 ff.; Michael Hope, *Power, Politics, and Tradition in the Mongol Empire and the Īlkhānate of Iran* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 44 ff.; and Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the Islamic World: From Conquest to Conversion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 382 ff.

[343] See Judith Pfeiffer, "Confessional Ambiguity vs. Confessional Polarization: Politics and the Negotiation of Religious Boundaries in the Ilkhanate," in *Politics, Patronage, and the Transmission of Knowledge in 13th-15th Century Tabriz*, ed. Judith Pfeiffer, Iran Studies, v. 8 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2014), 129–68.

Jonathan Brack argues that these discursive experiments were intellectually and socially productive for Mongols as well as Muslims. As Muslims (along with Buddhists and Jews) translated their claims at the Īlkhānid court, they offered their Mongol patrons new ways of expressing their absolute sovereignty and articulating their inheritance of Chinggis Khān's heavenly mandate. See Jonathan Z. Brack, "Mediating Sacred Kingship: Conversion and Sovereignty in Mongol Iran" (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 2016), 7-10.

[344] The early 14th-century *History of Öljeytü* (*Tārīkh-i Ūljāytū*), puts the analogy in explicit terms, reporting the following as part of a conversation between the Īlkhān Öljeytü (d. 1316)—who eventually converted to Shīʿism—and a Mongol *amīr*: "O Padishah, in Islam a Shīʿī (*rāfiḍī*) [is he who] recognizes the seed (*urugh*) of Chinggis Khān as his successor after his death according to the Mongol *yasa*. The Sunnī way (*madhhab-i sunna*) considers the *amīr* [i.e., someone without Chinggisid descent] worthy of his position." Translation by Judith Pfeiffer. Parenthetical insertions and clarifications in brackets are Pfeiffer's. See eadem, "Confessional Ambiguity," 145. The passage is also translated and analyzed in Jackson, *Mongols*, 177. For the original text, see Abū al-Qāsim Qāshānī (d. 1335/1336), *Tārīkh-i Ūljāytu* (Tehran: Intihārāt-i Bungāh-i Tarjuma wa Nashr-i Kitāb, 1969), 90-91.

privy to an authorizing divine knowledge that could only be passed on through biological inheritance.[345] Though of course not all descendants of Muḥammad identified with the Shīʿa, the Twelvers leveraged their support of the Prophet's family to advance a communal identity and political-theoretical discourse that appealed to Mongol elites.[346]

Under the Īlkhān Maḥmūd Ghāzān (d. 1304), these discourses materialized in the form of concrete policies. A self-declared defender of the *ahl al-bayt*, Ghāzān established endowments (*dār al-siyāda*s) for the Prophet's descendants in major cities of the Ilkhanate as institutional parallels to *madrasa*s and *khānaqāh*s.[347] Ghāzān's successor Öljeytü (d. 1316) formally adopted Twelver Shīʿism, which he declared the official religion of the Īlkhānid state. In addition to recruiting Shīʿī theologians for his court, minting coins with the Shīʿī *shahāda*, and having the *khuṭba* read in the Twelver manner across his domain, Öljeytu expanded Ghāzāns policies of official support for the Prophet's descendants.[348] According to Pfieffer, though the Mongols' allegiance to Shīʿism may have ended with Öljeytü's death, his and Ghāzān's rule represent a formative period for the discourses of genealogical legitimacy that would become central to Perso-Islamic articulations of authority in the Tīmūrid era and beyond.[349]

The ubiquity and social significance of lineage and genealogical authority among the Mongols and their allies suggests a key framework through which to understand Ḥamūya's

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[345] Pfeiffer, "Confessional Ambiguity," 155-156.

[346] Pfeiffer, "Confessional Ambiguity," 144-145, 161.

[347] Pfeiffer, "Confessional Ambiguity," 146.

[348] Pfeiffer, "Confessional Ambiguity," 151. The Īlkhān's reverence for the Prophet's bloodline was purportedly accompanied by a strict policy of enforcement. After being accused of counterfeiting an ʻAlid genealogy, the chief of the Īlkhānate's Twelver Shīʿa community was summarily executed under Öljeytü's orders. See Pfeiffer, "Confessional Ambiguity," 159-160.

[349] Pfeiffer, "Confessional Ambiguity," 162-163.

rhetorical deployment of his forefather's legacy.[350] Evidence from Sa'd al-Dīn's personal correspondences in Khurāsān suggest both that the roots of these genealogical arguments had sprouted even before they garnered official support in Ghāzān's policies *and* that the shaykh was fluent in their usage. In an epistle written to 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭā-Malik Juwaynī (d. 1283)—the famed Īlkhānid historian and administrator—Ḥamūya seeks a sympathetic ear to intercede between him and Bahā' al-Dīn Muḥammad Juwaynī (d. 1254), 'Aṭā'-Malik's father and the *ṣāhib-dīwān* under Chin Temür (d. 1235), Körgüz (d. 1242), and Arghun Aqā (d. 1275).[351] While the details of the disagreement are unclear, the crux of the issue seems to have revolved around Sa'd al-Dīn's support of a *sayyid* whom Bahā' al-Dīn believed to be of poor character.[352] To defend his actions, Ḥamūya justifies his reverence for the Prophet's family through a sustained discussion of genealogical origin and descent, supporting his claims with logical argument and, of course, evidence from the science of letters. He avers:

> ولكن احترام أهل البيت واجب وهو الدين الواصب لأنّ الفرد من المصدر الصحيح لأصل الطّيب الصريح الّذي له الأفراد والأولاد والأعداد الغالب القادر البالغ اللطيف
> إن كان هو على مثال الأصل ونعته وصفته فتعظيمه واحترامه واجب لتعظيم الأصل لأنّه به تمام الوصل وبتمام الوصل تمام الفصل وبتمام الفصل كمال الخصل

[350] The citations of Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya analyzed above are found in texts composed before Ḥamūya's final move back to Khurāsān. However, because the goal of this chapter is to explore the contexts in which Sa'd al-Dīn's work may have been written, taught, and *received*, I argue that reading his citations in relation to the Mongol world nevertheless yields generative insights.

[351] For more on 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭā-Malik Juwaynī, see George Lane, "JOVAYNI, 'ALĀ'-AL-DIN," in *EIr*. For more on Bahā' al-Dīn Muḥammad Juwaynī, see 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭā-Malik Juwaynī, *Tārīkh-i Jahān-Gushā-yi Juwaynī*, ed. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb Qazwīnī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Hirmis, 2009), 555-556, 585-587; idem, *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror*, trans. J. A. Boyle (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 487-488, 519-521; and George Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran: A Persian Renaissance* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 180-181.

[352] See Ḥamūya, "Makātīb," 468.

وإن لم يكن على مثال الأصل ونعته وصفته ودينه وملّته فلا نعظّمه ولا نحرّمه من حيث هو بل من حيث هو وغيره من مصدر قويّ غالب صحيح وأصل صريح يقتضي التكدير والتطهير لأنّ الصادر منه في غلباته مكدّر بغيره والصادر منه في ملطّفاته مطهّر غيره وميره فإذًا يجب تعظيم الأصل الجامع لإتمام الفصل والوصل وإكمال كرائم الخصل

كما نعظّم القرآن وحروفه وأشكاله وصنوفه فسبحان اللّه كلامٌ معظّمٌ من اللّه يدلّ على تنزيه اللّه فكل حرف فيه معظم واجب التعظيم إذا نسبناه إلى اللّه تعالى ومن أفراد الكلمات في القرآن ما هو موهم بنوع من النقصان ومعشر بما لا يليق بجلاج الرحمان نحو قوله تعالى ﴿ولا تسبّوا الّذين يدعون من دون اللّه فيسبّوا اللّه عدوا بغير علم﴾ وقوله تعالى ﴿أنت قلت للناس اتّخذوني وأمي إلهين من دون اللّه﴾ فيسين السبّ[353] سين سبحان وبأؤه باء سبحان وكلاهما معظّمان من حيث أنّهما صدرا من مصدر صحيح معظّم مع تفاوتهما فيما يليق بجلال اللّه وفيما لا يليق

Nay, reverence of the family of the prophet is obligatory—it is the lasting religion. Because, the individual of sound origins (*al-maṣdar al-ṣaḥīḥ*) belongs to a good and pure stock (*al-aṣl al-ṭayyib al-ṣarīḥ*), which has individuals, offspring, and numbers of the utmost power and furthest refinement.

If one conforms to the model of his stock, along with its character and attributes, then glorifying and revering him is necessary when one glorifies his stock. Because, through him the conjunction (*al-waṣl*) is perfect; through the perfection of the conjunction the disjunction (*al-faṣl*) is perfect; and through the perfection of the disjunction comes the consummation of the whole bunch (*al-khuṣal*).

If one does not conform to the model of his stock, along with its character and attribute, its religion and its sect, then we do not glorify and revere him *qua* him, but rather by virtue of his stock. Those other than him [still] come from a strong and perfectly sound source, for the pure stock yields [both] what sullies and what makes pure—[some of] what stems from it sullies other things in its acts of compulsion and [some of] what stems from it purifies other things in its acts of kindness. Thus, it is necessary to glorify the entire stock, due to the perfection of its disjunction and conjunction, and the consummation of the precious aspects of the whole bunch.

This is just as we glorify the Qurʾān, with all its letters, shapes, and forms. "Glory be to God" (*subḥān Allāh*) is glorious speech from God that testifies to God's transcendence. Each letter in the Qurʾān is glorious and necessitates glorification,

[353] The edition reads السبب ("the cause") here. Based on the context of the preceding Qurʾānic verse (Q. 6:108), السبّ ("insult," "reviling," "abuse," etc.) seem like a more likely choice.

> so we link it to God almighty. Among the individual letters in the Qur'ān, however, there are those that suggest type of deficiency and indicate what does not befit the majesty of the Merciful. As exalted He says, "Do not revile (*wa-lā tasubbū*) those they call on beside God in case they, in their hostility and ignorance, revile (*fa-yasubbū*) God" (Q. 6:108) and, "Did you say to people, 'Take me and my mother as two gods alongside God?'" (Q. 5:115) The *sīn* of "reviling" (*al-sabb*) is the *sīn* of "glory be" (*subḥān*) and its *bā'* is the *bā'* of "glory be." Both of them are glorious on account of the fact that they both stem from a pure and glorious source, despite their differences with respect to what befits the majesty of God and what does not.[354]

To absolve himself before ʿAṭā-Mālik Juwaynī and his father Bahā' al-Dīn, Saʿd al-Dīn deploys an abstract genealogical language that is wide-reaching in its applicability. The focus here is not on qualities of the Prophet, his divine mission, or the virtues of his family in particular, but rather on questions of inheritance and the relationship between an illustrious ancestor and his progeny. No matter the *apparent* characteristics of individual descendants, Ḥamūya declares, they are all to be exalted by virtue of their genealogical ties to their forefather and their membership within the distinguished family line. At the same time, Saʿd al-Dīn leaves theoretical space for individuals who most perfectly embody the qualities of their noble ancestor. These figures stand in for the sum total of their families, revered both by virtue of their noble stock *and* by virtue of their own perfect qualities. Although Saʿd al-Dīn uses the epistle to defend his reverence for the *sayyid*s, his logic is readily adaptable to a wide range of illustrious lineages: Chinggis Khān's "golden kin," the Juwaynīs (whose forefathers held distinguished positions under the ʿAbbāsids, Saljūqs, Khwārazmshāhs, and the Mongols), and of course, the Ḥamūya clan.[355] As Saʿd al-Dīn articulates them, these universalizing genealogical discourses—and in particular, the ideal of the "perfect de-

[354] Ḥamūya, "Makātīb," 468.

[355] For a brief history of the Juwaynī family, see Lane, "Jovayni."

scendant"—could be deployed just as easily to theorize a contextually potent link between him and his own renowned ancestor, Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya. Even if the shaykh does not explicitly deploy such arguments in extant correspondences or treatises, our analysis nevertheless reveals Saʿd al-Dīn's adroit grasp of the discursive landscape in Khurāsān, his ability to adapt relevant discourses for specific goals, and the contextual possibilities according to which his own illustrious ancestral history may have been articulated and received.

Towards the end of the epistle, we are met with a familiar recourse to the science of letters, applied here to God's speech as revealed in the Qurʾān. Citing Q. 6:108 as an example, Saʿd al-Dīn demonstrates how *sīn* and *bāʾ*, the letters that make up the word "reviling" (*sabba*; *al-sabb*), are the very same ones that testify to the glory of God (*subḥān Allāh*). Because these—and all letters found in the Qurʾān—originate in God's speech, they are all to be revered and exalted. As was the case in his epistle to ʿImād al-Dīn, Ḥamūya adapts his lettrist analysis to rhetorical strategies suited for the exigencies of this particular correspondence. If the social ties he emphasizes in response to his cousin's cold welcome reflect the institutional context of the Saʿīd al-Suʿadāʾ, his claims with regard to illustrious origins and family rights in this epistle are tailored to the genealogical predilections of the Mongols and their allies. In both cases, his lettrist output and laconic genealogical references are equally versatile.

If Saʿd al-Dīn's reverence for the *ahl al-bayt* and savvy articulation of genealogical authority foreshadow the Twelver Shīʿī strategies identified by Pfeiffer, it may be tempting to take this devotional and discursive affinity as indicative of the shaykh's Shīʿī leanings. Though it may be an exaggeration to suggest (with Jamal Elias) that "most modern studies accept Saʿd al-Dīn's formal profession of Twelver Shīʿism as beyond doubt," the question of the shaykh's sectarian affiliation

still looms large in contemporary scholarship.[356] The primary historical evidence for Ḥamūya's purported Shīʿī identification stems from ʿAzīz Nasafī's (d. before 1300) accounts of his views on the nature of the saints and the Mahdī. In *The Book of the Perfect Human Being* (*Kitāb al-Insān al-kāmil*), Nasafī reports, "According to the shaykh, the saints of Muḥammad's community will be no more than these twelve. The last saint, i.e., the twelfth, will be the Seal of the Saints, called the Mahdī and the Master of Time."[357] Three centuries later, the Qāḍī Nūr Allāh Shūshtarī (d. 1610) would cite a variation of this passage to support his assertion Saʿd al-Dīn was a Shīʿī who limited the saints to ʿAlī and his sinless offspring.[358]

Nasafī and Shushtarī's citations notwithstanding, Ḥamūya did not identify himself as a member of the Twelver Shīʿī community. The shaykh's family history, education, and correspondences all point towards a Shāfiʿī affiliation.[359] Even a brief perusal of Saʿd al-Dīn's work suggests that he did not limit the saints to twelve. The opening lines of his *Appearance of the Seal of the Saints* (*Risāla fī ẓuhūr khātim al-awliyāʾ*), for example, states that three hundred thirteen saints

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[356] See Elias, "Sufi Lords," 71-72. Fritz Meier and Spencer Trimingham both identify Ḥamūya as a Twelver Shīʿī. See Fritz Meier, "Die Schriften," 128 and Trimingham, *Orders*, 99. Marijan Molé is more cautious, noting that the lack of any specifically Shīʿī elements in the the texts to which he had access. See idem, "Kubrawīya," 74-76. With respect to Persian scholarship, Nafīsī's programmatic article (cited also by Molé) argues for a Shāfiʿī affiliation, as does Hirawī's introduction to *The Lamp of Sufism*. See Nafīsī, "Khandān," 19-20 and Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ,* 18-19.

[357] Nasafī, *Insān*, 32.

[358] Qāḍī Nūr Allāh Shūshtarī, *Majālis al-muʾminīn*, II.75-76, also quoted in Nafīsī, "Khāndān," 20.

According to Hirawī, Ḥāfiẓ Ḥusayn ibn Karbalāʾī (d. 1589) explicitly identifies Ḥamūya as a Twelver Shīʿī. A closer look at Ibn Karbalāʾī's claims reveals no such allegation; only a citation and discussion of a Saʿd al-Dīn's poetry vis-à-vis the coming of the Mahdī. See Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 16-17 and Karbalāʾī, *Rawḍāt*, II.392.

[359] See the Introduction, pp. 6 and 8. See also Nafīsī, "Khandān," 19-20 and Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ,* 18-19. Responding to what in English has been referred to as the "confessional ambiguity" of the period (see Pfeiffer, "Confessional Ambiguity," 129), Nafīsī notes that a branch of the Ḥamūya family did seem to have Twelver Shīʿī inclinations. Likewise, while Hirawī rejects the notion that Saʿd al-Dīn was a Shīʿī *per se*, he nevertheless characterizes him as a "Shāfiʿī with an inclination toward Shīʿī thought" (*Shāfiʿī būdih wa girāyash bih fikr-i shīʿī dāshtih būdih ast*), suggesting a general affinity between Shāfiʿīs and Shīʿīs on the one hand and Sufis and Shīʿīs on the other.

See also Elias "Sufi Lords," 70-72, which addresses and rejects Ḥamūya's supposed identity as a Shīʿī.

will pledge allegiance to the Beloved Saint at the end of time.[360] In any case, the shaykh's general predilection for expanding, contracting, or otherwise manipulating numbers, letters, and categories within and across works indicates that we should not presume an unwavering commitment to this or any other number.

Ḥamūya offers a host of assertions that counter efforts to identify him as a Twelver Shīʿī. In his *Realities of the Letters* (*Ḥaqāʾiq al-ḥurūf*), for example, he cites the first four caliphs and four eponymous founders of the "canonical" Sunnī law schools as fundamental links in cosmic chains of being and manifestations of the four letters of God's name.[361] Shīʿī Imāms, on the other hand, are nowhere to be found. In the *Levels of Joy*, Ḥamūya mentions the sixth imām Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 765) only to contradict him, citing his name without any honorific formulae whatsoever.[362]

If we turn our attention to the *Book of the Beloved*—the text that supposedly proffers Twelver tenets—Ḥamūya offers the following account of the relationship between Sunnīs and Shīʿīs:

> وأقرب الناس من اسم السعيد السنّي المقبل على سنّة وجه الله تعالى والمتّبع لسنّة نبيّه محمّد عليه الصلوة والسلام وأقرب اسم من اسم الشقي الشيعي المنحرف عن سنّة رسول الله والمنفي عن مواجهة حريم حرم سنّة وجه الله
>
> The closest of people to the name "the joyous" (*al-saʿīd*) is the Sunnī who devotes himself to the *sunna* of God's face and who follows the *sunna* of his prophet

[360] Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Risāla fi ẓuhūr khātam al-wilāya*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Ayasofya MS 2058, fol. 206a. Emphasis mine.

[361] Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Ḥaqāʾiq al-ḥurūf*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, MS Petrev Paşa 606 (P), fol. 16a.

[362] Ḥamūya, *Marātib*, (P) fol. 88b. For Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq as a revered figure and patriarch of the esoteric sciences, see Matthew S. Melvin-Koushki, "The Quest," 182, 251, 476 ff. and Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks*, 122.

> Muḥammad. The closest of names to the name "the wretched" (*al-shaqī*) is the Shīʿī who deviates from the *sunna* of God's messenger and disavows consideration of the sacred sanctuary that is the *sunna* of God's face.[363]

Ḥamūya's Sunnī-Shīʿī pair echoes analogous binaries that he draws throughout his work.[364] In spite of his damning language, the passage in its context suggests that the differences between these poles exists only with respect to manifest being. At the most fundamental level, both Sunnīs and Shīʿīs—and indeed all other binary divisions—are expressions of a single Reality. The perfect saint manipulates these distinctions as he pleases: bouncing between them, blurring their distinctions, or transcending them altogether. To a certain degree, Ḥamūya's textual strategies reflect his universalizing ideals. As we have seen throughout this chaper, he draws from a plurality of social identities and rhetorical techniques, adapting his strategies to move fluidly through diverse circles of actors. Despite the ostensibly ecumenical tenor of Saʿd al-Dīn's assertions, however, the subtext of the passage is clear enough: at the level of practical reality, it is better to be among the joyous than among the wretched. In this respect, the shaykh heeds his own advice, affirming the Shāfiʿī affiliation of his kin to navigate networks of what were primarily Sunnī teachers, interlocutors, and colleagues.

3.8. Conclusion

As a member of an illustrious family who enjoyed a world-class education, cultivated intimate relationships with a trans-regional network of renowned Sufi masters, and maintained close ties

[363] Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fol. 28b.

