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ABŪ NAṢR AL-QUSHAYRĪ
AND HIS KITĀB AL-SHAWĀHID WA-L-AMTHĀL

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zum zweiundsiebzigsten Geburtstag

Introduction

With the Mongol invasion of the Muslim lands in the thirteenth century, the task of writing intellectual history of the affected regions has become especially challenging for the scholars who look beyond the socio-political reality of the regions. When it comes to the reconstruction of the intellectual climate of the eastern province of Irān, Khurāsān, it is particularly difficult to gather the necessary details for its pre-Mongol period, and almost impossible for the pre-Ghaznavid era. Yet, it is still worthwhile (and even necessary) to attempt to consider the theological, literary, and common intellectual background of the works written in this period, for a better grasp of them. Fortunately, in a rare case of textual survival, we may be able to reconstruct some aspects of the general intellectual climate of the eleventh to twelfth century Khurāsān, which was then home to a great number of prominent Muslim intellectuals.

The *Risāla* of Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072)¹ is undoubtedly one of the most widely read texts in the history of Sufism. Already during the life-

¹ Some of the important introductions to the life of al-Qushayrī may be found in the following: *Badī' al-Zamān Furūzānfar*. Introduction to the Persian translation of al-Qushayrī's *al-Risāla* by Abū 'Alī Hasan b. Aḥmad-i 'Uthmānī. Tehran: Intishārāt-i 'Ilmī wa Farhangī, 1381/2002; *Ibrāhīm Basyūnī*. Al-Imām al-Qushayrī: Sīratuhu, āthāruhu, madhhabuhu fī al-taṣawwuf. Cairo: Majma' al-Buḥūth al-Islāmiyya, 1972; *Idem*. Al-Imām al-Qushayrī, Ḥayatuḥu wa-taṣawwufuḥu wa-thiqāfatuh. Cairo: Maktabat al-Ādāb, 1413/1992; *Idem*. "Madkhal" // *Laṭā'if al-Ishārāt*. Ed. Ibrāhīm Basyūnī. Cairo: Dār al-Kātib al-'Arabī, 1968; *Frank R.M.* Two Short Dogmatic Works of Abū l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī. P. 2. Edition and Translation of "al-Fuṣūl fī l-uṣūl" // *Mélanges* 16 (1983): P. 59–94. *Pīr Muḥammad Ḥasan*. Al-Rasā'il al-Qushayriya. Karachi: al-Ma'had al-Markazī li-l-Abḥāth al-Islāmiya, 1964; *Imām Hanafī Sayyid 'Abd Allāh*. Al-Ārā' al-Kalāmiyya wa-l-Ṣūfiyya 'ind al-Qushayrī. Cairo: Maktabat al-Thiqāfa al-Dīniyya, 1426/2006; *Nguyen M.T.* "The Confluence and Construction of Traditions: Al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072) and the Intersection of Qur'ānic Exegesis, Theology, and Sufism (Ph.D. Dissertation). Harvard University: May 2009.

time of its author, copies of this treatise had reached faraway lands. During the eleventh to twelfth centuries (the fifth to sixth centuries A.H.), his *Risāla* served as one of the chief sources for practical instruction in Sufi circles. However, little is still known of the author's literary, theological, and even Sufi background. For instance, one wonders: what texts did al-Qushayrī have access to while composing his works, and what were his attitudes toward the divergent currents of thought existing in the eleventh-century Khurāsān?

Fortunately, through the discovery of a manuscript of a hitherto unknown work, which I would like to call "The Qushayrī Family's Private Treasury," we now have access to reliable information on additional details of al-Qushayrī's intellectual background, including the kinds of sources he may have utilized in composing his Sufi works, first of all his *Risāla* and *Laṭā'if al-ishārāt*. The manuscript under discussion in the present article is entitled *al-Shawāhid wa-l-amthāl* and written by al-Qushayrī's fourth son, Abū Naṣr 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-Qushayrī (d. 514/1120).²

Al-Shawāhid appears to be a collection of Abū Naṣr's personal notes regarding things he has heard from his father, Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī.³ In this work, one can find rich material on some of the key theological issues that were of particular concern to his father, with whom Abū Naṣr shared most of his own views. At first sight, the work seems to lack any formal structure in terms of chapter divisions, and no specific arrangement of the various subjects covered in this text seems to exist.

Al-Shawāhid, which thus appears to be a sort of miscellanea, consists of various texts—poems, stories, anecdotes, Qur'anic verses, Hadiths, etc.—that were in wide circulation among the Sufis until about the fifth/eleventh century. Aside from gathering these external materials in this work, Abū Naṣr also expresses his own views on certain issues that show him to be more inclined toward dogmatic theology (*kalām*) than to Sufism. His adherence to Ash'arī doctrines is clear from this work, in complete agreement with the theological stance of both his father and his teachers.

In this article, I will discuss some of Abū Naṣr's inclinations toward Ash'arī *kalām*, on the one hand, and his simultaneous predispositions toward the Sufism of his father, on the other. This will be done by examining some of the key passages from the *Shawāhid* and comparing them with the writings of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, Ibn Fūrak, Ibn Khaffīf, and Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī.

² *Al-Shawāhid wa-l-Amthāl*. Ayasofia Library, Mss. No. 4128.

³ *Ibid.*, folio 1a: "Kitāb al-shawāhid wa-l-amthāl mim mā sami'ahu al-Imām Abū Naṣr 'Abd al-Raḥīm min wālidihī...".

The Qushayrī Family⁴

Many scholars have long spoken about the significance of Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī as a Qur'an commentator,⁵ Hadith scholar,⁶ and prominent Sufi.⁷ However, much less has been said about him as an Ash'arī theologian and about his stance toward the Ash'arism of Khurāsān, which gradually came to prevail over much of later Iranian Sufism. An assessment of the impact of Ash'arism on broader Islamic thought and culture in subsequent times is a task of great scholarly import to us still today,⁸ and this must be made on the basis of the earliest available sources.

We know that the most influential teacher of Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, Abū 'Alī al-Daqqāq (d. 406/1015),⁹ had a great inclination toward Ash'arism. Clearly, this could have had a deep impact on Abū al-Qāsim's attitude toward the Ash'arīs of Khurāsān. One of the key strategies that Abū al-Qāsim took for reinforcing and disseminating his thought in the broader Islamic world was a simultaneous advancement on two fronts: building a close relationship with the Ash'arīs on the one hand and associating with the ruling family of his time on the other.

⁴ The name Qushayrī comes from the family's ancestor, Qushayr b. Ka'b. See: *Ibn Imād al-Ḥanbalī*. Shadharāt al-Dhahab fī akhbār man dhahab. Ed. 'Abd al-Qādir al-ʿArna'ūt. Damascus: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1406 L.H. Vol. 3. P. 321.

⁵ Cf. *Basyūnī*. Madkhal // *Laṭā'if al-Ishārāt*. Vol. 1. P. 15–49; 'Abd Allāh b. 'Alī al-Maymūnī al-Maṭūrī. Al-Taysīr fī 'Ilm al-Tafsīr. (n. p.): Jāmi'at Umm al-Qurā, 1427/2006; Arnaldez R. Quelques remarques sur le commentaire mystique de Qushayrī: Laṭā'if al-Ishārāt // *Annales du Département des Lettres Arabes* 6-B (1991–1992). P. 99–106; Arnaldez R. Quelques remarques sur le commentaire mystique de Qushayrī: Laṭā'if al-Ishārāt // *Annales du Département des Lettres Arabes* 6 (1995). P. 99–106; Keeler A. Šūfī tafsīr as a Mirror: Al-Qushayrī the Murshid in His *Laṭā'if al-ishārāt* // *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 8.1 (2006). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. P. 1–21; Rashid Ahmad. Qur'anic Exegesis in Classical Literature with Particular Reference to Abu Al-Qāsim Al-Qushayrī: A Critique of His Age and His Work on the Quranic Exegesis. Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 2006.