[364] See e.g., *Sharḥ-i basmala-yi sharīf*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Çorulu Ali Paşa MS 4795, fol. 1b and Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 66.

with ascendant political authorities, Saʿd al-Dīn had at his disposal a range of diverse and occasionally incommensurable strategies, each shaped by the interplay between theoretical possibilities, material conditions, ideological predilections, individual goals, and a plurality of social contexts. The shaykh could thus cite his relationship with a non-Sufi legal authority to legitimize an infinite esoteric knowledge, uphold interpersonal ideals and genealogical privileges simultaneously, and deploy Mongol political theory to defend the *ahl al-bayt* (and implicitly his own prestigious lineage).

By tracing some of his strategies across these diverse contexts, we are afforded a textured window into Saʿd al-Dīn's intellectual and social worlds, as well as a way to imagine how such an individual might carve out his place(s) within them. Just as his performative writing strategies generated new meanings in relation to diverse readers and generic conventions, his laconic references to his forefather's legacy likely resonated differently for different audiences, as did the relationship between those genealogical claims and the interpersonal master-disciple ideals he promoted more explicitly. Ḥamūya did not seem particularly interested in theorizing these equivocations or stabilizing their ambiguities. Like the letters, these points of irritation yielded a plurality of generative possibilities, both socially and intellectually. In the end, all of these diverse strategies reinforce a consistent theme: Saʿd al-Dīn's commitment to the infinite possibilities of his words.

If the genealogical bonds that Ḥamūya forged between himself and his forefather obviated the need for legitimating personal narratives, these circumstances may have also contributed to the radical openness and deconstructive potential of his work. Kubrā and Qūnawī's anecdotes authorize the knowledge they produce, but implicitly bind their words to a *specific* history of

training and social relationships. Each of their strategies produces a singular authorial persona whose unique mastery of Reality their texts purport to convey. While Saʿd al-Dīn assumes the position of all-powerful shaykh in *The Lamp of Sufism*, this persona is bound primarily to the infinitely generative language of his text. Whether intentional or not, the absence of personal master-disciple narratives from Ḥamūya's theoretical writing may have worked in tandem with his avant-garde strategies to liberate the interpretive possibilities of his words from the pretension of a single totalizing authorial perspective. As we will see in the next chapter, it is precisely by denying his readers such a stable hermeneutical frame that the shaykh lays claim to ultimate saintly authority.

Chapter 4
Real Talk: Language, Revelation, and Human Perfection

BUTT (*miraculising into the Dann Deafir warcry, his bigotes bristling, a, jittinju triggity shittery pet, he shouts his thump and fee fauh foul finngures up the heighohs of their ahs*!) Bluddymuzzlemuzzle! The buckbeshottered! He'll umbozzle no more graves nor horne nor haunder, lou garou, for gayl geselles in dead men's hills! Kaptan (backsights to his bared!), His Cumbulent Embulence, the frustrate fourstar Russkakruscam, Dom Allaf O'Khorwan, connundurumchuff.

James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*[365]

First of all, we must internalize the flatulation of the matter by transmitting the effervescence of the Indianization proximity in order to segregate the crux of my venereal infection. Now, if I may retain my liquids here for one moment, I'd like to continue the redundance of my quote, unquote, "intestinal tract." You see, because to preclude on the issue of world domination would only circumvent—excuse me—circum*cise* the revelation that reflects the Afro-disiatic symptoms which now perpetrates the Jheri curls' activation.

Oswald Bates, *In Living Color*[366]

This final chapter draws together recurring themes from throughout the dissertation to examine how Saʿd al-Dīn imagines and performs human perfection in writing. While previous chapters have analyzed the epistemological foundations, embodied dimensions, and social context(s) of the shaykh's abstract and esoteric output, I focus here on incomprehensible speech itself as a mode of knowledge production. Delving deeper into the relational strategies and epistemological sensibilities theorized in the previous chapters, I explore how Ḥamūya's idiosyncratic language

[365] James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 352.

[366] *In Living Color*, season 1, episode 3, "Lean on Me Beautiful," directed by Paul Miller and Matt Wickline, written by Keenan Ivory Wayans et al., featuring Keenan Ivory Wayans et al., aired April 28, 1990, in broadcast syndication, on FOX.

may have been meaningful—and even authoritative—for contemporary audiences precisely *because* it subverted expectations and resisted any singular interpretation.

I begin with a brief overview of prophecy and sainthood in Ḥamūya's work, identifying key themes that will set the stage for subsequent analyses. While Saʿd al-Dīn explores the relationship between prophecy and sainthood through a wide range of metaphysical and temporal frames, he consistently identifies the two as interrelated modes of a single all-encompassing Reality. Despite their fundamental unity, the exigencies of time and space demand that these cosmic principles become manifest as individual prophets and saints, each of whom communicates perfect knowledge of the Real in accordance with the capacities of their respective audiences. According to Saʿd al-Dīn, prophets articulate inner realities in outer forms, while saints break open outer forms to reveal inner realities. As he emphasizes time and time again, neither prophecy nor sainthood can be considered the superior principle, for each completes the soteriological function of the other.

After sketching Saʿd al-Dīn's broader claims about prophecy and sainthood, I analyze how he traces their archetypal forms—the Seal of the Prophets and the Seal of the Saints—across space and time. The shaykh reads the two seals against shifting networks of prophets and saints, illuminating diverse dimensions of human perfection through a juxtaposition of outer forms. What matters to him is not the characteristics of individual prophets and saints, but rather the dynamic hidden realities that come into view through new combinations and points of reference. Just like the Divine Essence they embody, the Seal of the Prophets and Seal of the Saints can only be known through the endless webs of relational qualities they make manifest.

From here, I turn to a discussion of the Seal of the Saints from Saʿd al-Dīn's magnum

opus, *The Book of the Beloved*. Focusing in on the poetics and structure of key passages from "The Circle of *Nūn*," I demonstrate how Ḥamūya's modes of expression perform the hagiological claims outlined in earlier sections of the chapter. Through a strategic deployment of disorienting forms and structures, the shaykh denies his audience a totalizing framework within which to ground his vision. Instead, he forces readers to produce meaning for themselves, provoking them to continually negotiate and revise interpretive possibilities across shifting intellectual and experiential frames.

As we will see, Ḥamūya's idiosyncratic strategies implicitly engage with contemporary discussions about the nature of revealed speech and its effects on the human soul. According to medieval theories of Qurʾānic inimitability (*iʿjāz*), the Qurʾān articulated its message through obscure language that deferred meaning and subverted audience expectations, sending each reader or listener on an active quest for understanding. Through the interplay between text and audience, the Qurʾān opened up nuanced layers of intellectual and affective meaning. Although medieval *iʿjāz* scholars admitted a certain kinship between poetic speech and revealed language, they maintained that the degree to which the Qurʾān manipulated semantic possibilities remained unparalleled.

Saʿd al-Dīn took up this challenge, appropriating and expanding idiosyncratic forms of Qurʾānic meaning making to force his readers into a state of restless aporia. To express the hidden dimensions behind prophetic realities, he amplifies the techniques of *iʿjāz* beyond the level of syntax and into the broader architectonics of his text, deferring conceptual resolution for readers indefinitely. By freeing *The Book of the Beloved* from a stable hermeneutical center, Saʿd al-Dīn leaves his language radically open to endless play and possibility. In so doing, he establishes his

speech as a manifestation of the Real's Self-Disclosure—an infinite fount of meaning whose potential is limited only by the capacity of its audience. If Ḥamūya's speech is incomprehensible, then I argue that it is so in ways that would have been *legible* to his readers as revealed speech. The shaykh thus performs saintly authority through the generative possibilities of his language. Like the Qurʾān, the ultimate meaning of Saʿd al-Dīn's words becomes inseparable from what readers are inspired to make of them.

4.1. Prophecy and Sainthood: An Overview

Saʿd al-Dīn typically articulates his claims about human perfection through a language of prophecy (*nubuwwa*) and sainthood (*wilāya*), imagining the two as both ethical ideals and fundamental metaphysical principles. Ḥamūya consistently binds sainthood to prophecy, characterizing the two principles as interrelated modalities of a single hypostasis that encompasses the totality of the Divine Attributes. The lettrist metaphysical frameworks that Ḥamūya develops in *The Lamp of Sufism* and *The Realities of the Letters* bring prophecy and sainthood together with divinity to form one of several interrelated triads that emanate out of the Primordial Point (i.e., the Divine Essence). As disclosures (*kushūf*) of the Point's presence (*ḥuḍūr*), these triads become manifest as a single cosmic *alif* (i.e., Divinity) that forms the ontological basis for all created beings (see Figures 2 and 3).[367] Alongside this lettrist metaphysics, *The Lamp of Sufism* and *The Realities of the Letters* map the Divine Self-Disclosure according an exterior-interior (*ẓāhir-bāṭin*) binary, framing the relationship between prophecy and sainthood as an expression of these

[367] Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 57-58 and idem, *Ḥaqāʾiq*, (P) fol. 13b.

fundamental ontological modes (see Figure 6).[368] Ḥamūya does not attempt to resolve the points of irritation that irrupt between these schemes or the many other cosmogonic narratives, metaphysical hierarchies, and hagiological claims that crop up across his oeuvre. Instead, he weaves prophecy and sainthood into webs of letters and principles, manipulating the productive tension that emerges from their incommensurable juxtapositions.

In the terrestrial world, the constraints of time and matter necessitate that these principles be embodied in two overarching classes of perfect beings—prophets and saints. Though prophets and saints both realize the totality of the Divine Attributes, they are distinguished by *how* they communicate and perform them. According to Ḥamūya, the Primordial Point projects Itself out into macro- and microcosmic realms, such that both the universe and human beings encompass the totality of the Divine Attributes. These two realms are interrelated, for humans exist within the cosmos and represent the *telos* of its creation. Put simply, creation disperses the Divine Attribute throughout the cosmos, where they are then are gathered together and perfected in the bodies of human beings. In order for individual humans to achieve their cosmic destiny, however, they must fully realize the Divine Attributes by embodying the modes of knowing and being that are established, elucidated, and epitomized by God's prophets and saints. Prophets teach humans to comprehend the Divine Attributes in all of their outer forms while saints guide them through the totality of inner meanings. As Saʿd al-Dīn emphasizes time and time again, the beginning of prophecy is the end of sainthood and the end of prophecy is the beginning of sainthood. Although both inner and outer dimensions exist together in the Primordial Point, human beings need both prophets and saints to show them how to reintegrate the dynamic and relation-

[368] Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 81 and idem, *Ḥaqāʾiq*, (P) fol. 14b.

al qualities of the Divine Attributes as they are made manifest in creation.[369]

Ḥamūya explains that prophecy and sainthood reach their most perfect expression in two figures—the Seal of the Prophets (*khātam al-anbiyā'*) and the Seal of the Saints (*khātam al-awliyā'*). The Seal of the Prophets refers to the Prophet Muḥammad, whose prophetic mission marks what Ḥamūya calls the beginning of time. Although the Real had disclosed the totality of Its Attributes to Adam in the act of teaching him the Names (Q. 2:31), it was not until the Prophet Muḥammad's mission that these Attributes became perfectly manifest on earth. With Muḥammad, the inner dimensions of the Real reached their fullest expression as outer realities.[370] When the Seal of the Saints emerges at the end of time, the Divine Attributes will become perfectly manifest once again. At this point, however, the outer dimensions of the Real that were perfected through Muḥammad will reach their fullest expression as inner realities.[371]

As earthly expressions of a single metaphysical principle, the Seal of the Prophets and the Seal of the Saints both embody comprehensive knowledge of the Divine Essence—i.e., the transcendent source from which the totality of Divine Attributes become manifest in being. These perfect microcosmic beings mirror the macrocosmic act of creation as they articulate the Real in speech. Just as the Primordial Point unfolds its Attributes through a series of cosmic letters, words, and pages, the Seal of the Prophets and Seal of the Saints make these Attributes manifest in the letters and sounds of the Qur'ān and Furqān, respectively. It is not through any limitation or hierarchy on the part of the Seals, but rather the exigencies of time, space, and human capacity that shape the differing emphases of their comprehensive messages. Taken together,

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[369] See Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 137-138.

[370] See Ḥamūya, *Ḥaqā'iq*, (P) fol. 13b.

[371] See Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 99-113.

Muḥammad and the Seal of the Saints lead humanity to perfect knowledge of the Real in inverted, yet complementary ways—the former from inside out and the latter from outside in. Where one ends, the other begins. As Ḥamūya emphasizes, neither seal is superior, for each participates in a single unity whose complete realization marks a full cycle of cosmic time.[372]

4.2. Prophecy and Sainthood as Relational Principles

While Ḥamūya's accounts of sainthood and prophecy generally conform to this basic sketch, the relationships he traces between specific saints and prophets, metaphysical principles and human manifestations, and apocalyptic temporal frames are characteristically slippery. In what follows, I offer a few examples to explore how Ḥamūya illustrates the particulars of these broader themes. Ḥamūya applies many of the same relational strategies from Chapter 1 to his accounts of saints and prophets, illuminating webs of relationships through which the qualities of particular saints and prophets become manifest. By mapping the Seal of the Prophets and the Seal of the Saints across these ever-shifting relationships, Ḥamūya explores how cosmic and terrestrial manifestations of this perfect pair/principle are both embedded within and encompass the full scope of Reality.

In "The Circle of *Wāw*" from *The Book of the Beloved*, Ḥamūya fashions a threefold typology of saints: God's saint (*walī Allāh*), the saint of God's right (*walī ḥaqq Allāh*), and the saint for God (*walī li-Llāh*), whom he also calls the saint of God's spirit, word, and hand (*walī rūḥ Allāh wa-kalimat Allāh wa-yad Allāh*).[373] After expounding upon the qualities of each saintly type

[372] See Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 112-113.

[373] Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fols. 76a ff.; (CE78) fols. 79a ff.; (NO) fols. 65a ff.; (AS58) fols. 60a ff.; and (YC) fols. 170b

through allusive references to abstract principles, soteriological implications, Divine Attributes, and cosmic time, Ḥamūya binds God's saint to the prophecy of Muḥammad (*khātam al-anbiyāʾ wa-ḥabīb Allāh*), the saint of God's right to the prophecy of Abraham (*khalīl Allāh*), and the saint for God to the prophecy of Moses (*najī Allāh wa-kalīm Allāh*).[374] Taken together, these three pairs make up God's eyes, ears, and nostrils, respectively, joining together to form the full expression of God's face (*jumlat wajh Allāh*). Each prophet-saint pair also constitutes a cycle of two divine days—one from sainthood to prophecy and the other from prophecy to sainthood—yielding a total of six days. A single seventh day (comprised of the Seal of the Prophets and the Seal of the Saints) completes these three cycles, gathering the three saintly types with the principles of elocution (*al-lisān*), elucidation (*al-bayān*), and visualization (*al-ʿiyān*).[375] The threefold typology of saints that Ḥamūya elaborates here helps sharpen the details of the broader framework outlined above. Not only are sainthood and prophecy inextricably linked; they also become manifest through a series of cycles within which each principle ends where the other begins. The pairs/cycles are perfected in the figures/principles of the two seals, who encompass the totality of the other cycles and reveal full extent of God's Attributes.

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ff.

Here, Hamūya expands al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī's (d. between 905 and 910) binary hagiological framework. For al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, saints exist according to two broad types: God's saint and the saint of God's right. See e.g., al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Drei Schriften Des Theosophen von Tirmid: Das Buch vom Leben der Gottesfreunde. Ein Antwortschreiben nach Saraḫs. Ein Antwortschreiben nach Rayy. Erster Teil: Die arabischen Texte*, ed. Bernd Radtke (Beirut and Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1992); Bernd Radtke and John O'Kane, *The Concept of Sainthood in Early Islamic Mysticism: Two Works by al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1996), 43 ff.; and Karamustafa, *Sufism*, 45-46. For a discussion of Ḥamūya's theories of sainthood in relation to those of al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, see Alexandrin, "Seals and Sealing."

[374] Ḥamūya, *Kitāb al-Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fols. 77a-77b; (CE78) fol. 80b; (NO) fol. 66a; (AS58) fol. 61a; and (YC) fol. 173a.

[375] Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb,* (SBB) fol. 77b; (CE78) fol. 80b; (NO) fol. 661; (AS58) fol. 61a; (YC) fols. 173b-174a.

Ḥamūya's cycles do not unfold in a straightforward temporal sequence.[376] While he frames Abraham, Moses, and Muḥammad as specific individuals, the shaykh implies that God's saint, the saint of God's right, and the saint for God become manifest in a wide range of figures throughout historical time.[377] The Prophet Muḥammad is located at multiple overlapping levels of Reality, both as part of a "micro" prophet-saint pair *and* as part of the "macro" sealing principle that binds together the entire system of cycles. As was the case with the lettrist metaphysical principles explored in Chapter 1, Ḥamūya's elaboration of saints and prophets resists systematic organization, reflecting his vision of created existence as infinite webs of interrelated and interpenetrating principles. The cycles of sainthood and prophecy outlined above thus exist primarily as *relationships* of ontological and epistemological perfection that become manifest through multiple temporal, cosmic, and material possibilities.

Ḥamūya continually rearranges webs of prophetic relationships to bring new dimensions of Reality or human perfection to the fore. *The Sea of Gratitude in the River of Disavowal* (*Baḥr al-shukr fī nahr al-nukr*), for example, sketches interrelated ternaries of prophets, saints, and unbelievers to model a dynamic convergence and transcendence of divine erection (*ithbāt*) and erasure (*maḥw*). Initially, Ḥamūya focuses his attention on Adam and the Tree of Eternal Life (here, the Tree of the Command), using the Qur'ānic narrative to frame how Adam embodies di-

[376] See also Alexandrin, "Seals and Sealing," 86-87.

[377] We might draw parallels here to Ibn ʿArabī's theory of saintly inheritances. For Ibn ʿArabī, each saint participates in the spiritual inheritance (i.e., knowledge of the Real) of one or more of the prophets, communicating the Real to human beings through a language and wisdom determined by that specific inheritance. All saints after Muḥammad receive their degree of spiritual inheritance through him, for as the Seal of the Prophet, he gathered together and perfected the knowledge of all other prophets before him. It is only the the Seal of the Saints (a title that Ibn ʿArabī claims for himself), however, whose spiritual inheritance encompasses the totality of Muḥammad's comprehensive wisdom. For a sustained discussion of Ibn ʿArabī on prophecy and sainthood, see Chodkiewicz, *Seal*. For a brief overview, see William C. Chittick, *Ibn ʿArabi: Heir to the Prophets* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2007), 11-25.

vine principles. The shaykh explains:

> وثمرة شجرة الأمر محلّ نزول الأمر . . . وفي أمره المكوّن ﴿إنّي أنا الله ربّ العالمين﴾ (القصص ٣٠) أسمع وأرى وأعلم ما لا تعلمون خلقتك بيدي وسوّيتك ونفخت فيك من روحي وجمعت فيك بين ألفات أسمع وأرى وأعلم وبين تاءات نفخت وسويت وخلقت وكنت باءات بي وبك وبنا
>
> . . .
>
> لمّا تاب عن فعله أدرج في حقيقته من حقيقة الشجرة القلب الحاضر القابل أعني به قلب الخاتمين خاتم النبوة وخاتم الولاية
>
> The Tree of the Command's fruit was the locus for the descent of the command... In the generative command, there was "Verily, I am God, Lord of Worlds" (Q. 28:30), "I hear, I see, and I know what you do not know," "I created you with My hand, evened you out, and blew into you from My spirit," and "I gathered within you the [first person imperfect] *alifs* of 'I hear, I see, and I know' (*asmaʿu wa-arā wa-aʿlamu*) and the [first person perfect] *tā'*s of 'I blew, I evened out, and I created,' (*nafakhtu wa-sawītu wa-khalaqtu*) such that you were the *bā'*s of 'through Me, through you, and through Us' (*bī wa-bika wa-binā*)."[378]
>
> ...
>
> When [Adam] repented of his act, the present and receptive heart—i.e., the heart of the two seals, the Seal of Prophecy and the Seal of Sainthood—was inserted into his reality from the reality of the tree.[379]

Through the act of eating from the Tree of the Command, Adam's body becomes infused with fundamental divine principles, including dimensions of God's Self-referential "I-ness" (*anāniyya*) and the words "Verily, I am God, Lord of Worlds" (Q. 28:30), which Ḥamūya deploys throughout his oeuvre to represent the initial act of Self-Disclosure.[380] By receiving the totality of the Real's

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[378] Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, "Baḥr al-shukr fī nahr al-nukr," in *Rasā'il Ibn ʿArabī: Sharḥ Mubtada' al-ṭūfān wa-rasā'il ukhrā*, by Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī, ed. Qāsim Muḥammad ʿAbbās and Ḥusayn Muḥammad ʿAjīl (Abu Dhabi: Manshūrāt al-Majmaʿ al-Thaqāfī: Cultural Foundaition [sic] Publications, 1998), 206. The published version of this text is erroneously attributed to Ibn ʿArabī.

[379] Ḥamūya, "Baḥr," 208.

[380] For Ḥamūya's use of Q. 28:30—often as a discussion of the three *alifs* and two *nūn*s of *innī anā*—see e.g., Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 81 and idem, *Sharḥ-i Basmala*, fol. 2a.

generative command, therefore, Adam becomes the perfect microcosm and archetypal human being: the unifying principle that encompasses the Seal of Prophecy and the Seal of the Saints.

When Ḥamūya reads Adam in relation to Noah and Moses, however, he assigns the first prophet a different role. In sketching this new prophetic ternary, the shaykh offers an expanded narrative in which each prophet eats fruit from his own designated tree. Adam, Ḥamūya explains, eats from the Tree of Eternal Life (*shajarat al-khuld*) in heaven (*al-janna*), Noah eats from a "good tree" (*shajara ṭayyiba*) on earth (*al-dunya*), and Moses eats from the Tree of Dyeing (*shajarat al-ṣabgh*) that grows between heavenly and earthly realms (*bayna al-dunya wa-l-ākhira*).[381] As Ḥamūya elaborates how each prophet embodies the qualities associated with their respective trees, it becomes clear that Moses, and not Adam, has become the unifying principle of this new prophetic ternary. He writes:

> فالصلب محلّ المحو والجوف محلّ الإثبات والقلب محلّ الماحي والمُثبِت لهذا المعنى محا اللّه تعالى بالطوفان أولاد آدم عليه الصلاة والسلام وأثبت أولاد نوح عليه الصلاة والسلام وظهر هو تعالى وتقدّس في قلب موسى عليه الصلاة والسلام حين قال ﴿إنّي أنا اللّه ربّ العالمين﴾ (القصص ٣٠)
>
> According to this point of view, [Adam's] loins are the locus of erasure, [Noah's] insides are the locus of erection, and [Moses'] heart is the locus of the Eraser and the Erector. By means of the flood, Almighty God erased Adam's offspring, prayers and peace be upon him, and erected Noah's offspring, prayers and peace be upon him. Almighty and sanctified He became manifest in Moses' heart, prayers and peace be upon him, when He said, "Verily, I am God, Lord of Worlds." (Q. 28:30)[382]

Reading Adam against Noah and Moses, Ḥamūya illuminates a new series of relational qualities

[381] Ḥamūya, "Baḥr," 210-211.

[382] Ḥamūya, "Baḥr," 211.

that were not discernible in his discussion of Adam alone. Through the relationship between Adam and Noah, erection and erasure come to the fore as diametrically opposed Divine Attributes manifest in the material plane. While the waters of the flood erased Adam's offspring from the face of the earth, they raised up Noah and his offspring as the sole remaining survivors. Neither above nor below the flood, Moses splits the sea and crosses over, thus transcending the binaries of life and death, erection and erasure.[383] By juxtaposing Adam, Noah, and Moses vis-à-vis the flood, Ḥamūya illuminates the degrees of Moses' all-encompassing perfection as a figure who transcends/unifies the particularities of other prophetic exemplars. In the context of this specific ternary and narrative frame, therefore, it is now Moses who receives the full extent of the Divine Self-Disclosure epitomized in the words "Verily, I am God, Lord of Worlds" (Q. 28:30).[384]

Ḥamūya uses his discussion of Moses to pivot towards a final ternary, considering the prophet in relation to Yasʿā, the Seal of the Saints, and Pharaoh, the archetypal prophetic enemy. By juxtaposing the ways in which Moses and Yasʿā relate to Pharaoh, he explores the differing exterior (*ẓāhir)* and interior (*bāṭin*) emphases of prophets and saints with respect to their soteriological roles. Ḥamūya writes:

> فعبر موسى وهلك فرعون على أثره وكان موسى عليه الصلاة والسلام ذاهبًا إلى فرعون بأمر الله حال حياته . . . فلمّا عبر موسى على حياة فرعون وجرّده عن إحدى صفتيه وهي الحياة صار حيًّا بحياة الحيّ النازل إلى ساحل الإثبات وهبط موسى عليه الصلاة والسلام بين الموت والحياة

[383] See Ḥamūya, "Baḥr," 211 and Q. 26:63.

[384] By linking Moses to the "Tree of Dyeing," furthermore, Ḥamūya alludes to other contexts in which he characterizes the all-encompassing Beloved as "dyed with God's dye" (*munṣabigh bi-ṣibghatihi*), thus underscoring the association of Moses with the transcendence of oppositional qualities, at least in this context. See Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fol. 4a; (CE78) fol. 4b; (NO) fol. 3a; (AS58) fol. 3b; and (YC) fol. 7a. See also Ibn ʿArabī's *Meccan Revelations*, in which he describes the Perfect Human as dyed (*yanṣabighu*) by the each of the world's forms. Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, (SD) V.263.25-28 and my discussion on pp. 47 ff. of Chapter 1.

وكما أنّ موسى عليه الصلاة والسلام [كان] ذاهبًا إلى فرعون حال حياته حتّى جرّده عن الحياة فكذلك خاتم الأولياء أيضًا ذاهب إلى فرعون بعد موته . . . إلى أن يقول له الحقّ جلّ جلاله أن اضرب بقلمك العصا فإذا ضرب انغلق العصا ويعبر هو على العصا ويحيي فرعون على أثره حتّى صار مجرّدًا عن صفته الأخرى وهي الموت وصار خاتم الأولياء حيًّا بكلّيّته الحيّ النازل إلى ساحل المحو

عند ذلك يتمّ الأمر فيموت الخاتم عند ذلك عن كلّيّة كلّ شيء بكلّيّة كلّيّة كلّ شيء وعند ذلك يخرج فرعون من بين حكمة المحو والإثبات والموت والحياة بموسى ويسعى

> Moses crossed over [the sea] and Pharaoh perished through [the sea's] effect. In accordance with God's command, Moses, prayer and peace be upon him, went out to Pharaoh during [Pharaoh's] lifetime... When Moses crossed over Pharaoh's life and stripped him of the first of his attributes (i.e., life), [Moses] participated in life (*ṣāra ḥayyan*) through the life of the Living Who descends to the shore of erection. Moses, prayer and peace be upon him, thus descended between death and life.
>
> Just as Moses, prayer and peace be upon him, went out to Pharaoh during [Pharaoh's] lifetime to strip him of [his] life, so too the Seal of the Saints will go out to Pharaoh after [Pharaoh's] death... until the Real—mighty is He—says to him, "Strike the staff with your pen!" When he strikes it, the staff will be locked up. [The Seal of the Saints] will cross over [the staff] and bring Pharaoh to life through its effect in order that [Pharaoh] becomes stripped of the second of his attributes (i.e., death). Thus, the Seal of the Saints will participate completely in life (*ṣāra khātamu l-anbiyā'i ḥayyan bi-kulliyyatihi*) through the life of the Living Who descends to the shore of erasure.
>
> At that point, the matter will come to completion and the Seal will die with respect to the totality of each thing through the totality of each thing's totality. Likewise, through Moses and Yasʿā, Pharaoh will emerge from between the wisdom of erasure and erection, life and death.[385]

By bringing Moses in relation to Pharaoh and Yasʿā, Ḥamūya illuminates the fundamentally interrelated emphases of prophecy and sainthood. It is important to note that Ḥamūya typically frames the Divine Name/Attribute of the Living (*al-ḥayy*) as the comprehensive principle that

[385] Ḥamūya, "Baḥr," 218-219.

encompasses life and death, rather than a single node in a living-dead binary.[386] As complementary manifestations of the Living, therefore, Moses and Yasʿā act through inverted yet reciprocal processes, driving Pharaoh towards the Reality that transcends the particularities of life and death. Whereas Moses strips Pharaoh of the (particular) attribute of life and thus causes him to perish, Yasʿā strips Pharaoh of the (particular) attribute of death, thus bringing him to life. The gestalt effect of prophecy and sainthood takes Pharaoh through life and death in all of its dimensions, allowing him to transcend their opposition.[387] The relationship between Moses, Pharaoh, and Yasʿā in *The Sea of Gratitude in the River of Disavowal* thus gives texture to Ḥamūya's apologetic claim that sainthood should not be considered superior to prophecy. Although we may be tempted to read the Seal of the Saint as the primary agent catalyzing Pharaoh's transition to a state beyond opposing attributes, such an interpretation would fundamentally obscure the holistic and multidimensional processes through which this goal has been achieved.

Taken together, these brief examples from *The Book of the Beloved* and *The Sea of Gratitude in the River of Disavowal* represent a relational approach to prophecy and sainthood that dovetails with the strategies outlined in Chapter 1. Ḥamūya continually rearranges groups of prophets, saints, and even inveterate sinners to illuminate webs of relational qualities and the paradigmatic models/processes through which these qualities are identified, embodied, and transcended. Particular figures are not important here—at least not in and of themselves. What matters for Ḥamūya is how different relationships that emerge between these figures illuminate

[386] See e.g., Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Risāla fi ẓuhūr khātam al-wilāya*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Ayasofya MS 2058, fols. 206a-b (Moses does *not* bear the name the Living in this example) and idem, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fols. 242a, 244a.

[387] For another 13th-century take on Pharaoh participating in knowledge of the Real, see "The Wisdom of Eminence in the Word of Moses" from Ibn ʿArabī's *The Bezels of Wisdom*—idem, *Fuṣūṣ*, 198-212 and idem, *Bezels*, 249-266.

the Real as reflected in the Seal of the Prophets and the Seal of the Saints. Using Ḥamūya's language, we could say that these relationships are the inner realities that undergird their outer forms. To truly comprehend and articulate the full scope of prophecy and sainthood, therefore, demands a facility with the relational webs that stretch across metaphysical and temporal realms. To put it another way, one must master the epistemological sensibilities outlined in Chapters 1 and 2, molding oneself into a creative nexus through which the inner realities of saints and prophets become visible. As we will see below, Ḥamūya's performance of such sensibilities in text is not only a dazzling display of abstract creativity; it is an implicit, yet forceful claim to his own perfection and saintly authority.

4.3. Endless Deferrals in *The Book of the Beloved*

Although prophets and saints communicate through the medium of human language, the Real inspires them with divine modes of expression that distinguish their words from ordinary text and speech. In *The Sea of Gratitude in the River of Disavowal*, Ḥamūya highlights the *sui generis* and ostensibly unintelligible character of the expressions uttered by prophets and saints he names *ṣiddīq*s.[388] After these perfect servants cultivate receptive hearts through total repentance and submission, God opens their breasts as He did for Muḥammad (Q. 94:1) and bestows upon them knowledge of His Essence in the form of the archetypal Divine Book.[389] This act of Self-Disclosure augments (*yazīd*) the speech of the *ṣiddīq*s, refining their language (*yariqqu kalāmuhu*) to

[388] Ḥamūya uses the term *ṣiddīq* in *The Sea of Gratitude in the River of Disavowal* to refer to prophets and saints whom God has granted unshakable knowledge and faith. He writes, "The *ṣiddīq* is one who believes in God through an essential faith and the one who believes through an essential faith is a *ṣiddīq*." Ḥamūya, "Baḥr," 224-225.

[389] Ḥamūya, "Baḥr," 221-223.

the point that it becomes unintelligible (*lā yufham*) to the unworthy. In so doing, God protects His perfect servants from the gaze of strangers (*aghyār*) in order that they may share in His innermost secrets undisturbed.[390]

As we have seen in Sections 4.2 and 4.3, however, prophets and saints do not merely trade secrets with God; they also communicate their knowledge to other human beings so that they too may achieve perfection. In *The Lamp of Sufism*, Ḥamūya underscores the dual function of prophetic and saintly speech—i.e., to articulate meaning in a language appropriate to each audience while simultaneously protecting ultimate secrets from the unworthy.[391] For saints, the question of language and communication is particularly important, for Ḥamūya ties their soteriological role directly to the expression of inner realities in writing. While prophets augment their outwardly-oriented messages with such armaments as the staff (Moses) and the sword (Muḥammad), such texts as *The Sea of Gratitude in the River of Disavowal* and *The Appearance of the Seal of the Sainthood* (*Risāla fī ẓuhūr khātam al-awliyā'*) emphasize that it is through the *pen* that the Beloved Saint that will drive human beings towards the inner dimensions of the Real.[392]

Saʿd al-Dīn's theoretical claims about sainthood work in tandem with how he produces knowledge of inner realities in writing. The approaches outlined in the previous chapters illuminate hidden dimensions of the Real through an idiosyncratic form of writing that deconstructs conceptual stability. Although the shaykh posits the Real—and, by extension, the Beloved—as the ultimate epistemological and ontological foundation, his texts make this foundation manifest

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[390] Ḥamūya, "Baḥr," 225.

[391] See Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 113.

[392] See Ḥamūya, "Baḥr," 218-219 (quoted above) and idem, *Ẓuhūr,* fol. 207a, which explains, "The Prophet fought and killed unbelievers with his sword in the external reality; the Sealing Saint will fight and destroy them in the inner reality with his pen."

through strategies of infinite deferral and dynamic play. Borrowing from Claude Lévi-Strauss, we might say that with respect to Ḥamūya's writing, "Themes can be split up *ad infinitum*. Just when you think you have disentangled and separated them, you realized they are knitting together again in response to the operation of unexpected affinities."[393] Or, in Derrida's reading of Lévi-Strauss, "The field is in effect that of *play*... there is something missing from it: a center which arrests and grounds the play of substitutions."[394] Here, however, we must be careful in our comparisons, lest we unwittingly render Ḥamūya a (post-)structuralist *avant la lettre*. It is not that Ḥamūya *completely* does away with any notion of a hermeneutical center, but rather that he projects his endless deferral of meaning beyond his own writing and into the Sufi bodies of his readers. That is to say, he suggests that the semantic and experiential possibilities of his words must overflow past the flat surface of the page, both in a literal and conceptual sense. For Saʿd al-Dīn, it is only readers' living bodies that can totally encompass his discourse *as limitless play*; not through static internalization, but rather by becoming generative sources through which the language of his text may be endlessly expanded and reconfigured. By pushing readers to cultivate the epistemological sensibilities characteristic of Sufi bodies, Ḥamūya molds them into founts of Self-Disclosure and thus lays claim to the role of authoritative saint whose pen drives the worthy to perfection.

To understand how Ḥamūya imagines (and performs) the relationship between saint-hood, language, and transformative knowledge, let us direct our attention towards his magnum opus, *The Book of the Beloved*. By focusing on the poetics and narrative structure of an extended

[393] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*, trans. John Weightman and Doreen Weightman (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 5.

[394] Derrida, "Structure," 365.

passage from "The Circle of *Nūn*," we will be able to discern the specific strategies through which he continually teases and defers conceptual resolution. "The Circle of *Nūn*" begins with a diagram and a direct address to the audience, linking comprehension of its text and images with divinely-enacted transformation: "O you who gazes into the point and its circle, who reaches its totality, who unites and divides its word—may God make you victorious and arresting, sought and seeking (*ghāliban sāliban wa-maṭlūban ṭāliban*)!"[395] Eschewing preface or preamble, the shaykh launches into a moment in which a cosmic circle of *nūn* is split in two, releasing a series of mirrored letters that break up into a skittering play of syllables and sounds.[396] Out of this arcane opening discourse, Ḥamūya introduces the Beloved Saint, framing him as the locus in which all opposing forces are gathered and transcended. He writes:

يهدى اللّه لنوره من يشاء فكيف ينفعه أو يضرّه أو يذلّه أو يعزّه أو يحزنه أو يسرّه غيره أو عينه بل النافع والضّارّ أنا في أنا

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[395] Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) 12a.

[396] See Section 1.5 (p. 84). To orient the reader, I repeat Ḥamūya's introduction to "The Circle of *Nūn*" here:

أنّ الدائرة النونيّة لمّا انشقّت انفصلت منها نونان تبطّنا واوين وألفين فنزل بين ذلك معنى الألفين المألوفين وانتظم منه في قضيّة الإشارة وقصبة بقاع العبارة وقصة كتب البشارة صورة قول القائل إنّ

انَا فى النّور انَا وفى انَا النّور انَا وفى انَا انَ وانَا فى الظّهُور انَا وفى انَا الظّهُور انَ انَ فى انَ فى النّور والظّهُور نورٌ على نورٍ فى نور فى صورٍ على طور

When the circle of *nūn* is broken open, two *nūn*s (which encompass two *wāw*s and two *alif*s) split off from it. And so, the meaning of the two familiar *alif*s descends among all of that and becomes arranged therein. The form of the Speaker's speech is in the question of indication (*qaḍīyat al-ishāra*), the pen of the smudges of interpretation (*qaṣabat biqāʿ al-ʿibāra*), and the chronicle of the texts' joyous proclamation (*qiṣṣat kutub al-bishāra*):

I am in illumination, I; in I is illumination, I; in I is *i*; I am in manifestation, I; in I is manifestation, *i*; *i* is in *i*; in illumination and manifestation is illumination upon illumination, in illumination, in clarion orchestration upon an elevated station.

God guides whomever He will towards His illumination.

Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fol. 12b; (CE78) fol. 13b; (NO) fol. 11b; (AS58) fol. 11b; and (YC) fol. 28b.

الراء رجل والميم مرأة والزاء زوجيّة بينهما والجمع رمز ثمّ انظر من ميم المرأة إلى المرآة ومن راي الرجل إلى الرائي والمرئيّ وإلى [كذا] زاء الزوجيّة إلى الزيادة ﴿للّذين أحسنوا الحسنى وزيادة﴾ (يونس ٢٦)

المحبوب أحسن الحسنى فله الزيادة وله السيادة ومنه البداء والإعادة وفيه الشقاوة والسعادة فأنّى يؤثر فيه المؤثر أو يتصرّف فيه المعبّر أو يتفكّر فيه المفسّر له الكشف والفتح والنشر له العلم والبيان والنصر له العدل واللطف والقسر

> God guides whomever He wills to His light, so how could anyone else (or even he himself) help, harm, humble, honor, sadden, or gladden him? It can only be the One Who Helps and Harms—I in I.
>
> *Rāʾ* is man (*rajul*), *mīm* is woman (*marʾa*), and *zāʾ* is marriage (*zawjiyya*) between them. Together, they make an allusion (*ramz*). Direct your attention from the *mīm* of woman to the mirror (*al-mirʾā*), from the *rāʾ* (*rāy)* of man to the seer and the seen (*al-rāʾī wa-l-marʾī*), and from the *zāʾ* of marriage to even more (*ziyāda*)—i.e., "Those who do well will have what is most beautiful and even more (*li-llādhīna aḥsanū l-ḥusnā wa-ziyāda*)." (Q. 10:26)[397]
>
> The Beloved is the best of what is most beautiful (*al-maḥbūbu aḥsanu l-ḥusnā*) and thus has even more—and mastery! From him stems procession and return and in him are wretchedness and happiness. How could what effects affect him? What interprets inflect him? What decodes detect him? He is the one with unveiling, revealing, and unfolding; with knowledge, elucidation, and victory; with candor, kindness, and compulsion.[398]

Echoing Neoplatonic causal frameworks, Ḥamūya suggests that the Beloved Saint encompasses all qualities, yet transcends their particularities as the embodiment of their Cause.[399] The Beloved exceeds even the particularity of his own self, inhabiting the world as a manifestation the Real—i.e., the transcendent "I" Who undergirds all created subjects, or "the I in I." To introduce the gestalt character of the Beloved, the Ḥamūya offers his readers a set of interconnected images

[397] The translation of this Qur'ānic passage is mine.

[398] Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fol. 12b; (CE78) fol. 13a; (NO) fol. 11b; (AS58) fol. 11a; and (YC), fols. 28b-29a.

[399] For a discussion of Neoplatonic causality and its implications in the Arabic adaptation of Plotinus' (d. 270) *Enneads*, see Adamson, *Arabic Plotinus*, 111-170.

bound together through a lettrist analysis of the word "allusion" (*ramz*). Here, he weaves together (a) a concrete analogy in which marriage between a man and a woman exceeds the two as individuals; (b) a Sufi metaphor in which the moment of union/annihilation transcends (i.e., is "even more" than) the distinction between mirror, seer, and seen; and (c) a linguistic example in which *rāʾ*, *mīm*, and *zāʾ* come together to produce a word (*ramz*) whose meaning (allusion) transcends its individual letters. The shaykh's meta-discourse on allusion thus bears the form of that which it speaks. On the one hand, one can read each image as an allusion to the others *and* as an allusion to the Beloved. On the other hand, the very process of working through how these layers are held together by a single word whose possibilities exceeds them is *itself* an allusion to the relationship between the Beloved and created attributes.