⁶ Cf. *Arberry A.J.* Al-Qushayrī as Traditionist // *Studia orientalia* Ioanni Pedersen, septuagenario A.D. VII id. nov. anno MCMLIII a collegis discipulis amicis dicata. Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1953; *Nguyen*. The Confluence and Construction of Traditions. P. 324–358.

⁷ Faqīr b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ḥanaṭī (d. 1195/1780), the author of *Kitāb Qutb al-Irshād* (Bombay) states (P. 673) that he has five *isnāds* for *dhiḥr* that go back to al-Qushayrī, but he transmits through only one of them, i.e., via al-Qushayrī's grandson, Abū al-As'ad Hibat al-Raḥmān b. Abī Sa'īd 'Abd al-Wāḥid (1076–1151/460–546), from al-Qushayrī's second son, Abū Sa'īd 'Abd al-Wāḥid (1027–1100/418–494) (cited in *Furūzānfar*. Introduction. P. 47–48). For further information on al-Qushayrī's reputation in India, see Rizvī S.A.A. *A History of Sufism in India*. New Delhi: Munshiran, 1986.

⁸ *Shafī'ī Kadkanī M.-R.* Shi'r-i Jadwalī // *Zamīna-yi Ijtima'i-yi Shi'r-i Fārsī*. Tehran: Nashr-i Akhtarān and Nashr-i Zamāna, 1386 S.H. P. 412–413. On the continuance of its impact on modern Iranian society, see *Newman A.J.* *Safavid Iran: Rebirth of a Persian Empire*. London–New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006.

⁹ Cf. *Chabbi J.* Abū 'Alī Daqqāq // *Encyclopaedia Iranica* [www.iranica.com].

As for indications of Abū al-Qāsim's close relationship with the Ash'arīs, we must first note his discipleship under Abū 'Alī al-Daqqāq, a staunch Ash'arī, and second, his studies with a major Ash'arī theologian, Ibn Fūrak, the author of *Mujarrad Maqālāt al-Shaykh Abī al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī*,¹⁰ which is one of the most important sources we have today for understanding Ash'arī theology of this period. Moreover, Abū al-Qāsim's letter to Sunnis in defense of al-Ash'arī, entitled "The Complaint of the Sunnis,"¹¹ also shows his predilection for Ash'arism. Abū al-Qāsim's constant references to Ash'arī thought throughout his works¹² even suggest his strong agenda in propagating Ash'arism.

With regard to Abū al-Qāsim's relationship with the rulers of his time, we see that even during the decline of the Mu'tazili rationalism in Khurāsān¹³ and the power of al-Kundurī (d. 456/1064),¹⁴ al-Qushayrī was able to maintain a good relationship with the Abbasid caliphs in Baghdad on the one hand and with the local Iranian rulers on the other. He preached from the *minbar*, or the pulpit, in the presence of caliph al-Qā'im bi-Amr Allāh and found the general public's acceptance.¹⁵ Moreover, he even traveled in the company of the Seljuk sultan Tughril Beg (385–455/995–1063),¹⁶ which shows his close relationship with the Seljuks, the local Iranian rulers.¹⁷ Also, the respect that al-Qushayrī shows to-

¹⁰ *Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Fūrak*. *Mujarrad Maqālāt al-Shaykh Abī al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī*. Ed. D. Gimaret. Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 1987; *idem*. *Mujarrad Maqālāt al-Shaykh Abī al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī*. Ed. Aḥmad 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-Sā'ih. Cairo: Maktaba al-Thiqāfa al-Dīniyya, 1425/2005.

¹¹ *Shikāyat Ahl al-Sunna*. Ed. Pīr Muḥammad Ḥasan // *Al-Rasā'il al-Qushayriyya*. P. 1–49.

¹² Aside from *al-Risāla* and *Laṭā'if al-Ishārāt*, his two dogmatic works entitled *al-Fuṣūl fī al-Uṣūl* and *Luma' fī al-I'tiqād* are in complete accordance with Ash'arī thought.

¹³ Cf. *Gardet L.* 'Ilm al-Kalām // *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. 2nd ed. Eds. P. Bearman et al. Vol. 8. P. 1141.

¹⁴ Cf. *Ibn al-Athīr*. *Al-Kāmil fī 'l-Ta'rikh*. Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1386/1966. Vol. 9. P. 526; Vol. 10. P. 7; *Ibn Khallikān*. *Wafayāt al-A'yān wa-Anbā' Abnā' al-Zamān*. Ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās. Beirut: Dār al-Thiqāfa, 5:138.

¹⁵ Basyūnī mentions this in his introduction to *Laṭā'if al-Ishārāt* (P. 13), but I could not find any sources in support of his allusion.

¹⁶ For more details on his biography, see *Yaqūt al-Hamawī*. *Mu'jam al-Buldān*. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1399/1979. Vol. 1. PP. 412, 534; *Ibn Khallikān*. *Wafayāt*. Vol. 7. P. 156; *al-Ṣafādī*. *Al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*. Ed. Aḥmad al-Arna'ūt. Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1420/2000. Vol. 13. P. 183; Vol. 17. P. 15; *al-Kutbī*. *Fawāt al-Wafayāt*. Ed. 'Alī Muḥammad b. Ya'uz Allāh. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2000. Vol. 1. P. 518–520; *Ibn Khaldūn*. *Al-'Ibar*. Beirut: Mu'assasa al-A'lami, 1391/1971. Vol. 5. PP. 63, 126.

¹⁷ According to *al-Raḥī Ṭ's al-Tadwīn fī Akhbar [Ahl al-'Ilm bi-] Qazwīn*. Ed. A. 'Aṭārūdī. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1987. Vol. 3. P. 211, al-Qushayrī in 1062/454 was in the company of Tughril Beg in Qazwīn. On account of this historical evidence, it becomes hard to accept W. Madelung's assertion of the contention between the Saldjuq ruler and al-Qushayrī—cf. *The Spread of Maturidism and the Turks // Actas do IV Congresso de Estudos Arabes e Islâmicos* 1968 (1971). P. 109–168, reprinted in *Madelung W.* *Religious Schools and Sects in Medieval Islam*. London: Variorum Reprints, 1985. Chapter 2. In addition, we know that Tughril Beg visited three famous saints of Hamadān: Bābā Ṭāhir, Bābā Ja'far, and Shaykh Hamshā

ward the Seljuk vizier Niẓām al-Mulk (d. 1095/548) is a further indication of his multifaceted loyalty.¹⁸

At a time when the rulers persecuted and executed thinkers like Ḥallāj and Ibn ‘Aṭā’¹⁹ on the charge of unbelief,²⁰ al-Qushayrī’s good relations with both the local Seljuk rulers and the Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad were of particular significance. It seems most likely that one of the main causes for the spread of al-Qushayrī’s works²¹ well beyond Khurāsān and the greater Persia—even as far as India²²—was this very alliance he had with the politicians of his day.

With the help of his family in spreading his thought (of Ash‘arī conviction), Abū al-Qāsim was able to commence a new intellectual trend. The descendants of Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, most of whom were known to be highly learned and well-respected figures, include: Fāṭima Daqqāqiyya (d. 480/1087), his wife and Abū ‘Alī al-Daqqāq’s daughter; and his sons who were also highly learned figures.²³ The entire Qushayrī family seems to have been eager to spread Ash‘arī thought.