Ḥamūya epitomizes these interlocking images with the word *ziyāda* (translated loosely as "even more"), deploying the term as an allusion to a Qurʾānic verse that he uses to link the aforementioned lettrist analysis to an explicit discussion of the Beloved. I suggest that Saʿd a-Dīn reads the term *al-ḥusnā* (most beautiful) in Q. 10:26 as a reference to the so-called Most Beautiful Names of God that medieval Sufis typically associated with the Divine Attributes. As relationships of difference that express the infinite potential of the Divine Essence, these Names/Attributes serve as the ontological foundation for principles and entities in the created world. By identifying the Beloved Saint as a figure who encompasses and exceeds the Most Beautiful Names, therefore, Ḥamūya frames him as the perfect manifestation of the Divine Essence—i.e., the Cause of causes that is ontologically prior to all particular agents, qualities, and effects.

While our preceding analysis illuminates the dense allusions through which Ḥamūya characterizes the Beloved, it does not quite capture the effect of the passage in context. We have

artificially isolated a single unit from a broader structure, exploring this unit as its own conceptual world. Our discussion, for example, has presented Ḥamūya's lettrist analysis of *ramz* (allusion) as if it has *already been contextualized* by the discussion of the Beloved's qualities that follows. As it appears in context, however, the shaykh's lettrist analysis marks an abrupt and disorienting thematic shift. We only catch a glimpse of how the passage fits into Ḥamūya's broader discussion with the Qur'ānic citation that comes at the end. Likewise, we only understand how the Qur'ānic citation contextualizes the preceding lettrist discourse through the exegesis that follows. Even in this brief passage, therefore, we are able to discern a broader structural pattern in which Ḥamūya continually defers meaning, placing the context and conceptual key for each discussion only *after* the discussion has occurred.

When we situate this isolated unit within its broader context, the neat boundaries of our analysis breaks down even more. As noted above, Ḥamūya's lettrist manipulation of the word *ramz* and his discussion of the Beloved's gestalt character follows a disorienting sequence of sounds and syllables introduced with minimal pretense or context—"I am in illumination, I; in I is illumination, I; in I is *i*; I am in manifestation, I; in I is manifestation, *i*; *i* is in *i*," etc. Although the shaykh offers a brief reprise—"I in I"—to link this sequence to the discussions that follow, he leaves us without a sense of conceptual closure. If readers reach the end of this passage with something akin to the analysis we have sketched, they are still left searching for clues as to how relate what they have found to what came before. Or, even if they have managed to comprehend all of the themes thus far, subsequent passages always open new interpretive possibilities. Taken in context, therefore, the meaning of the passage is always *in process*—subject to revision or expansion in light of what follows.

As he pulls readers deeper into his text, Ḥamūya transfigures even the most straightforward narratives into fields of limitless play, building a sense of endless tension while continually deferring the promise of release. While the shaykh introduces allusions to the bee from *Sūrat al-Naḥl* (Q. 16) to illuminate how the sinless Beloved can perform ostensibly immoral acts, he uses lettrist techniques to turn the example in on itself, reconfiguring his previous arguments to reveal new dimensions of Reality. Following a fairly abstract discussion of the Beloved's freedom from sin, Saʿd al-Dīn writes:

فإن باشر أمراً من الأمور فإنّما يباشره بإذن وهو على مركب الظهور ومتن النور وإن أتا بما يخالج في الصدور أو بما يخالف ظواهر الكتاب المسطور يكون ذلك منه بأمر الآمر وهو به مأمور

اعتبر أيّها المعتبر حال المحبوب في سبيله الّتي له في فعله وقيله ونيله ودليله وخذ منه مثالاً وقسطًا ومنالاً بالنظر إلى النحلة التاركة لشهوتها المسالكة سبيل ربّها لربّها لا لنفسها كيف تأكل من جميع الثمرات من محبوبها ومكروهها

واذكر فيما أشار إليه نبيّنا صلى اللّه عليه وسلّم في حديث بلال وهو ما روي أبو هريرة رضى اللّه عنه عن رسول اللّه صلّى اللّه عليه وسلّم مرّ ببلال وهو يقرأ من هذه السورة وهذه السورة فقال أخلط الطيّب بالطيّب فقال رسول اللّه صلّى اللّه عليه وسلّم إقرأ السورة على نحوها ثمّ قال مثل بلال كمثل نحلة غدت تأكل من الحلو والمرّ ثمّ تمسي حلواً كلّه

. . .

فأُوحِيَ إليها ثمّ ذكر ذلك في تنزيله ﴿وأوحى ربّك إلى النحل أن اتّخذي من الجبال بيوتًا ومن الشجر ومما يعرشون ثم كلي من كلّ الثمرات فاسلكي سبل ربّك ذللاً يخرج من بطونها شراب مختلف ألوانه فيه شفاء للناس إنّ في ذلك لأية لقوم يتفكّرون﴾ (النحل ٦٨ – ٦٩)

. . .

ثمّ أمرها أن تأكل من كلّ الثمرات حلوها وحامضها ورطبها ويابها وحارّها وباردها ومحبوبها ومكروهها فإنّ لكلّ ثمرة نفًا فإذا أكلت من الكلّ فقد جمعت من النفع كلّه في أكلتها وإذا أكلت على

هذه الصفة تاركة شهوتها قد استوت عندها محبوب الثمار ومكروهها

If [the Beloved] engages with anything at all, he only does so with [divine] permission, for he rides the mount of manifestation and sits on the back of light. If he brings forth what troubles hearts or contradicts the Written Book's literal meaning (*ẓawāhir al-kitāb al-masṭūr*), he does so only through the command of the Commander—for he is at His command!

Consider—O you who considers—the state of the Beloved in the path he has taken with respect to his actions, speech, attainment, and sign. To grasp something of his example, his lot, and his manner, direct your attention towards the bee, which leaves aside its own desires and traverses the path of its Lord for the sake of its Lord, rather than for its own sake. [Consider] how it eats from all fruits; both what it loves and what it loathes.

Recall that to which the Prophet, peace be upon him, alluded in the *ḥadīth* about Bilāl reported by Abū Hurayra (d. 678), may God be pleased with him. The Prophet passed by Bilāl while he was reciting bits and pieces from a few *sūra*s (*min hādhihi l-sūra wa-hādhihi l-sūra*). Bilāl remarked, "I'm mixing together what's good with what's good!" The Messenger of God, peace be upon him, responded, "Recite [each] *sūra* in its proper order (*ʿalā naḥwihā*)," continuing, "Bilāl [should take] the bee as his model—it spends the morning eating what's sweet *and* bitter, then spends the evening in total sweetness."[400]

...

[The bee] was inspired and mention of this [is recorded] in His revelation—"And your Lord inspired the bee, saying, 'Build yourselves houses in the mountains and trees and what people construct. Then feed on all kinds of fruit and follow the paths made easy for you by your Lord.' From their bellies come a drink of different colors in which there is healing for people. There truly is a sign in this for people who think." (Q. 16:68-69)[401]

...

Then, He commanded [the bee] to eat what is sweet, sour, moist, dry, hot, cold, desirable, and loathsome from all kinds of fruit, for each fruit has something beneficial. When it ate from all of them, it gathered together everything beneficial through its act of eating. And, when it ate in this manner—i.e., leaving its own desires behind—the desirable and loathsome aspects of fruits balanced each other out within it. Because [the bee] humbled itself before almighty God's command, all of this was for God's sake and not for its own sake.[402]

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[400] Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fol. 13a; (CE78) fols. 14a-14b; (NO) fol. 12a; (AS58) fol. 11b; and (YC) fols. 30b-31a.

[401] Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fols. 13a-b; (CE78) fol. 14b; (NO) fol. 12b; and (AS58) fol. 11b; (YC) fol. 31a.

[402] Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fol. 13b; (CE78) fol. 14b; (NO) fol. 12b; (AS58) fol. 11b; and (YC) fols. 31b-32a.

Ḥamūya explicitly identifies the bee as a model through which attentive readers may understand the Beloved's actions (and implicitly, his own preceding discussion). Just as the bee distills the benefits of sweet and bitter fruits into an elixir that heals human bodies, the Beloved Saint draws together the inner dimensions of incommensurable outer realities to transform human souls. Unlike the cryptic and highly allusive passages cited above, the shaykh carefully explains his analogy here, exploring key themes with concrete evidence from the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth* to drive home his point. For Saʿd al-Dīn, the benefits that God ordains for His creation stem not necessarily from the inherent value of particular acts and attributes, but rather from a divine "grammar" that governs specific relationships between them. The Qurʾān thus brings together verses that humans find sweet with those they find bitter (or even unseemly) to guide them to true knowledge of the Real.[403] Because human beings are held captive by their own predilections and desires, they are unable to discern this grammar on their own. Bilāl, for example, strings his favorite pericopes together into what he imagines to be a Qurʾānic "greatest hits" compilation. In so doing, he disrupts the benefits of the text's juxtapositions and prompts the Prophet to correct his recitation. As opposed to ordinary human beings, however, the Beloved has annihilated his own will completely and acts as a perfect embodiment of the Real. He is no longer *subject* to Qurʾān, but rather becomes a dynamic manifestation of its Divine Source: a living expression of the hidden realities and relationships that it encodes. If the Saint's words or actions appear to contradict the Qurʾān, it is only because his audience is unfamiliar with the divine grammar through which the inner

[403] Ḥamūya makes a similar point in his letter to ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ʿAṭā-Malik Juwaynī (d. 1283). See Ḥamūya, "Makātīb," 468 and my discussion on pp. 166 ff. of Chapter 3.

dimensions of the Real become inflected in outer realities.

If readers hope that Ḥamūya's continued discussion of the bee might offer a sense of conceptual closure, he quickly disabuses them of any such notion. The real purpose of his Qur'ānic analogy, Sa'd al-Dīn suggests, is not to close a hermeneutical circle, but rather to illuminate the *endless* webs of possibility that bubble beneath the surface of outer forms. He writes:

إذا عرفت ما ذكرنا وتأمّلت فيما سطرنا فتفطّنْ لشرح ما حشرنا أنّ الدائرة الّتي انشقّت دائرة نونيّة والأصل في النّون نون النور وبعده نون النبيّ وبعده نون النزول من النور إلى النبيّ فنون النحل نون النزول من يفاع صورة الحقيقة إلى بقاع صورة الطريقة

اعتبر حروف النحل فيما ذكرت من المعاني المتعلّقة بالنزول والوقوع والهبوط والمعالي[404] والمداني والمباني فنون النحل في معنى النزول نون النهية ومنه ﴿أولوا النهى﴾ (طه ٥٤، ١٢٨)[405] وحاء النحل في معنى الوقوع حاء الحجر ومنه ﴿قسم لذي حجر﴾ (الفجر ٥) ولام النحل في معنى الهبوط لام اللُبّ ومنه ﴿أولوا الألباب﴾ (في آيات كثيرة ومنها البقرة ١٦٩، آل عمران ٧، إبراهيم ٥٢)

فالمرتبة الأولى نزول من أعلى علو إلى أقرب قرب وأدنى دنو يخاطبك في كلّ قريب وبعيد وعتيق وجديد وبطيء وبريد وغافل وعتيد ها أنا ﴿أقرب إليك من حبل الوريد لك﴾ (ق ١٦) الهنئ والمرئ والبركة والأمر الرشيد

. . .

شعر

شَغَفي بمحبوبي وما لي غيرُهُ * وسواه لا أَرجوا ولا أبغي سواه

---

[404] (SBB): المعاني

[405] In the Qur'ān, the first word (*muḍāf*) occurs in the genitive case—i.e., ﴿لأولي النهى﴾.

ومُناي منه نظرةٌ أرجوا بها ❋ بُرائي وعيشي من حبيبي في هواه[406]

If you understand what we have mentioned and contemplate what we have set down, then you should comprehend the elaboration (*sharḥ*) of all we have brought together. The circle that was split open was a circle of *nūn* (*dā'ira nūniyya*). The root within *nūn* is the *nūn* of light (*al-nūr*), which is followed by the *nūn* of the Prophet (*al-nabīy*), which in turn is followed by the *nūn* of the descent from light to the Prophet (*nūnu l-nuzūlī min al-nūr ilā l-nabīy*). The *nūn* of the bee (*al-naḥl*) is the *nūn* of the descent from the hilltop of Reality's form (*yafāʿi ṣūrati l-ḥaqīqa*) to lowlands of the path's form (*biqāʿi ṣūrati l-ṭarīqa*).

Contemplate the letters of the bee in light of what we mentioned—i.e., the meanings linked to descent (*al-nuzūl*), settling down (*al-wuqūʿ*), and alighting (*al-hubūṭ*)—and also in light of things raised high, sunk low, and built up (*al-maʿālī wa-l-madānī wa-l-mabānī*). Insofar as it means descent, the bee's *nūn* is the *nūn* of understanding [as *nuhā*], from which come "those who understand" (*ūlū al-nuhā*) (Q. 20:54, 128). Insofar as it means settling down, the bee's *ḥā'* is the *ḥā'* of understanding [as *ḥijr*], from which comes "an oath for one who understands" (*ūlū al-ḥijr*) (Q. 89:5). Insofar as it means alighting, the bee's *lām* is the *lām* of understanding [as *lubb*], from which come "those who understand" (*ūlū al-albāb*) (Q. 2:169, 3:70, 14:52, etc.).

The first level is the descent from a higher highness to a closer closeness and a lower lowness, which addresses you in whatever is close by and far off (*qarīb wa-baʿīd*), back then and here now (*ʿatīq wa-jadīd*), slowed down and sped up (*baṭī' wa-barīd*), heedless and ready to go (*ghāfil wa-ʿatīd*). Here I am, "closer to you than your jugular vein," (Q. 50:16) the healthful and the healthy, the blessing and the rightly guided command!

...

A Poem:

My heart is with my Beloved, He's all I've got

There's no hope without Him, not a single desire

All I want's a quick look (and that's all I can wish for)

Since loving my Darling is all I've got to keep me going

Ḥamūya reveals that the bee is both a concrete example through which to clarify the outer dimensions of the Beloved's actions and a cipher that encodes a host of interrelated principles,

[406] In light of the discrepancy between manuscripts, I transcribe these couplets of poetry from Yeni Camii MS 726 fol. 34a.

processes, and inner realities. To truly comprehend the bee, he explains, readers must double back to the start of the chapter; back to the disorienting moment in which the circle of *nūn* was split in two. It was this very moment that sent readers spiraling through the text, propelled along by Ḥamūya's continued deferral of context and meaning. The shaykh's discussion of the bee, we must remember, does not stand alone as a neatly packaged conceptual unit. Instead, it works to contextualize the abstract discussions that came before; the conceptual key for a bricolage of binary oppositions, and Qurʾānic allusions, and cryptic references to healing, harming, bee-ness (*naḥliyya*) and cow-ness (*baqariyya*). Just as readers approach a sense of narrative clarity and conceptual closure, however, the shaykh pulls the rug out from under them, dropping them into a new world of disorienting possibilities. He introduces interlocking metaphysical principles in the *nūn*s of light (*al-nūr*), the Prophet (*al-nabī*), and descent (*al-nuzūl*), which doubles as the *nūn* of the bee (*al-naḥl*); links the letters of the word "bee" to different forms of understanding/intellect (*nuhā*, *ḥijr*, *lubb*) mentioned in the Qurʾān; and ties these forms of understanding/intellect to three metaphysical levels/processes (*nuzūl, wuqūʿ*, *hubūṭ*) through which the Real becomes present to creatures. In exploring the levels of descent, settling down, and alighting, furthermore, he adds layers of poetic expression to articulate the affective dimensions of the Real's presence at each stage.

By opening the bee up to this new field of interpretive possibilities, Ḥamūya thus continues, or even accelerates, his endless deferral of meaning. His discourse mirrors the doubled *nūn* with which he began the chapter. There is no real beginning or end, for everything turns back in on itself; albeit always in a slightly different way. The clear analogy (along with all it brought together) must now be broken up and reimagined according to the abstract discourse that follows.

It is the implicit promise of a clear limit, conceptual center, or structural framework that pulls reader deeper into the text, grasping for new clues through which to tie together all of the moving pieces. Yet, with each new passage, the possible valences and relationships between these pieces proliferate, each one opening up its own world ever-expanding network of conceptual frameworks, interpretive possibilities, and allusions.

Through his twists, turns, and deferrals, Saʿd al-Dīn implicitly frames *The Book of the Beloved* as revelation: an inner counterpart to the outer dimensions of the Qurʾān. Read in this way, Ḥamūya's deferral of meaning, abstract technical terminology, impenetrable lettrist analyses, and abrupt conceptual shifts are expressions of the divine grammar through which the Real Discloses Itself to Its elect. The incomprehensible character of the text's language and structure thus work to *confirm* its divine origins. As the story of Bilāl implies, the structure of a revealed text like the Qurʾān does not conform to ordinary human whims or expectations. While average individuals like Bilāl may focus their attention on what they find most pleasing (or intelligible), it is precisely the jarring juxtapositions between ostensibly incommensurable elements that lend revealed language its full soteriological force. I read this anecdote not only as a commentary on the Beloved and the Qurʾān, but as an implicit reference to Ḥamūya's own speech as well. As a manifestation of the Real in language, the shaykh suggests that readers should resist the temptation to artificially isolate and stabilize a set of facts or dogmas from *The Book of the Beloved*. Instead, they must submit to the bitter difficulties of its particulars in order that they may benefit from the curative sweetness of its overall form.

But what, we may ask, was Saʿd al-Dīn's endless deferral of meaning supposed to *do* to his readers? What would they have made of these disorienting shifts? What was the "curative sweet-

ness" that *The Book of the Beloved* could offer them? And what does this all have to do with saint-hood? As we saw at the beginning of this section, Saʿd al-Dīn suggests that it is through revealed language—and more specifically, revealed language in its *written* form—that saints are to transform the inner realities of human beings. To understand the relationship between the idiosyncrasies of his style and the intended effects of his work, we must turn to contemporary conversations about eloquence, aesthetic wonder, and the inimitability of the Qurʾān and its language.

4.4. Inimitability, Incomprehensibility, and Wonder

According to Lara Harb, the 11th century witnessed the rise of a "new school" of literary theory centered around an aesthetics of wonder.[407] Spearheaded by Ibn Sīna (d. 1037) in philosophy and ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d. 1078 or 1081) in literary criticism, this new aesthetic paradigm framed poetic expression as a special type of strange, unexpected, or obscure language that sent readers' souls on a quest for understanding.[408] Poetic wonder, they explained, emerged from the interplay between a concerted effort on the part of the reader and the pleasurable experience of discovering subtle connections. Both philosophers and literary theorists agreed that this interplay provoked not only an intellectual assent, but also an *affective* response inextricable from the reader's active participation in the meaning-making process. To produce poetic language, al-Jurjānī suggested that poets drew from moments of heightened sensitivity to the affinities underlying the mysteries of existence. The syntax, grammar, and semantic structure of a poet's language in turn performed their original act of discovery. Thus, as Kamal Abu Deeb argues, the linguistic form of

[407] Harb, *Poetics*, 12.

[408] Harb, *Poetics*, *inter alia* 11-12, 29-30, 68, 127, 132-134, 202, 215.

poetry could not be expressed in any other way; it was the *only* means of expressing the nature of the realities that the poet grasped. When readers approached poetry, these images were activated, affording searching souls access to these otherwise hidden relationships and realities.[409] By the 13th and 14th centuries, this notion of wonder had become entrenched as a dominant literary-aesthetic paradigm, with critics such as al-Sakkākī (d. 1229) and al-Khaṭīb al-Qazwīnī (d. 1338) elaborating a formal "science of eloquence" (*ʿilm al-balāgha*) that explored the effects of specific literary devices on the human soul in a systematic manner.[410]

The paradigm of literary-aesthetic wonder offered medieval scholars new tools with which to theorize the miraculous inimitability (*iʿjāz*) of Qurʾān. By the 11th century, scholars of *iʿjāz* generally agreed that it was not necessarily the Qurʾān's conceptual content, but rather the *way* it articulated its message that could never be reproduced by humans.[411] Al-Jurjānī and his followers focused primarily on questions of syntax and sentence structure (*naẓm*), arguing that the very form of Qurʾānic utterances evoked wonder by deliberately withholding or deferring meaning.[412] Through such techniques as pre- and post-positioning (*taqdīm wa-taʾkhīr*), ellipsis (*ḥadhf*), and a nuanced manipulation of conjunctions (*wa-, fa-*), definite articles (*al-*), and emphatic particles (*inna*), al-Jurjānī argued that the Qurʾān produced multiple layers of implicit or indirect meanings that its audience must work to understand.[413] Elaborating on the effects of ellipsis, for example, the 14th-century scholar Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkashī's (d. 1392) *Proof in the Sci-*

[409] Kamal Abu Deeb, *Al-Jurjānīʾs Theory of Poetic Imagery* (Guildford: Biddles Ltd, 1979), 4.

[410] Harb, *Poetics*, 11-12, 137.

[411] Harb, *Poetics*, 205-206.

[412] Harb, *Poetics*, 208.

[413] Harb, *Poetics*, 219-233. For an excellent example of how this process works in context, see Alexander Key, *Language between God and the Poets: Maʿnā in the Eleventh Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018), 231.

ences of the Qurʾān (*al-Burhān fī ʿulūm al-Qurʾān*) suggested that the technique provoked readers and listeners to "wander in every direction and yearn for what is intended, falling short of grasping it."[414] Theorists like al-Sakkākī and al-Qazwīnī sharpened and systematized earlier approaches, exploring the relationship between *naẓm*, meaning, and context. For these 13th- and 14th-century scholars, the strategies that al-Jurjānī identified operated in relation to a specific set of audience expectations that the Qurʾān manipulated to articulate multiple dimensions of nuance and meaning.[415] Scholars of *iʿjāz* working in al-Jurjānī's wake thus distinguished between the "basic sense" of Qurʾānic statements and the final "form of meaning" (*ṣūrat al-maʿnā*) that included the multiple layers of subtle implications that readers and listeners had to uncover for themselves.[416]

Read in relation to contemporary discussions of wonder, meaning, and *iʿjāz*, Ḥamūya's strategies of endless deferral become an imitation of Qurʾānic inimitability. The shaykh's idiosyncratic modes of expression implicitly mark his text as a miraculous revelation: a "strange, unexpected, and obscure" language that participates in Qurʾānic forms of meaning making. While Ḥamūya certainly disorients his audience with arcane language and imagery, it is primarily through techniques of structure and form that texts like *The Book of the Beloved* demand active audience participation. The shaykh's deliberate deferral of contextual clues, abrupt shifts in theme, and consistent reconfiguration of conceptual frameworks leave his audience in the state of restless aporia that al-Zarkashī described above: wandering in every direction, yearning for what

[414] Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkashī (d. 1392), *al-Burhān fī ʿulūm al-Qurʾān*, ed. Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Turāth, 1957), III.104. Translated by Lara Harb in eadem, *Poetics*, 226.

[415] Harb, *Poetics*, 237-245.

[416] Harb, *Poetics*, 212-215, 248.

is intended, but falling short of grasping it. As readers work through the text's form, they negotiate layers of subtle meaning that emerge only through their active engagement with the text.

Unlike the rhetorical devices identified by medieval *iʿjāz* scholars, however, Ḥamūya's strategies of deferral operate beyond the level of figurative imagery and unexpected sentence structure. What medieval scholars theorized vis-à-vis Qurʾānic syntax, Saʿd al-Dīn does with the meta-structures of composition and organization. To articulate the inner dimensions of the Real, the shaykh expands strategies like ellipsis and pre- and post-positioning beyond the level of the sentence and into the broader architectonics of his text.[417] If the Qurʾān uses grammar to add subtle layers of meaning to words, phrases, and ideas, Ḥamūya uses organizational structures to nuance entire conceptual frameworks. As we saw in Section 4.3, *The Book of the Beloved* disorients readers by withholding key context, deploying them only after the arcane discussions purportedly elucidate. Likewise, as we saw in Chapter 2, structural allusions to classic Sufi manuals like al-Ghazālī's (d. 1111) *Revival of the Religious Sciences* and *Alchemy of Happiness* force readers to mine the fifth appendix to *The Levels of Joy* for recognizable embodied cues in which to ground his discussions. By priming then omitting these cues, the shaykh manipulates readers' expectations to open up limitless interpretive possibilities, thus performing the dynamic Self-Disclosure of the Real. Put simply, within contemporary frameworks of inimitability and wonder, it is the very idiosyncrasy of Ḥamūya's language—or, more precisely, the *way* he performs this idiosyncrasy—that marks his speech as revelation.

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[417] As al-Jurjānī explains, pre- and post-positioning refer to techniques that manipulate the order in which parts of speech are typically arranged—e.g., placing a predicate before the subject of a nominal clause, or the direct object before the subject of a verb. See Harb, *Poetics*, 219 and ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d. 1078 or 1081), *Dalāʾil al-iʿjāz*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākir (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 2004), 106-145. Ellipsis, on the other hand, involves omitting a part of speech that a sentence would typically include—e.g., a subject or object—for effect. See Harb, *Poetics*, 223-227 and al-Jurjānī, *Dalāʾil,* 146-172.

Read in conversation with medieval *iʿjāz* scholarship, Ḥamūya's writing belies a shared assumption about the nature of revelation. Whether it be saintly or prophetic, the *sine qua non* of revealed language and the mark of its miraculous authority stem from its engagement with human experience. In short, revelation is quintessentially *performative*. The strange and unexpected forms of revealed language demand the participation of living, breathing, and speaking bodies, forcing them to take part in an active production of meaning. By amplifying the strategies of Qurʾānic inimitability, Saʿd al-Dīn draws readers into his text while self-consciously refusing a totalizing "form of meaning" that would encapsulate his vision. We might say instead that the shaykh's goal is to turn each reader into a form that reveals the endless possibilities of his speech; to render them reflections of himself and, through him, reflections of the Real. In this reading, the perfect Sufi body becomes a hermeneutical center that encompasses the infinite semantic-experiential potential of Ḥamūya's words *as boundless play*. Such a state of dynamic comprehension demands that perfect readers not only contemplate, but produce. The shaykh's words must provoke readers to speak for themselves, for it is only through the generative possibilities of language that their own perfect knowledge can be realized. They must become like the Beloved: living, breathing, and speaking manifestations of the Qurʾān's source. Despite his frequent recourse to a rhetoric of ineffability, Ḥamūya holds that knowledge only becomes knowable through speech. Whatever is going on in the world beyond letters and sounds, it must always overflow through the words of perfect beings. If Ḥamūya aims to produce knowledge as an embodied sensibility, it is a sensibility that is inextricable from dynamic expression in language.

The effect of Ḥamūya's strategies is thus to project the experiential-epistemological possibilities of his words beyond the totalizing grasp of his own text and into the bodies of his readers.

As he relinquishes control of his words, however, the shaykh simultaneously *restricts* his texts to an elite audience. As we saw in Chapters 2 and 3, each reader must approach the shaykh's words from within a physically disciplined and socially authorized Sufi body that could draw connections between diverse phenomenal and intellectual realms. These bodies open up the generative possibilities of texts like *The Book of the Beloved*, affording Ḥamūya's words a dynamic experiential-epistemological laboratory in which they can be made meaningful. Readers cannot stabilize his endless deferrals in relation to a fixed textual center, but must negotiate them according to the particularities of their own changing states. It is *only* within the experiential-epistemological laboratory of the Sufi body, therefore, that Ḥamūya's strategies of meaning making can enact their full effects.

While Ḥamūya's writing certainly seems obscure (or even impenetrable) to the uninitiated, its capacity to defy expectations and evoke wonder—to be strange in a way that remains *legible*—stems from its deft manipulation of Sufi conventions. According to medieval *iʿjāz* scholars, appreciating the seductive strangeness of Qur'ānic syntax demanded an advanced knowledge of Arabic language and literature.[418] Without such knowledge, one could neither experience the affective force of its miraculous inimitability nor understand the depths of its meanings. Readers are likewise drawn into Ḥamūya's work *because* of their advanced knowledge of Sufi thought and practice. Without such knowledge, there is no deferral of meaning, no interplay between tension and the promise of release. It is not strange in the right ways. For the uninitiated, the saint's speech simply becomes completely unintelligible; its arcane wonder veiled by an impenetrable illegibility.

[418] See e.g., Harb, *Poetics*, 262-263.

The same strategies that bar neophytes from accessing Ḥamūya's texts leave them radically open to an elite cadre of Sufi readers. If Saʿd al-Dīn stakes his claim to sainthood in the infinite possibilities of his language, then it is precisely through the engagement of advanced readers (and speakers) that these possibilities are realized. Alongside the discussions of *iʿjāz* outlined above, medieval Sufis understood the Qurʾān as an infinite source of epistemological-experiential possibilities. As Jamal Elias explains, medieval Sufi commentaries aimed to illuminate the Qurʾān's endless possibilities as a pious confirmation of its beauty and excellence.[419] According to Ibn ʿArabī, for example, the language of the Qurʾān eternally reveals new meanings; any sense of limitation stems only from the receptivity of its audience. Each human being thus functions as a prism through which new secrets are continually made manifest.[420] "Any meaning of whatever verse of the Word of God... judged acceptable by one who knows the language in which this Word is expressed," he avers, "represents what God wanted to say to those who interpret it so, for His knowledge encompasses all meanings."[421] Although medieval Sufis might not put it in this way, their approaches suggest that the Qurʾān and its readers exist in a relationship of mutual dependence. The higher a reader's degree of spiritual realization (disciplined and authorized through Sufi training), the more they can articulate through the language of the Qurʾān. Likewise, the fact that skilled readers elaborate, yet never exhaust the Qurʾān's possibilities is itself a continual confirmation of the text's miraculous authority. By denying readers a stable hermeneutical center through which to ground their readings of his texts, Ḥamūya provokes them to confirm

[419] Jamal J. Elias, "Ṣūfī *tafsīr* Reconsidered: Exploring the Development of a Genre," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 12 (2010), 51-52.

[420] See Chodkiewicz, *Ocean*, 26, 53.

[421] Adapted from Chodkiewicz's translation in idem, *Ocean*, 30. See Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, (OY) XIII.92 and (SD) III.178.

his authority through their own commentary, citation, appropriation, and imitation. Reflecting the inimitable wonder of the Qurʾān, therefore, Ḥamūya's status as a saintly fount of revelation becomes confirmed not by the specificity of his claims, but rather by the capacity of his words to reveal infinitely generative possibilities.

4.5. Conclusion

Tracing prophecy and sainthood through all of their metaphysical, terrestrial, and temporal manifestations, Ḥamūya articulates a vision of human perfection rooted in an interplay of shifting qualities and relationships. The hierarchies of saints and prophets that he sketches are always open to revision and reformulation, for it is only through these endless juxtapositions that their realities may be known. Just as saints and prophets illuminate the Real through the infinite potentialities of revealed speech, they are likewise only *knowable* through the inexhaustible play of this very same language. By leaving the interpretive possibilities of his texts radically open to a skilled community of Sufi readers, Ḥamūya stakes a claim to sainthood by self-consciously severing the ties between authoritative meaning and authorial intent. In short, his distinct modes of expression enact what he imagines perfect saints to do. While it is certainly possible that the shaykh's oral instruction guided students towards particular interpretations, the effects of his written language remain the same—i.e., to project knowledge and meaning off of the page and into the dynamic world of living, breathing, and speaking bodies.

Thinking about human perfection in relation to the written performances of 13th-century Sufis opens productive avenues through which to explore a shared episteme. As Elizabeth Alexandrin points out, Ḥamūya's idiosyncratic approach to the Seal of the Saints is difficult to sit-

uate within the conversations of his contemporaries.[422] By illuminating the premises, stakes, and bylines that undergird these discussions, I have offered a means with which to contextualize the diversity of medieval Sufi approaches to sainthood. Running alongside their formal hagiological frameworks, for example, Ḥamūya and Ibn ʿArabī share similar assumptions about the relationship between sainthood, revelation, and meaning. Just as we saw with Ḥamūya, Ibn ʿArabī insists that revelation differs from ordinary human composition with respect to the unexpected structures through which it makes meaning. In his *Meccan Revelations*, Ibn ʿArabī self-consciously frames his text as revelation, marking its jarring juxtapositions and thematic shifts as evidence of its divine provenance. In "On the Knowledge of the Ranks of Consonants and Vowels..." (*fī maʿrifat marātib al-ḥurūfi wa-l-ḥarakāt...*) he writes:

فإنّ تأليفنا هذا وغيره لا يجري مجرى التواليف ولا نجري نحن فيه مجرى المؤلّفين . . . أنّه يلقي إلى هذا القلب أشياء يؤمر بإيصالها وهو لا يعلمها في ذلك الوقت لحكمة إلهيّة غابت عن الخلق فلهذا لا يتقيّد كلّ شخص يؤلف عن الإلقاء بعلم ذلك الباب الّذي يتكلّم عليه ولكن يدرج فيه غيره في علم السامع العاديّ على حسب ما يلقى إليه ولكنّه عندنا قطعًا من نفس ذلك الباب بعينه لكن بوجه لا يعرفه غيرنا مثل الحمامة والغراب اللذين اجتمعا وتألّفا[423] لعرج قام بأرجلهما وقد أذن لي في تقييد ما ألقيه بعد هذا فلا بدّ منه

> Neither this composition nor our others proceeds in the same way as other compositions, for in it we do not proceed in the same way as other authors... Things are cast into our heart that we are commanded to transmit—things it did not already know in that moment—on account of a divine wisdom that eludes mankind. Whoever composes by means of a divine casting (*al-ilqāʾ*) is thus not limited with respect to knowledge of the subject of which he speaks. On account of what is cast into him, he may insert into [his discourse] what to the normal listener might seem extraneous. For us, however, it cuts to the core of the issue at

[422] Alexandrin, "Seals and Sealing," 92.

[423] (SD) omits تألّفا.

> hand, but in a way that no one else would understand, just like the dove and the crow that got along well with one another on account of the limp in both their legs (*li-ʿarajin qāma bi-arjulihumā*). In what follows, I've been given permission to set down what has been cast into me, so I really have no choice but to do so![424]

Ibn ʿArabī makes explicit what Ḥamūya implies: his magnum opus is a manifestation of revealed speech, channeled directly from the Real to his heart, from his heart to his hand, and from his hand to the page. If the structure of his text or the order in which he presents ideas seems strange, it is only because ordinary human beings are unable to grasp the divine grammar through which revealed knowledge becomes articulated.

In "On the Knowledge of Secrets Pertaining to the Roots of Legal Prescriptions" (*fī maʿrifat asrār uṣūl aḥkām al-sharʿ*), Ibn ʿArabī's claims mirror Ḥamūya's use of the *ḥadīth* about Bilāl cited above. While he acknowledges that his progression of themes might seem disorganized to the average reader, the shaykh insists that their form indicates the divine root of his text. Ibn ʿArabī thus explicitly compares his speech to the Qurʾān: while certain verses may seem out of place, their organization follows the revealed structures of God's knowledge.[425]

As Syed Rizwan Zamir argues, Ibn ʿArabī's style and hermeneutical outlook as a whole might be considered an imitation of the Qurʾān.[426] While Zamir does not engage explicitly with contemporary *iʿjāz* literature, I suggest that Ibn ʿArabī's Qurʾānic imitation mirrors the structural strategies identified above. Here, we could note the form of *The Meccan Revelations* as a whole,

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[424] Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, (OY) I.264-265 and (SD) I.96-97. See also Gril's translation in Ibn ʿArabī, *Revelations II*, 164.

[425] Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt,* (OY) XIII.450-451 and (SD) III.245. See also Chodkiewicz's translation in Ibn ʿArabī, *Revelations II*, 69.

[426] Zamr explains, "In his capacity as the 'Seal of the Saints,' it is Ibn ʿArabī's function to not only divulge the deepest layers of meanings contained within the Word of God, but also to imitate its inimitable style." Syed Ridwan Zamir, "'*Tafsīr al-Qurʾān biʾl Qurʾān*': The Hermeneutics of Imitation and 'Adab' in Ibn 'Arabī's Interpretation of the Qurʾān," *Islamic Studies* 50, no. 1 (2011), 20.

which, as Chodkiewicz has demonstrated, unfolds in an almost impossibly complex interplay with the structure of the Qurʾān.[427] As was the case with *The Book of the Beloved*, the dizzying architectonics of Ibn ʿArabī's text force readers to double back on crisscrossing patterns of correspondences in ways that open endlessly generative interpretive possibilities. Muḥyī al-Dīn thus expands on the inimitable wonder-making strategies of the Qurʾān while literally binding the form of his *Meccan Revelations* to the structures of revelation. Like Ḥamūya, therefore, we might read Ibn ʿArabī as legitimizing his saintly authority through performative modes of expression whose dynamic engagement with readers aims to reproduce (or even surpass) the productive potential of the Qurʾān.

Reading their differences in style through the lenses of language, knowledge, and authority proves fruitful as well. For Ḥamūya, the first distinguishing mark of the Beloved Saint is that he will *not* claim sainthood (*lā yaddaʿī l-wilāya*).[428] Instead, he will make himself known through speech and actions that are recognizable only to other knowing saints. Ibn ʿArabī, on the other hand, makes no qualms about proclaiming himself the Seal of the Saints—"I am, without a doubt, the Seal of Sainthood / For I am heir to the Hashimite and the Messiah."[429] In light of our analysis above, I suggest that we explore this difference as an implicit dispute over how saintly authority is to be performed in language. While Ḥamūya and Ibn ʿArabī both leave their texts open to the interpretive capacities of skilled readers, the latter attempts to retain a level of control over the meaning of his words. With all his jarring shifts in perspective, Muḥyī al-Dīn always has the last word: it is *his* voice and *his* unique vision that afford readers ultimate access to the infinite com-

[427] See e.g., Chodkiewicz, *Ocean*, 63 ff.

[428] Ḥamūya, *Ẓuhūr*, fol. 206a.

[429] Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, (OY) IV.61 and (SD) I.350.

plexities of the Real. Reading the two in conversation, the radical openness of Ḥamūya's text and his refusal to claim sainthood becomes an implicit challenge to Ibn ʿArabī. Just as his *Letter to Ibn ʿArabī* critiques his interlocutor for imposing arbitrary limits on the letters, Ḥamūya may have understood Ibn ʿArabī's totalizing hermeneutical posturing as a limitation on the possibilities of his language and saintly potency.

Conclusion

Are you so foolish? Having started with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh?

Galatians 3:3

Throughout the preceding chapters, I have argued that Ḥamūya and his 13th-century colleagues imagined perfect knowledge as an embodied sensibility through which knowing Sufi subjects could navigate the infininite possibilities of Reality. To know for these Sufis was to imagine and inhabit the world in a particular way: to experience and self-consciously partake in Reality as a plurality of dynamic forces and frameworks. Such knowledge was not the detached speculation or anodyne monism of the post-Enlightenment mystic; it was an affirmation of the world in all its shifting relationships, messy contradictions, and incommensurable frames of reference.

Medieval Sufis cultivated their embodied sensibilities through holistic training programs that brought together physical practices, social relationships, and abstract theory. The goal of these programs was to produce Sufi bodies as abstract-experiential laboratories for specialized corporeal, affective, and intellectual operations. Though Sufis framed their training as a means of peeling back external realities, we can also read them as constructive—historically contingent modes of discipline that conditioned specific possibilities of knowing and being. Once disciplined, these subjects made their sensibilities manifest through creative performances whose improvised motifs modulated fluently across all dimensions of human experience.

I have read Ḥamūya's treatises as written performances of these sensibilities, analyzing them in conversation with the work of his contemporaries to illuminate how such dynamic forms of knowledge could be produced or even contested in text. A close attention to how the

shaykh and his colleagues write reveals a host of strategies that become meaningful *through* the practical and phenomenological dimensions of medieval Sufism. I call these strategies performative because they self-consciously engage readers, drawing them into an active process of meaning making. Ibn ʿArabī uses the science of letters to propel his audience between diverse discourses, technical vocabularies, phenomenological registers, and conceptual worlds, projecting his own totalizing vision as an all-encompassing hermeneutical capacity. Kubrā merges a meticulous attention to the body with personal anecdotes, imaginative exercises, and abstract metaphysical principles, framing himself as an all-powerful shaykh who guides students through the subtle intricacies of their innermost selves. Suhrawardī overlays human bodies with a multitude of practical and theoretical possibilities, vaunting himself (and his texts) as the keys to realizing the universal realities of Islam. Each of Saʿd al-Dīn's teachers and colleagues subsume a plurality of practical, affective, and intellectual possibilities within their work to demonstrate the limitless scope of their own sensibilities.