(sic!), and I surmise that al-Qushayrī was also present at these meetings. Also, see *Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Sulaymān al-Rāwandī*. Rāḥat al-Ṣudūr wa Āyat al-Surūr dar Ta’rīkh-i Āl-i Saljūq. Ed. M. Iqbal, with annotations by M. Mīnuwī. Tehran: Intishārāt-i Amīr Kabīr, 1364/1985. P. 98.

¹⁸ The respect seems to have been mutual, for a historical source indicates that when al-Qushayrī and al-Juwaynī entered Niẓām al-Mulk’s court, the latter stood up from his throne. Cf. *Ibn al-Athīr*. Al-Kāmil. Vol. 10. P. 209.

¹⁹ These incidents were supposedly recorded in one of the lost works of Abū ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021), entitled *Miḥan al-Sūfiyya*. Parts of this book have survived to this day in *al-Dhahabī*. Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’. Ed. Shu‘ayb al-Arna‘ūt. Beirut: Mu’assasa al-Risāla, 1413/1993. Vol. 11. P. 534; Vol. 12. P. 93; Vol. 14. PP. 489, 525; Vol. 18. P. 54; Vol. 23. PP. 509, 551.

²⁰ “One day, the former ruler [i.e., Maḥmūd of Ghazna] said: “Just for ‘Abbāsīd pleasure, and in order to patronize them, I am searching for Qarmaṭīs all over the world, and, whomever I find I hang...’” — *Abū al-Faḍl Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn Bayhaqī*. Tarīkh-i Bayhaqī. Ed. M. Yāḥaqī. Tehran: Nashr-i Sukhan, 1382/2009. Vol. 1. P. 172.

²¹ Al-Qushayrī’s thought was prevalent, even after Ibn ‘Arabī (1165–1240/560–638) became famous. Al-Qushayrī’s writings were well known and studied for a while in India. Cf. *Munzawī A*. Fihrist-i Mushtarak-i Nuskhahā-yi Fārsī-yi Pākistan. Lahore: Intishārāt-i Markaz-i Taḥqīqāt-i Fārsī-yi Pākistan 1363 S.H. P. 1779.

²² Sayyid Muḥammad-i Gīsūdarāz (d. 825/1422), a saint of the Chishtiyya order, well known as “Banda-Nawāz,” wrote a Persian commentary on the first forty chapters of al-Qushayrī’s *Risāla*. Cf. *Sayyid Muḥammad-i Gīsūdarāz Kh‘āja-yi Banda-Nawāz-i Chashṭī*. Sharḥ-i Risāla-yi Qushayriyya. Ed. Mawlawī Sayyid ‘Aṭā Ḥusayn. Ḥaydarābād–Dakan, 1361 L.H.

²³ References to al-Qushayrī’s sons can be found in the following: for Hibat al-Rahmān, see *al-Dhahabī*. Al-Mukhtaṣar min ta’rīkh Ibn al-Dabīthī. Ed. Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Aṭā. N.p., 1417/1997. PP. 261, 384; *al-Dhahabī*. Siyar. Vol. 21. P. 49; Vol. 22. PP. 89, 109. For Abū Sa‘īd ‘Abd al-Wāhid, see *al-Sam‘ānī*. Al-Ansāb. Ed. ‘Abd Allāh ‘Umar al-Barūdī. Beirut: Dār al-Jinān, 1408/1988. Vol. 4. P. 539; Vol. 5. P. 34; *al-Ḥamawī*. Mu‘jam. Vol. 1. P. 517. Vol. 2. P. 92. Vol. 4. P. 280; *Ibn al-Athīr al-Jazar*. Al-Lubāb fī Tahdhīb al-Ansāb. Beirut: Dār Ṣādir. Vol. 3. PP. 53, 84; *al-Dhahabī*. Ta’rīkh al-Islām. Ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām al-Tadmūrī. Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1407/1987. Vol. 29. P. 202. For Abū al-Muzaffar ‘Abd al-

Abū Naṣr 'Abd al-Raḥīm b. 'Abd al-Karīm b. Huwāzin al-Qushayrī: His Life

Among all the descendants of Abū al-Qāsim, the most learned and the most similar to him in various respects seems to have been his fourth son, Abū Naṣr al-Qushayrī (d. 514/1120),²⁴ or to be exact, Abū Naṣr 'Abd al-Raḥīm b. 'Abd al-Karīm b. Huwāzin al-Qushayrī.²⁵ He was also known by such epithets as "Pillar of Islam" (*rukn al-islām*),²⁶ "Chief Imam" (*imām al-a'imma*),²⁷ and "Incontestable Gatherer of Virtues and Excellence" (*Jāmi' al-maḥāsīn wa-l-faḍā'il bilā manāzi'*).²⁸ He was also known to have been most similar to his father in his looks as well as in personality²⁹ and in the way he preached,³⁰ as it were, his existence was a fragment of his father's.³¹

As already mentioned, he was said to be the most learned descendant in al-Qushayrī's family,³² and sources show the considerable breadth of his learning. For instance, he was famous for his special mastery of two fields of traditional Islamic learning: commentaries on the Qur'an (*tafsīr*) and the principles of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*).³³ Moreover, at a time when the study of the Hadith meant the Islamic learning proper and the chief field of Islamic education,³⁴ Abū

Mun'im, see *al-Sam'ānī*. Al-Ansāb. Vol. 5. P. 400. For Abū Manṣūr 'Abd al-Raḥmān, see *Ibn al-Athīr*. Al-Lubāb. Vol. 1. P. 326.

²⁴ He is different from Abū Naṣr 'Abd al-Mālik b. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Qushayrī al-Tammār (d. 228/842), also known as Abū Naṣr al-Qushayrī. For his biography, see *Ibn Hibbān al-Bustī*. Kitāb al-Thiqāt. Ḥaydarābād–Dakan: Majlis Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-'Uthmāniyya, 1393/1973. Vol. 8. P. 390; *Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī*. Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1404/1984. Vol. 12. P. 230.

²⁵ *Al-Dhahabī*. Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī. Vol. 4. P. 1254; *idem*. Siyar. Vol. 19. P. 430. His *kunya* must be corrected in the following two sources: *Ibn al-Athīr*. Al-Kāmil. Vol. 10. P. 587 (wrongly spelled "Abū Sa'd") and *al-Kutbī*. Fawāt. Vol. 1. P. 651, No. 271 (wrongly spelled as "Abū al-Qāsim").

²⁶ *Al-Subkī*. Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyāt al-Kubrā. Ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad al-Ṭanāhī. Dār al-Hijra, 1413/1992. Vol. 1. P. 118.

²⁷ *Ibn 'Asākir*. Tabyīn Kādhīb al-Muftarī. Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1404 L.H. P. 308.

²⁸ *Al-Yāfi'ī*. Mir'āt al-Janān wa-'Ibrat al-Yaqzān fī Ma'rifat Ḥawādith al-Zamān. Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, 1413/1993. Vol. 3. P. 113.

²⁹ *Ibn 'Imād*. Shadhārāt. Vol. 3. P. 321; *al-Ṣarīfīnī*. Al-Muntakhab min al-Siyāq li-Ta'rīkh Nisābūr. Ed. Khālid Ḥaydar. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1414 L.H. P. 354; *Ibn Ṣalāḥ*. Ṭabaqāt al-Fuqahā' al-Shāfi'iyya. Ed. Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Alī Najīb. Beirut: Dār al-Bashā'ir al-Islāmiyya, 1992. No. 204, Vol. 1. P. 546.

³⁰ *Al-Yāfi'ī*. Mir'āt al-Janān. Vol. 3. P. 113.

³¹ *Ibn Ṣalāḥ*. Ṭabaqāt. No. 204. Vol. 1. P. 546; *Ibn 'Asākir*. Tabyīn. P. 308.

³² *Ibn Ṣalāḥ*. Ṭabaqāt. No. 204. Vol. 1. P. 546.

³³ *Ibn 'Asākir*. Tabyīn. P. 308; *al-Kutbī*. Fawāt. Vol. 1. P. 651; Ibn Ṣalāḥ mentions that he studied *tafsīr* and *uṣūl al-fiqh* with his father. See Ṭabaqāt. No. 204. Vol. 1. P. 546.

³⁴ From this point of view, anyone who cannot think orthodoxly is a heterodox, and that is why a great scholar like Avicenna "does not have anything of science (= Hadith)" and thereupon "because of his philosophical opinions, May God not forgive him!" Cf. *al-Dhahabī*. Mizān

Naṣr was famous as a *muhaddith*, i.e., a Hadith transmitter,³⁵ well respected among his numerous teachers and students.

Yet at the same time, he was also referred to as a *mutakallim*,³⁶ i.e., a dogmatic theologian, due to his frequent recourse to the works of al-Ash‘arī, as well as of Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī and of his own father, Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, both of whom were prominent Ash‘arī thinkers. Moreover, Abū Naṣr was a first-rate jurisprudent (*faqīh*) in Shāfi‘ī law.³⁷ In the field of the Arabic language, he was a known grammarian³⁸ and such a master of the Arabic vocabulary³⁹ that even after his death his work in this field continued to be quoted. Furthermore, thanks to his poetic gifts and exceptional memory,⁴⁰ his name came to be recorded in literary collections as that of an articulate and eloquent⁴¹ litterateur (*adīb*)⁴² or even of a poet (*shā‘ir*).⁴³ Moreover, just as his father did in his youth, Abū Naṣr familiarized himself with the exact sciences and arithmetic.⁴⁴ In Nīshāpūr, he was so highly respected that he even led the prayer for the cele-

al-I‘tidāl. Ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad al-Bijāwī. Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifā. Vol. 1. P. 539; *Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī*. Liṣān al-Mizān. Beirut: Mu‘assasa al-A‘lami, 1390/1971. Vol. 2. P. 291.

³⁵ *Ibn Ṣalāh*. Ṭabaqāt. No. 204. Vol. 1. P. 546.

³⁶ *Ibn ‘Imād*. Shadharāt. Vol. 4. P. 54; *al-Tilimsānī*. Naḥḥ al-Ṭīb min Ghuṣn Andalus al-Raṭīb. Ed. Ihsān ‘Abbās. Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1997. Vol. 2. P. 550.

³⁷ In old Islamic usages, *al-madhhab* may refer to jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and *al-khilāf* to dogmatic theology (*kalām*). Abū Naṣr had studied jurisprudence (or *madhhab*) with Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī.

³⁸ *Al-Tilimsānī*. Naḥḥ al-Ṭīb. Vol. 2. P. 550.

³⁹ *Al-Shawkānī*. Nayl al-Awṭār. Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1973. Vol. 7. P. 315, counts Abū Naṣr among the great lexicographers like al-Jawharī and al-Fīrūzābādī (the compiler of *al-Qāmūs*).

⁴⁰ *Ibn al-Athīr*. Al-Kāmil. Vol. 10. P. 587 (he recorded 50,000 poems and stories); *al-Sam‘ānī*. Al-Ansāb. Vol. 2. P. 121; *al-Yāfi‘ī*. Mir‘āt al-Janān. Vol. 3. P. 211; *al-Subkī*. Ṭabaqāt. Vol. 7. P. 163; *Ibn al-Jawzī*. Al-Muntaḍam fī Ta‘rīkh al-Mulūk wa-l-Umam. Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1358 L.H. Vol. 9. P. 222.

⁴¹ *Al-Tilimsānī*. Naḥḥ al-Ṭīb. Vol. 2. P. 550; *Ibn Imād al-Ḥanbalī*. Shadharāt. Vol. 4. P. 45; *Ibn Ṣalāh*. Ṭabaqāt. No. 204. Vol. 1. P. 546; *al-Subkī*. Ṭabaqāt. Vol. 7. P. 160; Al-Tadwīn. Vol. 2. P. 259 (Abū Naṣr was corresponding with Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Adīb, well-known as Balak al-Quzbūrī).

⁴² *Ibn Kathīr*. *Al-Bidāya wa-l-Nihāya*. Ed. ‘Alī Shīrī. Beirut: Dār Ihyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1408/1988. Vol. 12. P. 232.

⁴³ *Ibn al-Jawzī*. Al-Muntaḍam. Vol. 9. P. 222; *al-Sam‘ānī*. Al-Ansāb. Vol. 1. P. 357 (Abū Naṣr’s poetry about Ayk, Bushtanaqān, and Farakhk, three pleasant locations near Nīshāpūr, has been preserved); *ibid.* Vol. 2. P. 121; *idem*. Adab al-Imlā’ wa-l-Istimplā’. Ed. Sa‘īd Muḥammad al-Laḥḥām. Beirut: Maktabat al-Hilāl, 1409/1989. P. 111; *Ibn al-Athīr*. Al-Lubāb. Vol. 1. P. 310; *Ibn Ṣalāh*. Ṭabaqāt. Vol. 1. PP. 210, 548 (regarding the poem he recited at the funeral of al-Juwaynī’s father); *al-Dhahabī*. Ta‘rīkh. Vol. 36. P. 187 (Abū Naṣr responded to a question by a poem. Another of his poems is recorded there wrongly and should be corrected to “ها قد بسطت يدي اليك فردها / بالفضل لا بشماتة الأعداء”); *al-Ṣafadī*. Al-Wāfi. Vol. 18. P. 200; *al-Kutbī*. Fawāt. Vol. 1. P. 652; *Ibn ‘Asākir*. Tabyīn. P. 167; *al-Subkī*. Ṭabaqāt. Vol. 6. P. 148; Vol. 7. P. 163 (about his poems in praise of Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī).

⁴⁴ *Ibn ‘Asākir*. Tabyīn. P. 167.

brated Hadith scholar and Sufi, Abū al-'Abbās Shaqānī (d. 1112/506)⁴⁵ on his death.⁴⁶ All this suggests (1) Abū Naṣr's elevated status during his time and (2) that he was better known as a religious scholar-encyclopedist than as a Sufi master.⁴⁷ ⁴⁸ However, there are indications of his personal inclination toward asceticism, as he apparently liked the practice of seclusion (*khalwa*) as well.⁴⁹

Little information remains of Abū Naṣr's childhood, apart from the fact that he was the first among al-Qushayrī's children to become a prominent figure within the family outside the blood line of al-Daqqāq,⁵⁰ the father of Abū al-Qāsim's first wife Fāṭima. Apparently, Abū Naṣr was a child of another wife of al-Qushayrī's.⁵¹ Abū Naṣr's mother was not as well known as the famous Fāṭima al-Daqqāqiyya, nor did she have the same intellectual or spiritual capacity as Fāṭima. Hence, there is no mention of her name in the historical sources. We only know that she is a daughter of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Jarfī al-Saladhī⁵² (or al-Charkhī al-Baladī⁵³). Unfortunately, we do not have any information about the date of her death either. Even though Abū Naṣr was the fourth child,⁵⁴ al-Qushayrī the father paid a special personal attention to him while raising and educating him;⁵⁵ for instance, he personally taught him the Arabic language,⁵⁶ which was one of the most fundamental fields of Islamic learning and the mastery of which was a sign of cultural sophistication. Stenography was another skill that Abū Naṣr acquired in his childhood, and apparently it was thanks to this skill

⁴⁵ *al-Dhahabī*. Siyar. Vol. 19. P. 244.