Ḥamūya carves out a distinct place in this competitive field by deconstructing the strategies of his rivals and repurposing the underlying processes through which they make meaning. His work presumes the performative conventions of his contemporaries, then warps them into avant-garde modes of Sufi expression. I have read Ḥamūya against his colleagues because he operates in implicit dialogue with them. His writing is performative not only because it is bound to the experiential dimensions of Sufi practice, but also because it plays with readers' expectations of *how* those bonds might be forged. He implicitly sets his idiosyncratic formulations against contemporary conventions, generating nuanced layers of meaning through the allusive juxtapositions that arise. We might say that the shaykh's work provokes readers to self-consciously inter-

rogate sign and signified—i.e., letter and reality, body and experience, genealogy and authority, text and meaning. If we understand Sufi knowledge as an embodied sensibility that interfaces between abstract and experiential frames, then Ḥamūya forces readers to realize that their mechanisms of negotiation are themselves negotiable.

While Ḥamūya's deconstructive approach renders his texts illegible to the uninitiated, it leaves his writing radically open to advanced Sufi readers. The shaykh parochializes the work of his contemporaries by loosening the reigns of authorial intent, allowing the meaning of his words to proliferate endlessly. Rather than attempting to subsume a totality within his *own* hermeneutical vision, Ḥamūya recruits his audience(s) to produce infinity for him. It is in dialogue with the embodied sensibilities of his elite Sufi readers that shaykh's language unfolds as boundless play, through their embodied performances that his words become expressions of Reality. As his writing transforms readers into manifestations of the Divine Self-Disclosure, Ḥamūya becomes the fully realized saint who catalyzes their perfection. In this sense, he also becomes the Primordial Point: the inexhaustible source that gives rise to an infinitely generative language.

So what would become of Ḥamūya's avant-garde Sufism? What was the legacy of his performative deconstruction? Immediately after his death, the embodied and social dimensions of the shaykh's spiritual authority split off from his theoretical work and were inherited along biological-genealogical lines. Ḥamūya's son Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm (d. 1322) assumed the mantle of his father's *baraka* through blood and birth, affording him a prestigious position among the Īlkhān elites and administrators. Ṣadr al-Dīn married the daughter of the famed ʿAṭā-Malik Juwaynī (d. 1283) in 1272/1273, then played a central role in the conversion ceremony of Īlkhān Maḥmūd Ghāzān (d. 1304) in 1295. In Ṣadr al-Dīn's own account of the latter event, he is eager to frame

himself as a corporeal link to his father's legacy.[430] Two generations later, Saʿd al-Dīn's great grandson Ghiyāth al-Dīn (fl. 14th c.) laid claim to the same saintly genealogy with a hagiography centered around his forefather's charisma, physiognomy, and social bonds. The opening folia of the text foreground Saʿd al-Dīn's (and thus Ghiyāth al-Dīn's) noble lineage, amplifying genealogical themes as the shaykh's primary source of spiritual legitimacy.[431] Though not much is known about Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ḥamūya, he seems to have been a well-known and well-respected Sufi during his lifetime. According to Ḥafiẓ Abrū (d. 1340), Shaykh Khalīfa Mazāndarānī (d. 1335)—eponym of the Shaykhiyya Sufi order—pledged himself to Ghiyāth al-Dīn in Baḥrābād after being violently expelled from ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla al-Simnānī's (d. 1336) circle of students in Khurāsān.[432] Despite their success as inheritors of his embodied authority, however, neither Ṣadr al-Dīn nor Ghiyāth al-Dīn would (or could?) attempt the kind of dazzling performances that characterized Saʿd al-Dīn's written work.

Attending to the afterlife of Ḥamūya's abstract theoretical output suggests that the radical openness of his work became stabilized and systematized in his wake. Ḥamūya's student ʿAzīz Nasafī (d. before 1300) staked his authority in an ability to strip away the excesses of his master's boundless play. He articulates the matter rather explicitly through a dream narrative at the beginning of his *Unveiling the Realities* (*Kashf al-ḥaqāʾiq*). According to Nasafī, he was overcome by sleep after staying up late to write on the night of September 3, 1281. His father appeared to him

[430] Ṣadr al-Dīn's account was orally transmitted to the Syrian historian al-Birzālī (d. 1338/1339), whose narrative was in turn put into writing by a certain al-Jazarī (d. 1338/1339). See Melville, "Pādshāh-i Islām," 161. See also Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb's (d. 1318) account in idem, *Tārīkh-i Ghāzānī*, 76 ff.

[431] Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 3-4.

[432] See Tanvir Ahmed, "Radical Shadows of God: Islam and Sociopolitical Dissent, 1240-1600" (PhD dissertation, Brown University, 2021), 71n38. As the story goes, Shaykh Khalīfa did not last long in Ghiyāth al-Dīn's circle and was soon sent on his way.

in a dream, then took him to the Friday mosque of Abarkuh (in Iran) where the Prophet Muḥammad, the Sufi shaykh Abū ʿAbd Allāh Mūhammad ibn Khafīf (d. 982), and Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya were waiting for him. After they exchanged greetings, Muḥammad revealed that Ḥamūya had just finished discussing Nasafī and his teachings.[433]

Although Ḥamūya (the dream version) certifies the legitimacy of Nasafī's knowledge, his comments belie a point of tension between him and his student. On the one hand, dream Saʿd al-Dīn concedes that Nasafī's language is clear, concise, and effective: it distills four hundred tomes of lettrist operations, cryptic allusions, and destabilizing deferrals into just ten volumes of clear Persian prose. On the other, even this idealized version of the shaykh balks at his student's project. Through the intermediary of the Prophet, Ḥamūya exclaims, "While I've endeavored to hide and conceal [my teachings], *he* tries to make them manifest. I fear [for Nasafī], lest some unlucky event or misfortune befall him on account of this."[434]

Against Ḥamūya's radical openness, Nasafī's writing asserts authorial control over the outer and inner realities it subsumes. Texts like *The Perfect Human* categorize diverse points of view, harmonize technical vocabularies, and envelope interpretive possibilities within a totalizing hermeneutical framework. Nasafī domesticates Ḥamūya with limpid prose, divesting his master's thought of the very qualities that made it compelling during his lifetime. Although it is impossible to ascertain whether or not this methodological division soured their relationship while Ḥamūya was alive, Nasafī's dream must recruit no less than the authority of the Prophet to mend the rift between him and his master's legacy.

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[433] Nasafī, *Kashf al-ḥaqāʾiq*, 7. See also Ridgeon's translation in idem, *Nasafī*, 9-10.

[434] Nasafī, *Kashf al-ḥaqāʾiq*, 7. Emphasis mine.

Around a century later, the Tīmūrid occultist Ṣā'in al-Dīn Ibn Turka Iṣfāhānī (d. 1432) wrangled the radical openness of Saʿd al-Dīn's lettrist approach into a rigorous occult science. For Ibn Turka, an intellectualized lettrism superseded both philosophy and Sufism, offering operators access to and control of all epistemological and ontological possibilities. Ṣā'in al-Dīn frames his avowedly unprecedented emphasis on the written dimensions of letters as a new era of human possibility: a moment in which all previous knowledge could be unified and transcended. Through manipulation of the letters in writing, he laid claim to a saintly authority (*wilāya*) that actualized the oral revelation of the prophets.[435]

Ibn Turka vaunted *The Book of the Beloved* as an invaluable textual source, lionizing Ḥamūya (alongside Ibn ʿArabī) as one of the foremost exponents of the universal knowledge to which he was heir.[436] At the same time, however, the Tīmūrid occultist stabilized and repackaged Saʿd al-Dīn's work, transmuting it into a rational technology whose practical applicability was perfectly suited for the 17th-century age of empires. Under Ibn Turka, Ḥamūya's deconstructive lettrism became a science par excellence: an abstract, intellectualized, and systematic metaphysics rooted in a Neopythagorean mathematization of the cosmos. Ibn Turka thus appropriated Ḥamūya's legacy by subverting the radical openness that distinguished his work in its 13th-century context. In this case, Ḥamūya's unwavering commitment to boundless play may have set the stage for its own deconstruction.

What should we make of these stabilizing tendencies? Is this an implosion of Ḥamūya's

[435] See Matthew S. Melvin-Koushki, "The Occult Challenge to Philosophy and Messianism in Early Timurid Iran: Ibn Turka's Lettrism as a New Metaphysics," in *Unity in Diversity: Mysticism, Messianism and the Construction of Religious Authority in Islam*, ed. Orkhan Mir-Kasimov (Leiden: Brill, 2014): 247-276.

[436] Melvin-Koushki, "Occult Challenge," 266.

embodied sensibilities? A jarring break between an early-modern episteme and a medieval landscape in which Ḥamūya's radical openness made sense? Perhaps. But probably not. Contemporary to Ibn Turka and Ghiyāth al-Dīn, Faḍl Allāh Astarābādī (d. 1394) and the Ḥurūfīs took up Saʿd al-Dīn's equation of authoritative knowledge with productive possibility. Under Faḍl Allāh, the Persian language and its letters became keys to cosmic secrets, allowing him and his followers to break apart any sound, text, or entity for generative meta-linguistic exegesis.[437] The shaykh taught disciples to map this meta-language onto their own bodies, imagining their faces and daily practices as manifestations of letters whose resonances fed back across the cosmos.[438] Though he did not claim Ḥamūya directly, Faḍl Allāḥ articulated his messianic dispensation as a new way of reading, writing, speaking, and being: an idiosyncratic mode of meaning making that promised ultimate power through proliferating lettrist possibilities.

Faḍl Allāḥ's example invites us to imagine Ḥamūya's afterlife beyond just those who would claim him by name. If the shaykh performed authority through the generative potential of his deconstructive approach, we might do better to consider the legacy of his knowledge *as a radically open embodied sensibility*. What if we used Saʿd al-Dīn's radical openness as a lens through which to read the proliferation and sheer diversity of Sufi identities across all strata of medieval and early modern Islamic societies? What if it was not the consolidation of monolithic traditions, but rather Sufis' nuanced engagement with plurality and difference that allowed Sufism to thrive as a vehicle for pilgrimage, sacred kingship, corporate identity, institutionalized piety, antinomian critique, occult-scientific practice, encyclopedic scholasticism, and military organization? Per-

[437] Bashir, *Fazlallah*, esp. 61-84.

[438] Bashir, *Fazlallah*, 52-55, 75-76.

haps the adaptive, appropriative, and generative potential of the sensibilities pioneered by Ḥamūya (and his colleagues) opened Sufis up to new worlds and catalyzed diverse possibilities of knowing and being that stretched beyond rarefied circles of educated elites. And perhaps, in an age of early-modern empires, it was these very same sensibilities—these same nuanced engagements with plurality and difference—that engendered new modes of domination and control.

Appendix: List of Ḥamūya's Works

The following is not meant to be an exhaustive representation of Ḥamūya's work. Because several other scholars have already drawn up lists of the shaykh's texts, here I list only published editions, manuscripts to which I have access, and works whose mention I have come across in primary sources.

I. For previous lists of Ḥamūya's work in secondary scholarship, see:

-Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *al-Miṣbāḥ fī al-taṣawwuf*, ed. Najīb Māyil Hirawī (Tehrān: Mawlā, 1983), 46-52.

-Jamal J. Elias, "The Sufi Lords of Bahrabad: Saʿd al-Din and Sadr al-Din Hamuwayi," *Iranian Studies* 27, no. 1/4 (1994), 61-66.

Elias' article is incredibly helpful in that it includes an extensive list of manuscript locations.

-Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Murād al-murīdīn*, ed. S.A.A. Mīr-Bāqirī Fard and Z. Najafī (Tehran: Muʾassasat-i Muṭālaʿāt-i Islāmī-yi Dānishgāh-i Tihrān - Dānishgāh-i Makgīl, 2011), xiv-xv.

-Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Sakīnat al-ṣāliḥīn*, ed. Sārā Kashfī (Qom: Majmaʿ-i Dhakhāʾir-i Islāmī, Muʾassasat-i Tārīkh-i ʿIlm wa Farhang, 2015), 33-36.

II. Published texts:

-*The Lamp of Sufism*

Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *al-Miṣbāḥ fī al-taṣawwuf*, ed. Najīb Māyil Hirawī (Tehrān: Mawlā, 1983)

-*The Heart of the Hereafter* (*Qalb al-munqalab*)

Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, "Qalb al-munqalab," ed. Najīb Māyil Hirawī, *Maʿārif* 5 (1988), 256-259.

As Hirawī notes in his Persian introduction to the text, Saʿd al-Dīn originally composed *The Heart* in Arabic, titling it *The Knowledge of the Heart's Stages* (*Maʿrifat aṭwār al-qalb*). The treatise was translated into Persian only after Ḥamūya's death, undertaken by a certain Akhī Manṣūr under the command of his shaykh, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ḥasan al-Bulghārī (d. 1299). According to Hirawī, the Arabic *Knowledge of the Heart's Stages* had become quite popular among the shaykhs of Kirmān by the time al-Bulghārī arrived there in 1274, prompting his need for a Persian translation and analysis. This manuscript was said to have been sealed away in the royal library of a certain Kirmānī notable (known only by the *laqab* Majd al-Milla wa-l-Ḥaqq wa-l-Dunyā wa-l-Dīn Rukn al-Islām wa-ʿImād al-Muslimīn) until the 14th century, when it was discovered by an anonymous scribe

who copied the text and penned an extended introduction in praise of the aforementioned Majd al-Dīn. Accordingly, Hacı Selim Ağa MS 491 (to which Hirawī did not have access) is titled *Translation of the Epistle Entitled the Heart of the Hereafter* (*Tarjumat al-risāla al-musammā bi-Qalb al-munqalab*).

-*The Sea of Gratitude in the River of Disavowal* (*Baḥr al-shukr fī nahr al-nukr*)

Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, "Baḥr al-shukr fī nahr al-nukr," in *Rasāʾil Ibn ʿArabī: Sharḥ Mubtadaʾ al-ṭūfān wa-rasāʾil ukhrā*, by Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1240), ed. Qāsim Muḥammad ʿAbbās and Ḥusayn Muḥammad ʿAjīl (Abu Dhabi: Manshūrāt al-Majmaʿ al-Thaqāfī: Cultural Foundaition [sic] Publications, 1998), 204–26.

In its published form, the text is erroneously attributed to Ibn ʿArabī.

-A collection of correspondences

Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, "Makātīb-i Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥammūʾī," in *Jashn-nāma-yi ustād Sayyid Aḥmad Ḥusaynī Ashkūrī*, ed. Aḥmad Khāmih-Yār (Tehran: Nashr-i ʿIlm, 2013).

Epistle to Ibn ʿArabī

Epistle to Shaykh al-Shuyūkh ʿImād al-Dīn ʿUmar (d. 1238/1239), son of Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. 1220)

See also Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ḥamūya (fl. 14th c.), *Murād al-murīdīn*, ed. S.A.A. Mīr-Bāqirī Fard and Z. Najafī (Tehran: Muʾassasat-i Muṭālaʿāt-i Islāmī-yi Dānishgāh-i Tihrān - Dānishgāh-i Makgīl, 2011), 169-172.

Second epistle to ʿImād al-Dīn ʿUmar

Epistle to ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ʿAṭā-Malik Juwaynī (d. 1283)[439]

Epistle to Burhān al-Dīn Jājarmī

Epistle to one of his companions by the name of Sharaf al-Dīn

Epistle in response to one of Najm al-Dīn Kubrā's (d. 1221) disciples

Epistle to Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī (d. 1261)

-*The Repose of the Righteous* (*Sakīnat al-ṣāliḥīn*)

Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Sakīnat al-ṣāliḥīn*, ed. Sārā Kashfī (Qom: Majmaʿ-i Dhakhāʾir-i Islāmī, Muʾassassat-i Tārīkh-i ʿllm wa Farhang, 2015).

-The Knowledge of Realities and Wisdom of Subtle Points (*ʿUlūm al-daqāʾq wa-ḥikam al-daqāʾiq*)

[439] The table of content reads "ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn, son of ʿAṭā-Malik Juwaynī" (*ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn farzand-i ʿAṭā-Malik*), but this is incorrect. The Arabic of the epistle reads, rather ambiguously, *ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ibn ṣāḥib dīwān al-mālik ʿAṭā-Malik al-Juwaynī*.

This text can be found on pages 487-498 of an Egyptian collection of epistles, published in 1910. See Nafīsī, "*Khāndān*," 23 and Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 50.

III. Published collections of poetry:

-Saʿīd Nafīsī, "Khāndān-i Saʿd al-Dīn-i Ḥamawī," *Kunjkāwīhā-yi ʿIlmī wa Adabī* 83 (1950), 15-28.

-Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *al-Miṣbāḥ fī al-taṣawwuf*, ed. Najīb Māyil Hirawī (Tehrān: Mawlā, 1983), 36-46.

IV. The following are texts that I have been able to track down in manuscript form. I have added an asterisk next to those manuscripts whose attribution I believe to be incorrect. The texts are in rough Arabic alphabetical order, excluding articles and prepositions. Texts in collections (*majāmiʿ*) are listed in order of appearance:

-Adʿiya

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya MS 4819, fol. 172

-Taʾwīl-i ḥadīth-i ʿashara

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Esad Efendi MS 1760, fols. 1b-8b

-Tamāmī-yi asāmī

Istanbul, İzmir MS 800, fols. 41b-55a.

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Fatih MS 5378, fols. 100b-114a

-Ḥirz Saʿd al-Dīn al-Ḥamawī

Bursa, Bursa İnebey Kütüphanesi, H. Çelebi MS 1183, fols. 72a-75b

-Ḥaqq al-waqt wa-l-sāʿa

Princeton, Princeton University Library, Garret Collection MS 3793Y, fols. 138a-143b (P)

See also *Majmūʿa* (H. Çelebi MS 422), fols. 151a-163a (HC)

Also mentioned on fol. 1a of Yani Camii MS 726

-Ḥaqāʾiq al-ḥurūf

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Carullah MS 2077, fols. 96b-101a (CE)

Title listed as *Risāla*

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Mahmud Paşa MS 278, fols. 25b-42a (MP)

Title listed as *Risāla*

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehid Ali Paşa MS 2771, fols. 175b-181b (SAP)

Title listed as *Risāla dar taṣawwuf*

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Bursa Genel MS 4393, fols. 111b-119a (BG)

Title listed as *Risāla-yi naṣīḥa*

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Petrev Paşa MS 606, fols. 13b-18a (PP)

Title listed as *Risāla-yi sharīfa*

-*Risāla fī bayān taḥqīq-i ṣalāt* (*)[440]

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Serez MS 3931, fols. 1b-32b (incomplete)

-*Risāla dar taṣawwuf* (*)[441]

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Serez MS 3931, fols. 33b-43b.

-*Risāla-yi Dhikr-i Jibraʾīl*

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Raşid Efendi MS 450, fols. 205b-208a / 190b-193b (RE450)

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Raşid Efendi MS 1295, fols. 353b-357a (RE1295)

-*Risālat Sharḥ āyat al-kursī*

Princeton, Princeton University Library, Garret Collection MS 3793Y, fols. 144a-151a

-*Risālat Sharḥ al-ṣadr*

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehid Ali Paşa MS 1351, fols. 135a-149b

-*Risāla fi ẓuhūr khātam al-awliyāʾ*

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya MS 2058, fols. 206a-207b

-*Risāla fī ʿilm al-ḥurūf*

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Fatih MS 5378, fols. 89b-100a (F)

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehid Ali Paşa MS 1342, fols. 263b-266b (SAP)

-*Risālat Kashf al-ghiṭāʾ wa-rafʿ al-ḥijāb*

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya MS 2058, fols. 208b-214a (AS)

Princeton, Princeton University Library, Garret Collection MS 3793Y, fols. 134b-138a (P)

Also mentioned on fol. 1a of Yani Camii MS 726

-*Risāla fī maʿānī ḥurūf al-hijā*

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya MS 4795, fols. 177a-177b

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[440] Includes stanzas penned by such later poets as Saʿdī (d. 1291), Awḥad al-Dīn ibn Awḥadī Marāghaʾī (ca. 1274/5-1338), and Ḥāfiẓ (d. 1390), suggesting a spurious attribution. For quotations of Saʿdī's poetry, see e.g., fol. 2a. For Awḥadī Marāghaʾī see e.g., fol. 2b. For Ḥāfiẓ, see e.g., fol. 3b.