⁴⁶ *al-Sam'ānī*. Al-Ansāb. Vol. 3. P. 442.

⁴⁷ Muḥammad b. Munawwar, Shaykh Abū Sa'īd's grandson, narrated that Abū al-Ma'ālī al-Qushayrī (i.e., Abū al-Qāsim's grandson) had said: "There was a gathering (*majlis*) in Abū Sa'īd's *khāniqāh* in Nīshāpūr, in 'Adnī Kubān/'Adnī Kuyān alley, and I was there with my two uncles Imām Abū Naṣr and Imām Abū Sa'īd and all prominent Sufis and leaders were there." Cf. *Muḥammad b. Munawwar*. *Asrār al-Tawḥīd fī Maqāmāt Shaykh Abū Sa'īd*. Ed. M.-R. Shaḥīrī Kadkanī. Tehran: Nashr-i Āgāh, 1367/1997. Vol. 1. P. 376. He mentions that among the prominent figures present was Abū Sa'īd al-Qushayrī. Cf. *ibid.* Vol. 1. P. 377.

⁴⁸ Al-Qushayrī's principal disciples were Abū al-Qāsim's second son, Abū Sa'īd 'Abd al-Wāḥid al-Qushayrī (418/1027–494/1101), and his own wife Fāṭima al-Daqqāqiyya. Cf. *Sayyid Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh*. *Mushajjara*, quoted in *Furūzānfar*. Introduction. P. 53.

⁴⁹ *Ibn Ṣalāḥ*. Ṭabaqāt. No. 204. Vol. 1. P. 546; *al-Subkī*. Ṭabaqāt. Vol. 7. P. 163.

⁵⁰ *Ibn 'Asākir*. Tabyīn. P. 308.

⁵¹ Al-Subkī wrongly claims that all al-Qushayrī's sons were from Fāṭima al-Daqqāqiyya. Cf. Ṭabaqāt. Vol. 7. P. 163.

⁵² *Al-Ṣarīfīnī*. Al-Muntakhab. No. 1093. P. 363. He writes that Abū Sa'īd 'Abd al-Malik b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Jurfī al-Saladhī is the uncle of al-Qushayrī's children: *wa-huwa khāl awlād Zayn al-Islām*.

⁵³ Furūzānfar vocalized his name in this way. See *idem*. Introduction. P. 48.

⁵⁴ *Al-Subkī*. Ṭabaqāt. Vol. 7. P. 161.

⁵⁵ *Al-Tilimsānī*. Naḥḥ al-Ṭib. Vol. 2. P. 550.

⁵⁶ *Ibn 'Asākir*. Tabyīn. P. 308.

that he was able to preserve his father's writings for the next generation, having read these texts in the presence of his father himself.⁵⁷

In his youth, Abū Naṣr went through a carefully structured curriculum of studies under the supervision of his father, and then, after his death, under the guidance of al-Juwaynī. Al-Qushayrī the father had such a great respect for Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī (419–478/1028–1085)⁵⁸ as to affirm: "If Imām al-Ḥaramayn were to proclaim prophecy today, just because he said so, it would not be necessary for him to display miracles [to prove his prophecy]."⁵⁹ Apparently, Abū Naṣr first studied Hadith with his father,⁶⁰ and after his death, with al-Juwaynī.⁶¹ There are also some indications that in the year 445/1053⁶² or 452/1060,⁶³ Abū Naṣr studied Hadith under the guidance of Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī. After his father's death, Abū Naṣr hurriedly attached himself to Imām al-Ḥaramayn and attended the latter's lessons until he learned *madhhab* and *khiḷāf*.⁶⁴ Night and day he attended to Imām al-Ḥaramayn, and the latter also allowed himself to spend most of his time with Abū Naṣr.⁶⁵ This suggests both the intellectual prominence of Abū Naṣr at the time and his anticipated bright future in the eyes of Imām al-Ḥaramayn. Despite his young age, Abū Naṣr attained such a high degree of learning that even his own teacher, Imām al-Ḥaramayn quoted Abū Naṣr.⁶⁶ In continuation of the tradition of his father, Abū Naṣr held gatherings (*majālis*), which were quite well attended.⁶⁷ The gatherings for preaching (*wa'z*) are of special interest to us, since Abū Naṣr took Imām al-Ḥaramayn to these gatherings with his own students.⁶⁸ After this period of his life, Abū Naṣr becomes more famous. The study of jurisprudence marked the

⁵⁷ *Al-Rafi'ī*. Al-Tadwīn. Vol. 2. PP. 165, 442; Vol. 4. P. 101 (Sahl b. 'Abd Allāh al-Sarrāj narrated al-Qushayrī's *al-Taḥbīr fī tadhkīr*—a book on the divine names—through Abū Naṣr).

⁵⁸ For his biography, see *al-Dhahabī*. Siyar. Vol. 18. P. 468; *Ibn al-Dimiyāṭī*. Al-Mustafād min Dhayl Tarīkh Baghdād. Ed. Muṣṭafā 'Abd al-Qādir 'Aṭā. N.p., 1414/1997. P. 130; *al-Sam'ānī*. Al-Ansāb. Vol. 2. P. 129; *Ibn al-Athīr*. Al-Kāmil. Vol. 10. P. 145; *Ibn Khallikān*. Wafayāt. Vol. 3. P. 167; *Ibn Kathīr*. Al-Bidāya. Vol. 12. P. 157.

⁵⁹ *Ibn al-Najjār al-Baghdādī*. Dhayl Ta'rikh Baghdād. Vol. 1. P. 46.

⁶⁰ *Ibn al-Jawzī*. Al-Muntaḍam. Vol. 9. P. 222.

⁶¹ Ibid.; *Ibn al-Kathīr*. Al-Bidāya. Vol. 12. P. 232.

⁶² *Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī*. Ḥayāt al-Anbiyā' ba'da wafātihim. Ed. Aḥmad b. 'Atiyya al-Ghāmīdī. Medina: Maktabat al-'Ulūm wa-l-Ḥikam, 1993. P. 68.

⁶³ *Idem*. Al-Jāmi' fī'l-Khātām.

⁶⁴ *Ibn Imād*. Shadharāt. Vol. 3. P. 321; *al-Yāfi'ī*. Mir'āt al-Janān. Vol. 3. P. 113; *al-Kutbī*. Fawāt. Vol. 1. P. 651; *al-Tilimsānī*. Naḥḥ al-Ṭīb. Vol. 2. P. 550; *Ibn 'Asākir*. Tabyīn. P. 308; *Ibn Qaḍī Shuhba*. Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya. Ed. Al-Ḥāfiz 'Abd al-'Alīm Khān. Beirut: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1407 L.H. Vol. 1. P. 286 (*uṣūl*, *furū'*, and *khalāf*).

⁶⁵ *Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*. Ṭabaqāt al-Fuqahā' al-Shāfi'iyya. Ed. Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Alī Najīb. Beirut: Dar al-Bashā'ir al-Islamiyya, 1992. 1:547; *al-Ṣuyūṭī*. Ṭabaqāt al-Mufasssīrīn. Ed. 'Alī Muḥammad 'Umar. Cairo: Maktaba Wahba, 1976/396. P. 55; *Ibn Qaḍī Shuhba*. Ṭabaqāt 1:286.

⁶⁶ *Ibn Qaḍī Shuhba*. Ṭabaqāt 1:286; *Al-Subkī*. Ṭabaqāt 7:163.

⁶⁷ *Ibn al-Athīr*. al-Kāmil 10:587.

⁶⁸ *Al-Yāfi'ī*. Mir'āt al-Janān 3:113.

end of his program of studies in Nīshāpūr, and, having mastered it, he decides to go on a *hajj* to Mecca.⁶⁹

Abū Naṣr's travels after his departure from Nīshāpūr look as follows.⁷⁰ On his way to Mecca he first traveled to Baghdad, reaching it sometime in 469/1076.⁷¹ Then he continues on to Mecca, where his youngest brother, Abū al-Muẓaffar 'Abd al-Mun'im b. 'Abd al-Karīm al-Qushayrī (445/1053–532/1137), seems to have joined him.⁷² From Mecca he travels back to Baghdad. Thence, he goes on another *hajj* back to Mecca with the noble people that Amīr al-Ḥājj had entrusted to him. For a third time, he makes his trip back to Baghdad. From Baghdad, he is summoned to Isfahan, where Nizām al-Mulk was residing. From Isfahan, he travels to Qazwīn and then finally back to Nīshāpūr.

The fitna of the son of al-Qushayrī

The key events in Abū Naṣr's life were the preaching sessions (*majālis al-wa'z*) that took place during his sojourn in Baghdad. His propagation of Ash'arī doctrines at these gatherings eventually provoked the Ḥanbalīs to revolt against him. Regarding this affair, various superficial speculations have been made, one of these being the view that it was a *fitna*, which suggests a major strife between two parties: (1) the defenders of *tashbīh*, i.e., the Ḥanbalīs and Karrāmīs; and (2) the advocates of *tanzīh*, i.e., the Ash'arīs and the Shāfī'īs.

The Ḥanbalīs, who regarded Baghdad as their home base, viewed the Ash'arīs and the Shāfī'īs as outsiders from Khurāsān.⁷³ Ibn 'Asākir, who is one of the most important defenders of Ash'arism, describes the behavior of the Ḥanbalīs thus: "Ḥanbalīs have the habit of exaggerating on the *sunna*, and they record things that have nothing to do with the *sunna* out of their fear of entering into a *fitna*."⁷⁴ Nizām al-Mulk⁷⁵ seems to have invited Abū Naṣr to preach in Baghdad.⁷⁶ This propagation of Ash'arī thought in such an important place as the Nizāmiyya was a severe blow to the Ḥanbalīs. While the scholars in Baghdad did not believe Abū Naṣr to be sufficiently erudite,⁷⁷ once the general public had

⁶⁹ *Ibn al-Ṣalāh*. Ṭabaqāt 1:547; *Ibn al-Najjār*. Dhayl Ta'rīkh Baghdād 1:91.

⁷⁰ *Al-Yāfi'ī*. Mir'āt al-Janān 3:210; *al-Subkī*. Ṭabaqāt 7:161; *al-Dhahabī*. Siyar 19:425.

⁷¹ *Ibn al-Athīr*. al-Kāmil 10:104; *al-Dhahabī*. Tā'īkh 31:34; *Ibn al-Jawzī*. al-Muntaḍam 9:222 (without mentioning the date).

⁷² *Ibn al-Najjār*. Dhayl Ta'rīkh Baghdād 1:91; *al-Subkī*. Ṭabaqāt 7:193.

⁷³ *Ibn Abī Ya'li*. Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila. Ed. Muḥammad Ḥāmid al-Faqī. N.p., n.d.: Dār al-Ma'rifa. Vol. 2. P. 239; *Ibn al-Jawzī*. Al-Muntaḍam. Vol. 8. P. 305.

⁷⁴ *Ibn 'Asākir*. Tabyīn. P. 163.

⁷⁵ *Ibn al-Jawzī*. Al-Muntaḍam. Vol. 9. P. 221.

⁷⁶ *Ibn al-Jawzī*. Al-Muntaḍam. Vol. 8. P. 305; *Ibn al-Athīr*. Al-Kāmil. Vol. 10. P. 104; *al-Yāfi'ī*. Mir'āt al-Janān. Vol. 3. P. 210; *al-Subkī*. Ṭabaqāt Vol. 7. P. 161; *Ibn Qaḍī Shuhba*. Ṭabaqāt. Vol. 1. P. 286.

⁷⁷ *Al-Yāfi'ī*. Mir'āt al-Janān. Vol. 3. P. 210; *Ibn 'Asākir*. Tabyīn. P. 308; *al-Subkī*. Ṭabaqāt. Vol. 7. P. 161; *Ibn Imād*. Shadharāt. Vol. 3. P. 321.

accepted him, the Ḥanbalīs started to revolt against him out of the fear that they might lose supporters in Baghdad. Among the supporters of Abū Naṣr were two famous individuals. The first was Shaykh al-Shuyūkh Abū Sa’d Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Dūst-Dādā Nīshābūrī (born in 407 or 409 and died in 477 or 479 A.H.), who showed such complete support for him⁷⁸ that Abū Sa’d’s *ribāṭ* in Baghdad came to be attributed to Abū Naṣr.⁷⁹ Abū Sa’d saw the revolt to be in a volatile situation.⁸⁰ The second famous supporter of Abū Naṣr is Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī (d. 476/1083)^{81, 82} who was one of the most important advocates of Abū Naṣr.⁸³ In the end, from the fact that Abū Ja’far al-Hāshimī, a chief Ḥanbalī, died in prison due to his sedition against Abū Naṣr, we can surmise that he was the one who caused the *fitna* in the first place, and this whole affair came to be recorded as “the *fitna* of the son of al-Qushayrī.”⁸⁴

As for the reasons for the Ḥanbalīs’ skirmish with Abū Naṣr in Baghdad, the following observations can be made:

1) Abū Naṣr’s defense of al-Ash’arī: Abū Naṣr showed his clear allegiance to Ash’arism even at all those gatherings.⁸⁵ The *fitna* was also because of the Ash’arī beliefs of Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī and Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī, his two teachers.⁸⁶ The *fitna* among the Ḥanbalīs and the Ash’arīs first broke out in the month of Shawwāl.⁸⁷

2) His defense of Shāfi’ī: a *fitna* also broke out between the Shāfi’īs and the Ḥanbalīs, who denounced Shāfi’ī and his companions.⁸⁸

3) His refutation and denial of *tashbīh*: Abū Naṣr rejected and severely criticized the Ḥanbalī inclination toward *tashbīh*,⁸⁹ as the Ḥanbalīs of Baghdad at the time propagated the view that God has legs and teeth, sits on a donkey in the form of a youth with braided hair, with his reins made of gold,⁹⁰ while his speech

⁷⁸ *Ibn al-Jawzī*. Al-Muntaḍam. Vol. 9. P. 221; *al-Tilimsānī*. Naḥḥ al-Ṭīb. Vol. 2. P. 550.

⁷⁹ *Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*. Ṭabaqāt. Vol. 1. P. 547.

⁸⁰ *Al-Tilimsānī*. Naḥḥ al-Ṭīb. Vol. 2. P. 550.

⁸¹ *Ibn al-Athīr*. Al-Kāmil. Vol. 10. P. 104.

⁸² One day, when Abū Naṣr was sitting near Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī, he noticed that something was in the latter’s mouth. When Abū Naṣr asked, he understood these were two salty tablets that Abū Ishāq was keeping in his mouth for austerity. Cf. *Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*. Ṭabaqāt. Vol. 1. P. 305; *al-Dhahabī*. Ta’rīkh. Vol. 32. P. 155.