[441] The text's frequent yet uncredited citation of the later Sufi poet Awḥad al-Dīn ibn Awḥadī Marāghaʾī suggests a spurious attribution. See e.g., fols. 34b and 36a.

-Risālat Maʿrifat al-nabī wa-l-rusūl al-mursal

Princeton, Princeton University Library, Garret Collection MS 3793Y, fols. 125b-134a

-Sajanjal al-arwāḥ wa-nuqūsh al-alwāḥ

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Fatih MS 2645 (F)

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Carullah MS 1541 (CE)

-Sharḥ bāl wa-rashḥ ḥāl (*Risāla ilā Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī*)

Los Angeles, UCLA Library, Special Collections, Caro Minasian MS 32, fols. 100-108

-Sharḥ-i Basmala-yi sharīf

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Çorlulu Ali Paşa MS 445, fols. 1a-7b

-Sharḥ-i ḥadīth-i kuntu kanzan makhfiyyan

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Serez MS 3931, fols. 49b-51a

-Sharḥ qawlihi inna Allāh wa-malā'ikatahu yuṣallūna ʿalā al-nabī (Q. 33:56)

Princeton, Princeton University Library, Garret Collection MS 3793Y, fols. 151a-153a

-ʿUlūm al-Ḥaqā'iq wa-Ḥikam al-Daqā'iq

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Bağdatlı Vehbi Efendi MS 2155, fols. 43b-44b (BVE)

Istanbul, Kasideci Zade MS 800, fols. 58a-60b (KZ)

-Kitāb Baḥr al-maʿānī

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Fazil Ahmed Paşa MS 706

-Kitāb al-Maḥbūb

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Carullah MS 1078 (CE78)

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Carullah MS 1096 (CE96)

Istanbul, Hekimoğlu Ali Paşa Kütüphanesi MS 507 (HAP)

Istanbul, Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi MS 2577 (NO)

Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Museum Library MS A1418 (TK)

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Yani Camii MS 726, Süleymaniye (YC)

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehid Ali Paşa MS 1342, fols. 1a-139a

Title listed as *Maḥbūb al-qulūb*

Berlin, Königlichen Bibliotek, MS Or. Fol. 4084 (SBB)

http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB00008DAF00000000

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya MS 2058 (AS58)

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya MS 2057 (AS57)

Volume II only

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Fatih MS 2758 (F)

Volume II only

Manisa, Manisa Il Halk Kütüphanesi MS 1224 (MIH)

Volume II only

-*Kitāb Marātib al-qurra fī ʿuyūn al-qudra*

Princeton, Princeton University Library, Garret Collection MS 3793Y, fols. 1b-125a

Cairo, Dār al-Kutub MS 2070

-*Kitāb al-nuqṭa*

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehid Ali Paşa MS 1364, fols. 76b-77a

-*Laṭāʾif al-tawḥīd wa-gharāʾib al-tafrīd* (=*Risāla fī bayān inbisāṭ al-wujūd al-muṭlaq ʿalā maẓāhir al-kāʾināt*)

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Carullah MS 2077, fols. 31a-32b

See also *Majmūʿa* (Hacı Selim Ağa MS 491), fols. 1b-3b

-*Majmūʿa* (H. Çelebi MS 422)

Bursa, Bursa İnebey Kütüphanesi, H. Çelebi MS 442

Risālat al-ʿAynayn fī al-ʿaynayn, fols. 1b-6a

Completed at the end of Shawwāl AH 628 (August/September 1231)

Risālat Shuʿbat al-īmān, fols. 6a-23a

Risālat al-Taʿjīz wa-muqaddimat al-tabrīz, fols. 23a-31b

Completed 26 Dhū al-Qaʿda AH 628 (2 October, 1231)

Rizālat Izdiwāj al-amr wa-l-qalam, fols, 32a-33b

Manām, fols. 34a-34b

Risālat Kashf al-ʿālam al-subḥānī, fols. 34b-45a

Risālat al-Marfūʿ al-maṣnūʿ fī al-majmūʿ al-masmūʿ, fols. 45a-52a

Risālat al-Ism wa-l-ṣifa, fols. 52a-53b

Risālat al-Qahr wa-l-luṭf, fols. 54a-95a

Completed in Baghdad, 27 Shawwāl AH 628 (4 September, 1231)

Risālat al-Ghālib wa-l-maghlūb, fols. 96a-105a

Risālat al-Ḥāḍir maʿa al-khāṭir, fols. 106a-146b

Completed 7 Rabīʿ II AH 637 (13 November, 1239)

Risālat Ḥurūf al-kalimāt wa-ṣarf al-ṣalawāt, fols. 147a-151a

Completed 16 Dhū al-Qaʿda AH 638 (5 June, 1241)

Risālat Ḥaqq al-waqt wa-l-sāʿa wa-ḥaẓẓ al-ḥāla wa-l-ṭāʿa, fols. 151a-163a (HC)

See also Princeton, Princeton University Library, Garret Collection MS 3793Y, fols. 138a-143b (P)

Also mentioned on fol. 1a of Yani Camii MS 726

-*Majmūʿa* (Hacı Selim Ağa MS 491)

Istanbul, Hacı Selim Ağa MS 491

Risāla fī bayān inbisāṭ al-wujūd al-muṭlaq ʿalā maẓāhir al-kāʾināt (=*Laṭāʾif al-tawḥīd wa-gharāʾib al-tafrīd*), fols. 1b-3b

See also Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Carullah MS 2077, fols. 31a-32b

Qalb al-munqalab, fols. 4b-22a

Title listed a *Tarjumat al-risāla al-musammā bi-Qalb al-munqalab*

Dāʾirat rijāl al-ghayb, fol. 22b

Mafātīḥ al-asrār (*sharḥ arbaʿīn min aḥādīth al-nabī*), fols. 23b-118a (HSA)

See also Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Haşim Paşa MS 4 (HP)

al-Wasīla fī kashf al-waṣīla, fols. 120a-123b

Risāla fī bayān aqsām al-tajalliyāt al-ilāhiyya, fols. 124b-126a

Fawāʾid min kalimāt al-mashāyikh (*), fols. 126a-131a

-*Mukhtaṣār-i Asāmī*

Istanbul, Sütlüce Dergahı, Elif Efeni MS 40, fols. 2a-6a.

-*al-Miṣbāḥ fī al-taṣawwuf*

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya MS 3832, fols. 237b-318b

Title listed as *Risālat al-Miṣbāḥ*

-*Mafātīḥ al-asrār*

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Haşim Paşa MS 4 (HP)

See also *Majmūʿa* (Hacı Selim Ağa MS 491), fols. 23b-118a (HSA)

-*al-Wasāʾil al-sabʿ*

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehit Ali Paşa MS 2735, fols. 224b-225a

V. Texts mentioned by Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ḥamūya in idem, *Murād al-murīdīn*, ed. S.A.A. Mīr-Bāqirī Fard and Z. Najafī (Tehran: Muʾassasat-i Muṭālaʿāt-i Islāmī-yi Dānishgāh-i Tihrān - Dānishgāh-i Makgīl, 2011), 163-166:

-*Risālat al-Iḥṣāʾ fī ʿilm al-asmāʾ al-ḥusnā*

Completed at the end of Rajab AH 626 (late June 1229) in the Ḥijāz

-*Kitāb Ẓuhūr al-tawḥīd fī nūr al-tajrīd*

Completed on 9 Ramaḍān AH 626 (8 August, 1229) in the Prophet's Mosque in Medina

-*Risālat Asrār al-Bāriʾ fī naghamāt al-qāriʾ*

Completed on 28 Ramaḍān AH 627 (17 August, 1230)

-*Ijāza* for ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Miṣrī

Written in Dhū al-Qaʿda AH 627 (September/October 1230) in Egypt

-*Risālat Asbāb al-faṣl li-arbāb al-faḍl*

Composed in Muḥarram AH 628 (November/December 1230) in Hebron

-*Risālat Ḥikmat Luqmān fī maʿālam al-insān*

Composed on 5 Dhū al-Ḥijja AH 627 (22 October, 1230)[442]

-*al-Fatḥ al-Mawṣilī*

Composed in Shaʿbān AH 627 (June/July 1230)[443]

-*Kitāb Manār al-muhlik*

Composed in Shawwāl AH 627 (August/September 1230) in Baghdad[444]

-*Kitāb Shuʿbat al-īmān*

Composed on 10 Dhū al-Qaʿda AH 627 (27 September, 1230)[445]

See also *Majmūʿa* (H. Çelebi MS 422), fols. 6a-23a

-*Kitāb Ikhrāj al-durar al-baḥriyya*

Composed on 1 Jumāda 1 AH 629 (2 March 1232) in the mosque of Baghdad

-*Kitāb Wijdān al-umm fī sharḥ Allāhumma*

Composed on 1 Jumāda II AH 629 (1 April 1232) in the mosque of Baghdad

-*Majlis al-radd fī al-ḥirz wa-l-madd*

Composed on 20 Jumāda II AH 629 (20 April, 1232) in the *ḥarīm* [of Baghdad?]

-*al-Ishāra fī al-ishāra*

Composed on 11 Shaʿbān AH 629 (9 June, 1232) in the mosque of Baghdad

-*Risālat Ṣabāḥ al-ḥayāt wa-anfāsihā*

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[442] Or, possibly 5 Dhū al-Ḥijja AH 629 (29 September, 1232). See the discussion in note 26 on p. 10 of the Introduction.

[443] Or, possibly Shaʿbān AH 629 (June 1232). See the discussion in note 26 on p. 10 of the Introduction.

[444] Or, possibly Shawwāl AH 629 (August 1232). See the discussion in note 26 on p. 10 of the Introduction.

[445] Or, possibly 10 Dhū al-Qaʿda AH 629 (4 September, 1232). See the discussion in note 26 on p. 10 of the Introduction.

Composed on 12 Rajab AH 630 (1 May, 1233) in a *zāwiya* outside the city of Homs

-*ʿĪd al-fiṭr*

Composed on 22 Dhū al-Qaʿda AH 630 (6 September 1233) in Qāsiyūn

-*Risālat Ṣūltān ʿalā al-Shayṭān*

Composed on 25 Muḥarram AH 631 (7 November, 1233) at the *zāwiya* of Shams al-Dīn al-Rūmī in Ṣāliḥiyya

-*al-Duʿāʾ ʿinda fatḥ bāb al-Kaʿba*

Composed in Ramaḍān AH 632 (May/June 1235) in the Mosque in Jerusalem

Completed on 29 Ramaḍān AH 632 (24 June, 1235)

-*Kitāb Taʿrīf fī maʿnā al-kashf*

Composed in Ṣafar AH 639 (August/September 1241) in Damascus; specifically, in Jākūra on the Barada river (*nahar Barand* [*sic*])

-*Risālat al-Taʾyīd wa-l-nuṣra*

Composed on Rabīʿ I AH 639 (September/October 1241) in Jākūra

Also mentioned on fol. 1a of Yani Camii MS 726

-*al-Maqāmāt al-nuzūliyya*

Composed on Rabīʿ I AH 639 (September/October 1241) in Ṣanʿa, one of the provinces of Baalbek

Likely mentioned on fol. 1a of Yani Camii MS 726

-*Sharḥ manām*

Ḥamūya had a dream in Ṣafar AH 640 (August/September 1242) that he subsequently interpreted

-*Sharḥ al-ṣād*

Composed in Jumādā I AH 640 (November 1242) in Tabriz

-*Risālat Ilḥāḥ al-qāṣid*

Composed in Dhū al-Qaʿda AH 640 (April/May 1243)

-*Risālat al-Jamʿ bayna al-anfus wa-l-aʿyun*

Composed in Muḥarram AH 641 (June/July 1243) in Georgia, Gilan (*bi-Gurjustān Jīlān*) [sic]

-*Ijāza* for Kamāl al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn al-ʿAzīz al-Marāghīnī

Written on 1 Muḥarram AH 641 (28 June, 1243)

-*Ijāza fī al-riwāya* for Shams al-Dīn Abū Bakr ibn ʿAlī al-Maqqarī al-Jājarmī

Written in the beginning of Shawwāl AH 643 (February 1246)

-*Ijāza* for Najm al-Dīn ʿUthmān ibn al-Muwaffaq al-Adkānī

Written on Jumādā I AH 645 (September/October 1247)

Ghiyāth al-Dīn specifies that al-Adkānī studied *Kitāb Wasīlat al-ṣiddīqīn wa-waṣīlat al-muqarrabīn ʿalā khātam al-nabīyīn* with Saʿd al-Dīn, who gave him permission to transmit it and narrate all of his works

See also *Majmūʿa* (Hacı Selim Ağa MS 491), fols. 120a-123b

-*Risālat Khalq al-janna fī kashf al-qubba*

Written on 1 Rabīʿ II AH 646 (31 July, 1248) in al-Kābād (Iran)

-*Nisbat al-khirqa* for Muḥammad Zakriyya al-Rāzī

Written in AH 647 (1249/1250) in Amol

-*Ijāza* for Sharaf al-Dīn al-Ṭabīb al-Khūrandī

Written on 6 Jumādā II, AH 648 (12 September, 1250) in Khurāsān

-*Nisbat al-khirqa* for Shihāb al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Māhān al-Simnānī in Amol

Written on 20 Rabīʿ II AH 649 (19 July, 1251) in Amol

VI. Texts mentioned on the cover (fol. 1a) of the Yani Camii MS 726 of *The Book of the Beloved*:

-*Sajanjal al-arwāḥ*

-*Kitāb Aṣl fī fiʿl al-mughrib*

-*Kashf ʿanqāʾ al-mughrib*[446]

-*Risālat al-ḥall wa-l-ʿuqd*

-*Kitāb Kashf al-ghiṭāʾ*

See also Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya MS 2058, fols. 208b-214a (AS) and Princeton, Princeton University Library, Garret Collection MS 3793Y, fols. 134b-138a (P)

-*Ḥarf al-maʿārij*

-*Kitāb al-ʿayn wa-l-naẓr*

-*Kitāb Ṭahārat al-nabīy ʿalayhi al-salām*

-*Kalimāt al-injīliyya wa-hiya ḥarf al-kalimāt*

-*Kitāb Ḥaqq al-waqt wa-l-sāʿa*

See also Princeton, Princeton University Library, Garret Collection MS 3793Y, fols. 138a-143b (P) and *Majmūʿa* (H. Çelebi MS 422), fols. 151a-163a (HC)

-*Kitāb Saṭr al-ḥarf wa-l-kalimāt*

-*Kitāb al-taʾyīd wa-l-naṣr*

[446] Jamal Elias notes that this text is the same as *Risāla fi ẓuhūr khātam al-awliyāʾ*. See Jamal J. Elias, "The Sufi Lords of Bahrabad: Saʿd al-Din and Sadr al-Din Hamuwayi," *Iranian Studies* 27, no. 1/4 (1994), 65.

According to Ghiyāth al-Dīn, composed on Rabīʿ I AH 639 (September/October 1241) in Jākūra

-*Kitāb al-muqābila al-nuzūliyya*

Ghiyāth al-Dīn cites a text entitled *al-Maqāmāt al-nuzūliyya* composed on Rabīʿ I AH 639 (September/October 1241) in Ṣanʿa, one of the provinces of Baalbek

-*Kitāb Maqāmāt al-ṣāliyya*

-*Kitāb al-taʿarruf fī maʿnā al-takashshuf*

-*Kitāb Kashf al-ghitāʾ min kunh al-ʿaṭāʾ*

-*Kitāb muthallathāt al-malk wa-l-mulk*

-*Kitāb al-Ṣalāt fī qālab*

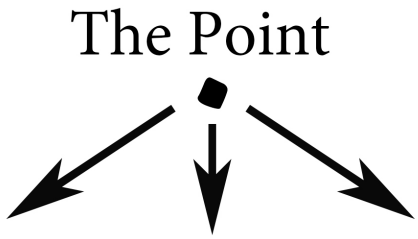
-*Risālat Istiwāʾ al-Raḥmān*

-*Kitāb fī waṣāyā li-baʿḍ al-aṣḥāb*

-*Rasāʾil ilā baʿḍ al-aḥbāb*

Figures

Figure 1. The tripartite manifestation of the Point as outlined in *The Book of the Point* (*Kitāb al-Nuqṭa*). The *Lamp of Sufism* (*al-Miṣbāḥ fī al-taṣawwuf*) presents a similar scheme, though it does not label each rank according to *lāhūt*, *malakūt*, and *mulk*.



[------- *Alif* in the Rank of *Lāhūt* -------]

i.	ii.	iii.
The Black Point of the Essence (*al-nuqṭa al-aṣliyya al-sawādiyya*; *al-nuqṭa al-dhātiyya*)	The White Point of the Attributes (*al-nuqṭa al-bayāḍiyya al-ṣifātiyya*)	The Red Point of Dispositions (*al-nuqṭa al-aḥmariyya al-khalqiyya*)

[------- *Alif* in the Rank of *Malakūt* -------]

i.	ii.	iii.
The Holy Spirit (*rūḥ al-quddus*)	The Spirit of God (*rūḥ Allāh*)	The Faithful Spirit (*rūḥ al-amīn*)

[------- *Alif* in the Rank of *Mulk*-------]

i.	ii.	iii.
Hearing (*al-samʿ*)	Seeing (*al-baṣar*)	Knowing (*al-ʿilm*)

Figure 2. The tripartite projection of the Point and linear projection of Divinity as outlined in *The Realities of the Letters* (*Ḥaqā'iq al-ḥurūf*).

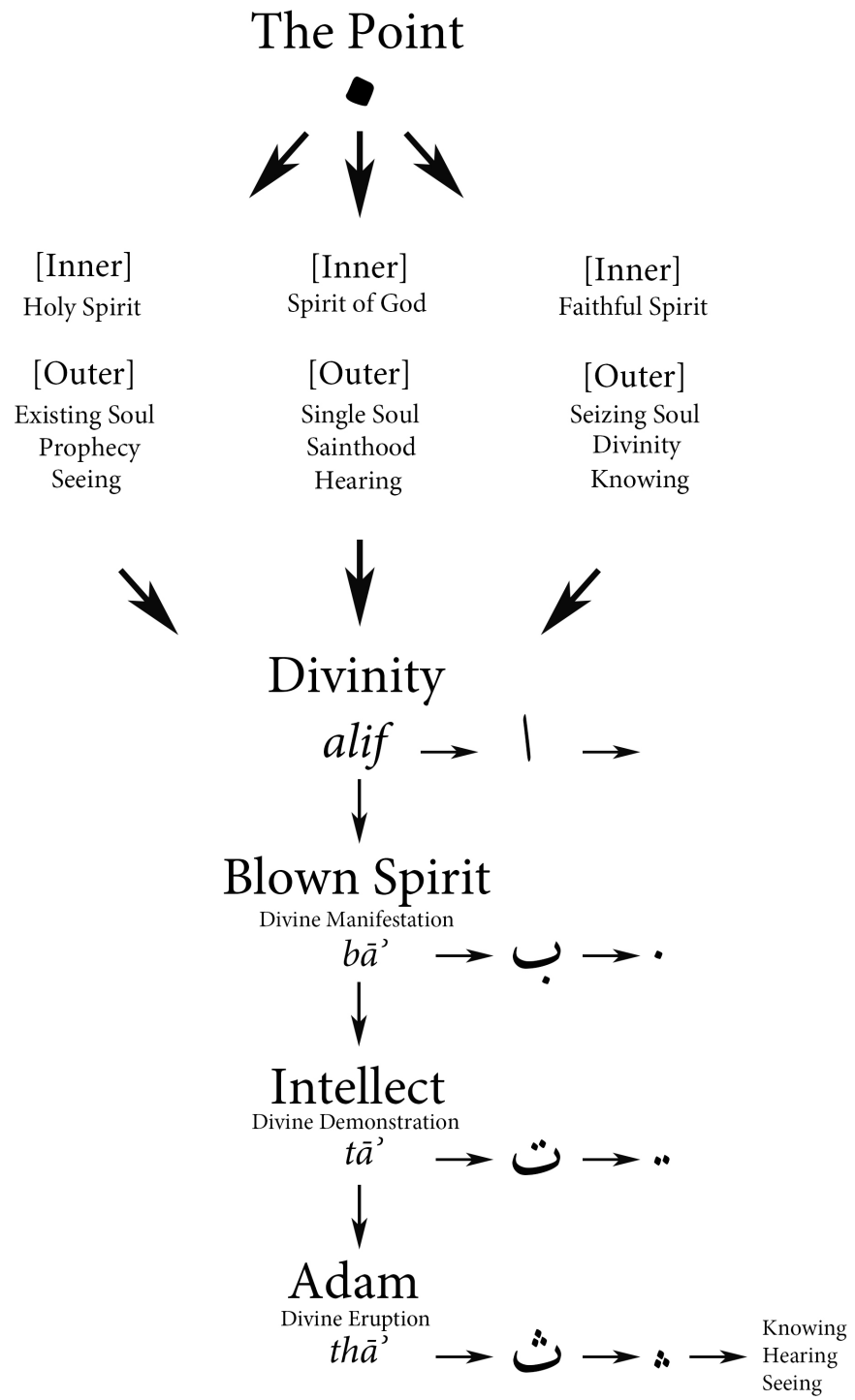
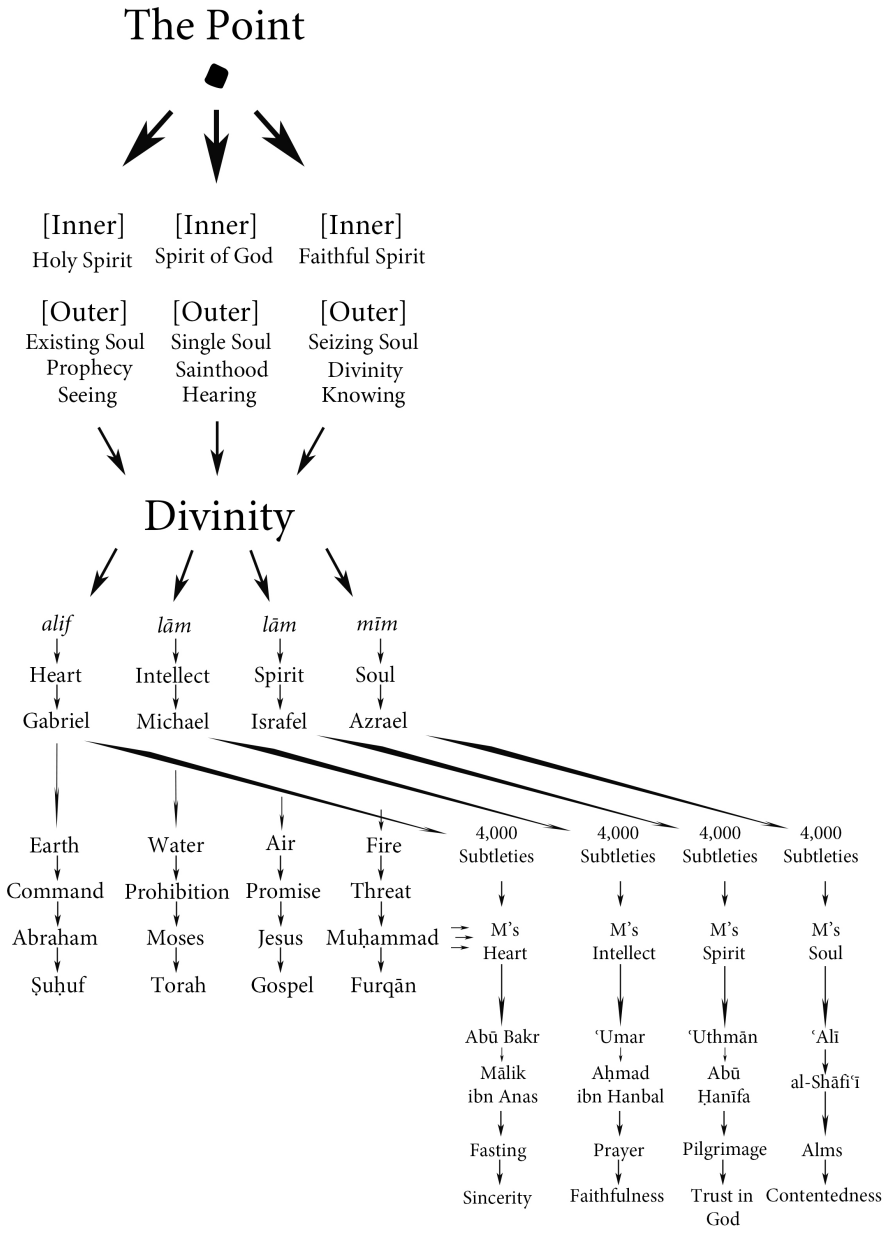
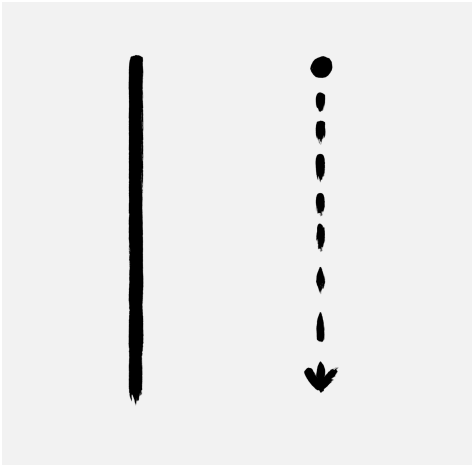


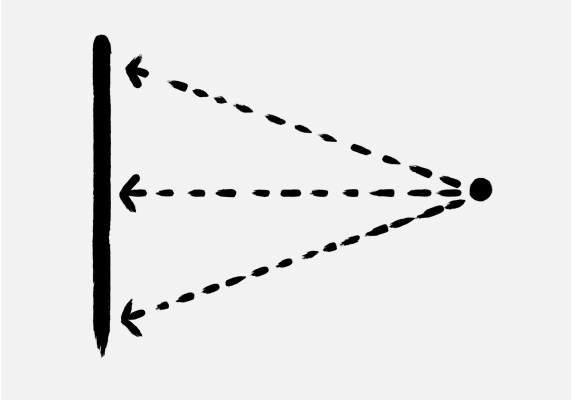
Figure 3. The tripartite projection of the Point and fourfold emanation of Divinity as outlined in *The Realities of the Letters* (*Ḥaqā'iq al-ḥurūf*).[447]



[447] For the purposes of visual clarity, I have streamlined Ḥamūya's schemes, omitting several levels of reality and simplifying others. I have left aside, for example, Saʿd al-Dīn's discussion of the four elements and the formation of the mineral, plant, and animal kingdoms. Likewise, I have diagrammed the realities below Muḥammad as if each stems from a particular aspect of his being. Though Saʿd al-Dīn does not make this connection explicitly, I believe the context and general structure of the scheme justifies such an interpretation.

Figure 4. Illustrations of the movement from the point to the line, the manifestation of the point's levels in the line, and the relationship between the point, the line, and the letters.





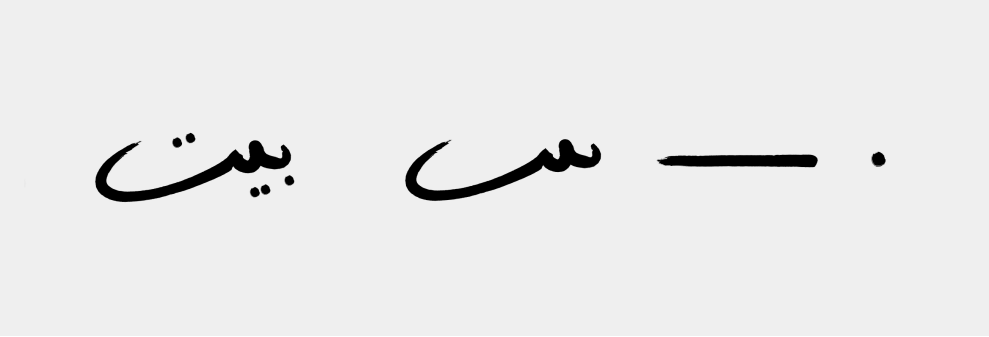


Figure 5. Ontological principles and correspondences as outlined in *The Epistle on the Explanation of the Expansion of Absolute Existence Upon the Sites of Manifestation of the Existing Beings* (*Risāla fī bayān inbisāṭ al-wujūd al-muṭlaq ʿalā maẓāhir al-kā'ināt*).

According to the epistle, Divinity (*ilāhiyyat*) expands within the pages of existing beings (*munbasiṭ ast dar ṣaḥā'if-i kāyināt*). The form (*ṣūra*) of that expansion, for example, is called the Intellect, its meaning (*maʿnā*) is called the Spirit (*rūḥ*) and so on and so forth. The totality of these principles are gathered in the heart of the human being (*dil-i insān*).

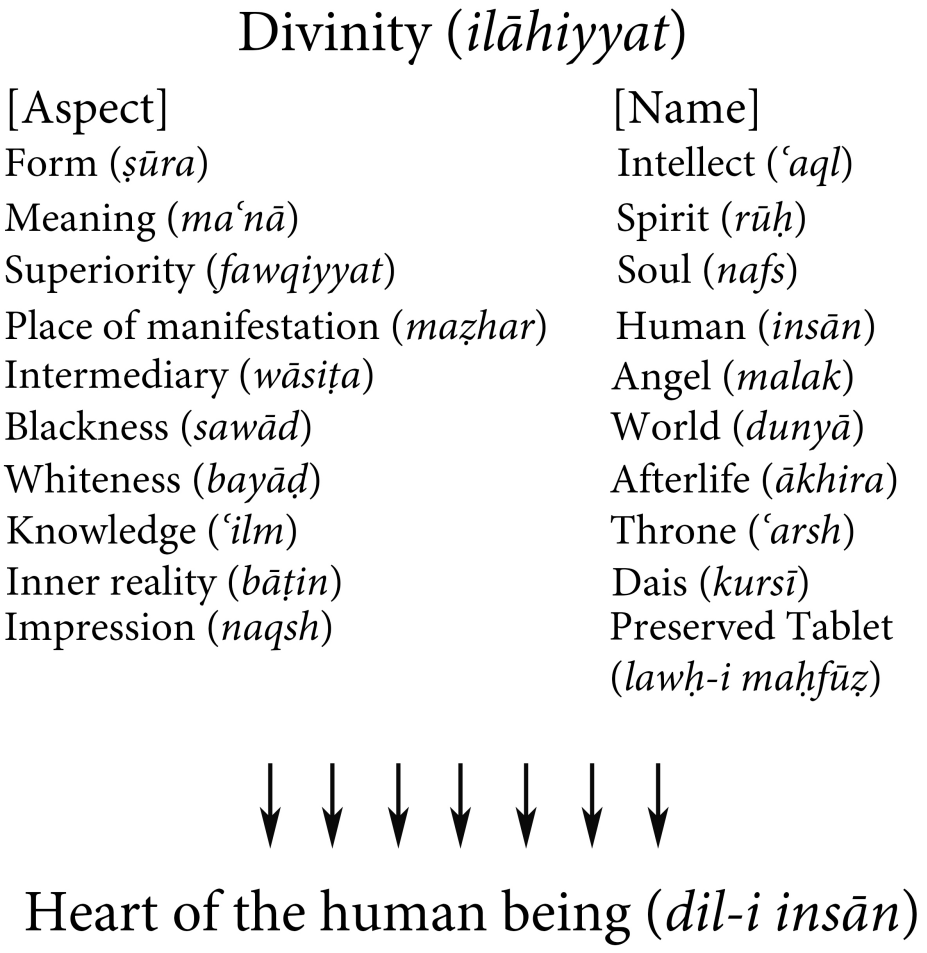


Figure 6. The bifurcation of Divinity (abridged) as outlined in *The Realities of the Letters (Ḥaqā'iq al-ḥurūf).*

Divinity (*ilāhiyyat*)

[Side of Higher Things] (*ṭaraf-i ʿulwiyyāt)*

i. The Face (*wajh*)
ii. The Spirit (*rūḥ*)
iii. Sainthood (*wilāyat*)
iv. Darkness (*ẓulmat*)—Veil of the Face
v. Light (*ẓūlmat*)

[Side of Lower Things] (*ṭaraf-i sufliyyāt*)

i. The Essence (*dhāt*)
ii. The Soul (*nafs*)
iii. Prophecy (*nubuwwat*)
iv. Hell (*jaḥīm*)—Veil of the Essence
v. Darkness (*ẓūlmat*)

Figure 7. Ontological principles (abridged) linked to the three primary darknesses in *The Levels of Joy in the Fountains of Power* (*Kitāb Marātib al-qurra fī ʿuyūn al-qudra*).

The First Darkness

i. Light (*nūr*)
ii. The Veil of the Majesties of His Face (*subuḥāt wajhihi*)
iii. The Veil of the Names (*al-asmāʾ*)
iv. The Veil of Existence (*al-wujūd*)
v. The Mosque of the Spirit (*masjid al-rūḥ*)

The Second Darkness

i. Manifestation (*ẓuhūr*)
ii. The Veil of the Face (*al-wajh*)
iii. The Veil of the Attributes (*al-ṣifāt*)
iv. The Veil of What is Named (*al-musammā*)
v. The Homeland of the Body (*mawṭan al-jasad*)

The Third Darkness

i. Clarification (*wuḍūḥ*)
ii The Veil of His Face (*wajhihi*)
—i.e., the Veil of the Reality of *Lāhūt* (*al-ḥaqīqa al-lāhūtiyya*)
iii. The Veil of Dispositions (*al-akhlāq*)
iv. The Veil of the Essence (*al-dhāt*)
v. The House of the Heart (*bayt al-qalb*)

Figure 8. Concentric lettrist circles as outlined in *The Book of the Beloved* (*Kitāb al-Maḥbūb*).

According to Ḥamūya, these fifteen concentric circles exist one on top of the other. Each is made up of two letters, except the circle of *hā'*, which encompasses the others and serves as their ultimate foundation.

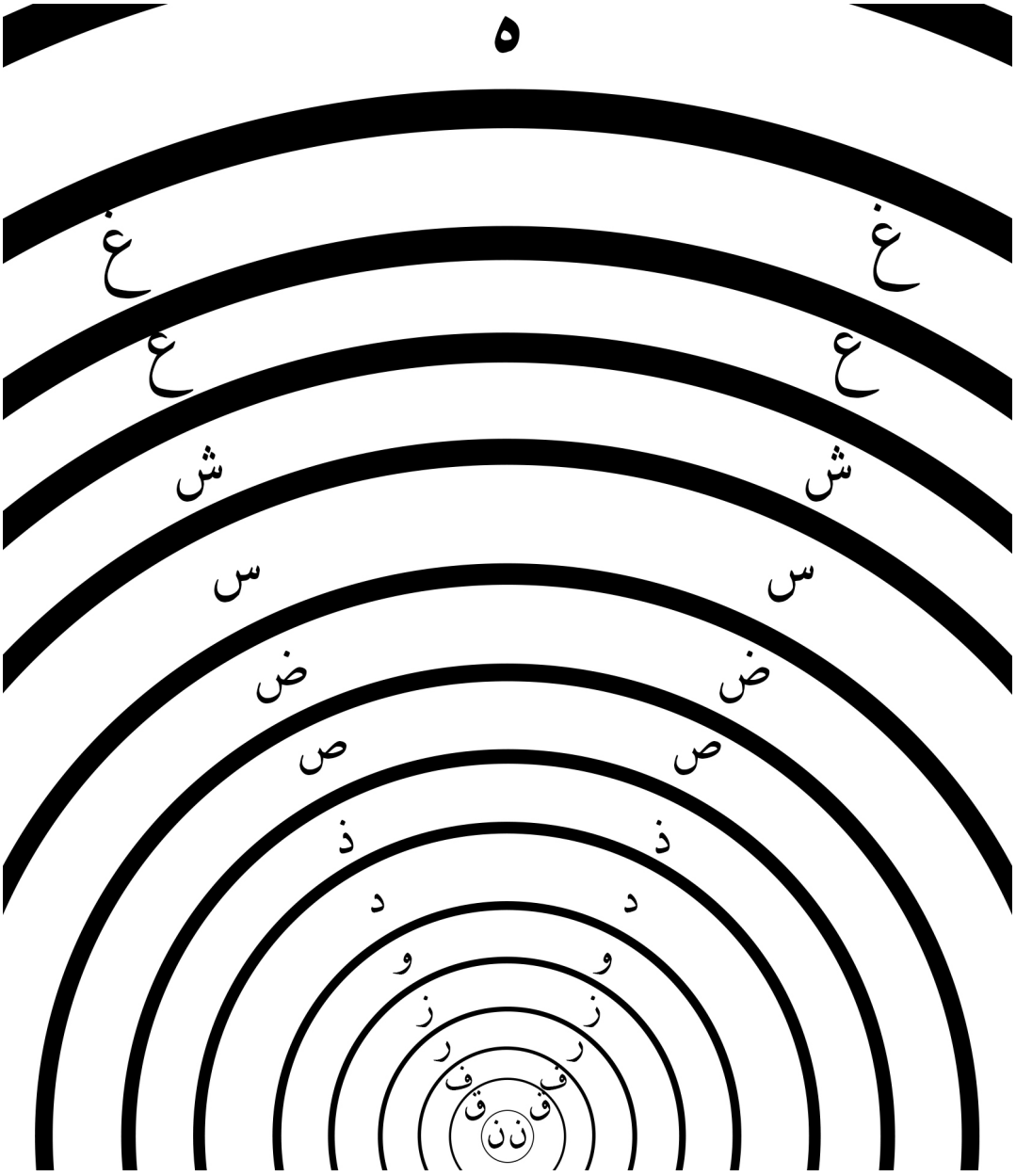


Figure 9. Four pillars of *alif* (abridged) as outlined in *The Lamp of Sufism (al-Miṣbāḥ fī al-taṣawwuf).*

The Four Pillars (*arkān*) of *Alif*

Form (*ṣūrat*)

i. The relationship (*munāsabat*) between *alif*'s beginning and end; between its manifest and hidden aspects

ii. Form is cloaked with hopeful envy (*ḥasad*)

iii. The inner reality of form is the *mulk* of eternity (*mulk-i ṣāmadiyyat*)

iv. Form's secret (*sirr*) is within earth (*turāb*)

v. The inner reality of earth is Heart (*qalb*)

vi. The Heart is linked to Gabriel

Likeness (*shakl*)

i. *Alif*'s apparent (*paydā*) aspects

ii. Likeness is cloaked with haughtiness (*kibr*)

iii. The inner reality of likeness is the *mulk* of unity (*mulk-i waḥdat*)

iv. Likeness' secret (*sirr*) is within fire (*nār*)

v. The inner reality of fire is Soul (*nafs*)

vi. The Soul is linked to Azrael

Shape (*hay'at*)

i. *Alif*'s uprightness (*istiqāmat*)

ii. Shape is cloaked with hopeful desire (*amal*)

iii. The inner reality of shape is the *mulk* of individuality (*mulk-i fardiyyat)*

iv. Shape's secret (*sirr*) is within in air (*hawā'*)

v. The inner reality of air is Spirit (*rūḥ*)

vi. The Spirit is linked to Israfel

Model (*mithāl*)

i. That which maintains between one *alif* and another

ii. Model is cloaked with greed (*ḥirṣ*)

iii. The inner reality of model is the *mulk* of transcendence and sanctification (*mulk-i tanzīh wa taqdīs*)

iv. Model's secret (*sirr*) is within water (*mā'*)

v. The inner reality of water is Intellect (*'āql*)

vi. The Intellect is linked to Michael

Figure 10. The three states of form as outlined in *The Levels of Joy in the Fountains of Power* (*Kitāb Marātib al-qurra fi ʿuyūn al-qudra*).

The Three States (*aḥwāl*) of Form (*ṣūra*)

Form in the Loins of Likeness (*al-ṣalb al-shaklī*)

i. Locus of explanation and the tongue

ii. Stems from the Holy Spirit (*al-rūḥ al-quddus*), which corresponds to the Intellect (*al-ʿaql*)

iii. Linked to relationship (*munāsaba*)

Form in the Womb of Shape (*al-raḥim al-hayʾatī*)

i. Locus of the Qur'ān's *muḥkamāt*

ii. Stems from the Faithful Spirit (*al-rūḥ al-amīn*), which corresponds to the Heart (*al-qalb*)

iii. Linked to relationality (*al-tanāsub*)

Form in the Belly of Model (*al-baṭn al-mithālī*)

i. Locus of the Furqān's *mutashābihāt*

ii. Stems from the Spirit of God (*al-rūḥ Allāh*), which corresponds to Face that is face-to-face with God (*al-wajhu llādhī yuwājihu bi-Llāh*)

iii. Linked to relation (*nisba*)

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