⁸³ An eminent Shāfi’ī jurist. For his biography, see *al-Dhahabī*. Siyar. Vol. 17. P. 353; *al-Ṣafaḍī*. Al-Wāfi. Vol. 6. P. 69; *Ibn Kathīr*. Al-Bidāya. Vol. 12. P. 30.

⁸⁴ *al-Dhahabī*. Ta’rīkh. Vol. 31. P. 326.

⁸⁵ *al-Ṣafaḍī*. Al-Wāfi. Vol. 18. P. 200; *al-Yāfi’ī*. Mir’āt al-Janān. Vol. 3. P. 210; *Ibn al-Dimyāṭī*. Al-Mustafād. P. 119; *Ibn al-Jawzī*. Al-Muntaḍam. Vol. 9. P. 222.

⁸⁶ *Al-Yāfi’ī*. Mir’āt al-Janān. Vol. 3. P. 210; *al-Tilimsānī*. Naḥḥ al-Ṭīb. Vol. 2. P. 550.

⁸⁷ *Ibn al-Jawzī*. Al-Muntaḍam. Vol. 8. P. 305.

⁸⁸ *Ibn ‘Asākir*. Tabyīn. P. 309.

⁸⁹ *Al-Subkī*. Ṭabaqāt. Vol. 7. P. 163.

⁹⁰ *Ibn ‘Asākir*. Tabyīn. P. 309.

is like the sound of a thunder or a neighing horse.⁹¹ The doctrinal proximity of the Ḥanbalīs with the Karrāmīs in the *tashbīḥ* of God provided a rare occasion for the two groups to work together in their continued and increasing resistance against Abū Naṣr.

On the basis of what was said above, it is clear that the “the *fitna* of al-Qushayrī” must be called “the *fitna* of the Ḥanbalīs” instead.

On his way back to his hometown Nīshāpūr, Abū Naṣr passed through Qazwīn.⁹² In Nīshāpūr, he devoted himself to teaching and preaching until the end of his life.⁹³ He also interacted with prominent figures there, for some of whom he even led the funeral prayer, including Abū al-‘Abbās al-Ḍurayr al-Rāzī (d. 510/1116)⁹⁴ and Abū Sa’d ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Naqīb al-Ṣūfī (d. 512/1118).⁹⁵ Abū Naṣr continued to teach Hadith until 512/1118, i.e., two years before his death,⁹⁶ at his home.⁹⁷

At the end of his life, Abū Naṣr became unable to speak,⁹⁸ except for the verses of the Qur’an.⁹⁹ On Friday, 22nd of Jumādā II, 514 A.H. (December 24, 1120) in Nīshāpūr, at nearly eighty years of age, Abū Naṣr al-Qushayrī passed away.¹⁰⁰ His younger brother, Abū al-Muẓaffar ‘Abd al-Mun‘im (445–532/1053–1137) led the funeral prayer for him. The grandeur of Abū Naṣr was so vast that even those living in distant lands also mourned for him, as far away as in Baghdad, in the *ribāṭ* of Shaykh al-Shuyūkh Abū Sa’d Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Dūst-Dādā.¹⁰¹ Abū Naṣr’s tomb in Nīshāpūr is located at the family graveyard of the Qushayrīs now known by their family name,¹⁰² and he lies next to the tombs

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.; *al-Subkī*. Ṭabaqāt. Vol. 7. P. 161.

⁹³ *Ibn al-Ṣalāh*. Ṭabaqāt. Vol. 1. P. 504; *al-Ṣafadī*. Al-Wāfī. Vol. 18. P. 200; *al-Yāfi’ī*. Mir’āt. Vol. 3. P. 210; *al-Kutbī*. Fawāt. Vol. 1. P. 651; *al-Tilimsānī*. Naḥḥ al-Ṭīb. Vol. 2. P. 550.

⁹⁴ *Al-Ṣarīfīnī*. Al-Muntakhab. P. 126.

⁹⁵ *Al-Ṣarīfīnī*. Al-Muntakhab. P. 382.

⁹⁶ *Al-Subkī*. Ṭabaqāt. Vol. 1. P. 118.

⁹⁷ *Al-Kutbī*. Fawāt. Vol. 1. P. 651.

⁹⁸ *Al-Yāfi’ī*. Mir’āt. Vol. 3. P. 210; *al-Tilimsānī*. Naḥḥ al-Ṭīb. Vol. 2. P. 550; *al-Dhahabī*. Al-‘Ibar. Vol. 2. P. 403.

⁹⁹ *Al-Tilimsānī*. Naḥḥ al-Ṭīb. Vol. 2. P. 550; *al-Subkī*. Ṭabaqāt. Vol. 7. P. 163.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibn al-Ṣalāh*. Ṭabaqāt. Vol. 1. P. 504; *Ibn al-Jawzī*. Al-Muntaḍam. Vol. 9. P. 221; *Ibn ‘Imād*. Shadharāt. Vol. 3. P. 321; *Ibn Kathīr*. Al-Bidāya. Vol. 12. P. 232. All sources are unanimous on this date.

¹⁰¹ *Ibn al-Athīr*. Al-Kāmil. Vol. 10. P. 587; *Ibn al-Jawzī*. Al-Muntaḍam. Vol. 9. P. 221.

¹⁰² *Al-Fārisī*. Al-Mukhtaṣar min Kitāb al-Siyāq li-Ta’rīkh Nīsābūr. Ed. M.K. Maḥmūdī. Tehran: Nashr-i Mīrath-i Maktūb, 1384/2005. No. 1994: “He was interred in their personal tomb, in Bāb al-‘Azrah, which was well-known by them.” Also see: *al-Yāfi’ī*. Mir’āt. Vol. 3. P. 211; *Ibn ‘Imād*. Shadharāt. Vol. 3. P. 322.

of Abū ‘Alī al-Daqqāq and Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī.¹⁰³ This graveyard is situated in Bāb-i ‘Azra—one of the old parts of Nīshāpūr.¹⁰⁴

His Works

In his works, Abū Naṣr shows great admiration for his father and al-Juwaynī. However, while he has great admiration for al-Juwaynī, as we shall see, he also rejects some of the latter’s views on occasion.¹⁰⁵ Also, Abū Naṣr adds marginal notes on his father’s books, providing additional explanations for his arguments.¹⁰⁶ This is an indication of the independence of Abū Naṣr’s thought from that of his father. Soon after Abū Naṣr’s death came the *fitna* of the Ghaznavids (548/1153).¹⁰⁷ Against such a turbulent period of political and theological disputes in Khurāsān and at the same time in the glorious shadow of his famous father, Abū Naṣr and his renown gradually became effaced or went largely unnoticed, rendering his works almost inaccessible. Below is a list of the works he composed.

1) *Al-Taysīr fī-l-Tafsīr*,¹⁰⁸ also called *al-Majmū‘ fī-l-tafsīr wa-l-ta-wīl*,¹⁰⁹ is undoubtedly a work of Abū Naṣr, not of Abū al-Qāsim, his father.¹¹⁰ This was a commentary on the Qur’an that resembled the typical styles of *uṣūlī* and *kalāmī* commentators more than the allusive Sufī style of his father. This view is further supported by the quotations it contains (see below). We do not have any information about the date or circumstances of the composition of this work, except

¹⁰³ *Muḥammad b. Khalīfa-i Neyshābūrī*. Ta’rīkh-i Nayshābūr. Ed. M.-R. Shaftī Kadkanī. Tehran: Nashr-i Āgāh, 1375/1996. No. 2794. He refers to the tombs of these prominent figures in Nīshāpūr and also mentions their names: Shaykh-i ‘Ālam Abū ‘Alī Daqqāq, Ustād Abu ‘l-Qāsim Qushayrī, Imām Aḥmad-i Maydānī (d. 518/1124), Imām ‘Alī-i Wāhidī (468/1076), Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn ‘Aṭṭār (627?/1230?), Shaykh Maḥmad-i Ṭabasī (sic!), Shaykh Majnūn-i Awliyā’ (sic!), Shaykh Majd al-Dīn Baghdādī (d. 607/1210 or 616/1219).

¹⁰⁴ *Muḥammad b. Khalīfa-i Neyshābūrī*. Ta’rīkh-i Nayshābūr. No. 1071. P. 118; Bāb al-‘Azra is also mentioned elsewhere in this book: No. 961, 976, 1025, 1071, 1124, 1387, 2722, 2780, 2796; *al-Sam‘ānī*. Al-Ansāb. Vol. 1. P. 333; Vol. 2. P. 330; Vol. 3. PP. 176, 373; Vol. 4. P. 187 (al-‘Azrī); *Sarīfīnī*. Al-Muntakhab. P. 53, in which the author refers to al-Suyūrī’s school in Bāb al-‘Azrah; *Ibn al-Athīr*. Al-Lubāb. Vol. 2. P. 338; *al-Suyūrī*. Lubb al-Lubāb fī Taḥrīr al-Ansāb. Beirut: Dār Ṣādir. P. 179. Therefore, “Bāb ‘Arza” cited in Al-Ansāb, Vol. 5. P. 332, should be corrected.

¹⁰⁵ *Al-Zarkashī*. Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh. Ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Tāmir. N.p., 1421/2000. Vol. 3. P. 352.

¹⁰⁶ I will synchronize some of these at the end of the article.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. *Ibn Khallikān*. Wafāyāt. Vol. 4. P. 238; *Ibn al-Athīr*. Al-Kāmil. Vol. 11. PP. 184, 378.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. *Nguyen*. The Confluence and Construction of Traditions. P. 245; *Böwering G.* The Light Verse: Qur’ānic Text and Sūfī Interpretation // *Oriens* 36 (2001). P. 137, note 97.

¹⁰⁹ MS Aḥmed III No. 91 (quoted in *Al-Murshid al-Wajīz*. P. 231).

¹¹⁰ *Nguyen*. Confluence. P. 250–251.

that his daughter's husband, Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar b. Aḥmad al-Ṣaffār (d. 1158/553) dictated this *tafsīr* in Baghdad in 1147/542, playing a role in its publication.¹¹¹

II) A treatise that was used by Abū Sa'd al-Ṣaffār in composing his *Kitāb al-Arba'īn*.

III) A short work, consisting of ten parts, containing Hadiths that he received (*kharrāja*) from his brother Abū al-Muẓaffar 'Abd al-Mun'im, from his forty teachers in Hadith.

IV) *Al-Muwazzaḥ fī-l-Furū'*. A work on *furū'* *al-fiqh* (this work may be identical with the work called *al-Murshid*).¹¹²

V) *Al-Murshid*.¹¹³ The title alludes to one of al-Juwaynī's books, *Kitāb al-irshād ilā qawāṭi' al-adilla fī uṣūl al-i'tiqād*, showing Abū Naṣr's clear sympathy towards al-Juwaynī.

VI) *Al-Maqāmāt wa-l-Ādāb*¹¹⁴ (perhaps another name of *al-Shawāhid wa-l-Amthāl*).

VII) *Al-Shawāhid wa-l-Amthāl*. Some of the passages of this book can also be found in al-Subkī and Ibn 'Asākir, which suggests that this book was available to them. During the next few centuries, there is no mention of this work until the time of Ismā'īl Pāshā al-Baghdādī.¹¹⁵ However, he mistakenly attributes this work to Abū Naṣr 'Abd al-Raḥīm b. Nafīs b. Wabhān al-Sulamī al-Hadīthī (d. 617/1220)¹¹⁶ and stores the manuscript in the Aya Sophia. This misattribution is clearly due to the similarity of their personal names and *kunyas*. *Al-Shawāhid* is a collection of stories and sayings that Abū Naṣr heard from his father. There are also indications of the influence of some earlier literary works.¹¹⁷ As for the Sufī texts written before his time, we know of a book of a slightly similar character, entitled *al-Amthāl wa-l-istishhādāt*, written by Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān Sulamī (d. 412).¹¹⁸ In the introduction to the latter work, Sulamī clearly indicates that he wrote this book in order to record the sayings of the Sufis who, when asked about their states, responded by a line of poetry that belonged to someone else.¹¹⁹ Sulamī's book contains stories and poems, representing a genre of writing that

¹¹¹ *Ibn al-Najjār al-Baghdādī*. Dhayl Ta'rīkh Baghdād. Vol. 5. P. 22; *al-Subkī*. Ṭabaqāt. Vol. 7. P. 242.

¹¹² *Al-Zarkashī*. Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ. Vol. 1. P. 13; Vol. 3. P. 352.

¹¹³ *Ibn Ḥajar al-Haythamī al-Makkī*. Al-Fatāwā al-Ḥadīthīyya. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d. P. 79; *al-Zarkashī*. Al-Burhān. Vol. 2. P. 177; *al-Suyūfī*. Al-Itqān. Vol. 2. P. 489.

¹¹⁴ *Al-Ziriklī*. Al-A'lām. Vol. 3. P. 346.

¹¹⁵ *Ismā'īl Pashā al-Baghdādī*. Īdāḥ al-Maknūn. Vol. 2. P. 59; *idem*. Hadiyyat al-'Ārifīn. Vol. 1. P. 560.

¹¹⁶ *Al-Dhababī*. Siyar. Vol. 22. P. 148; *Ibn al-Dimyāfī*. Al-Mustafād. P. 120; *al-Ḥamawī*. Mu'jam al-Buldān. Vol. 1. P. 149; *al-Ṣafadī*. Al-Wāfī. Vol. 18. P. 241.

¹¹⁷ For actual examples of this, see for instance, *Abū Tammām*. Al-Ḥamāsa, and *al-Tha'ālibī*. Al-Tamthīl wa-l-Muḥāḍara.

¹¹⁸ Published in *Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī*. Sufī Treatises. Eds. G. Böwering and B. Orfālī. Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 2009. P. 87–116.

¹¹⁹ See *Sulamī*. Al-Amthāl wa-l-'Istishhādāt // *Sufī Treatises*. P. 87, paragraph 421.

can be situated between Sufism and belles-lettres such as one could rather title it *al-Istishhād wa-l-Tamaththul*. It is quite likely that Abū Naṣr based his *al-Shawāhid wa-l-Amthāl* on this work by Sulamī.

Al-Shawāhid wa-l-Amthāl lacks chapter divisions. It is not clear whether Abū Naṣr intended to preserve his work in this form, or he was planning to later produce a final version in which the material would be arranged by subjects or divided into chapters. In the unique manuscript of this work we possess, the content has an intricate structure while covering various subjects. There is no apparent logical order in this structure, except that roughly every three to seven paragraphs deal with a single subject, which is mentioned in the opening paragraph of this collection. Such manner of presentation is somewhat reminiscent of the structure of preaching sessions (*majālis al-wa'z*), which is aptly described by the expression, "Speech brings forth another speech" (*al-kalām yajurru al-kalām*).

The tradition of *majālis*, or gatherings, has existed since before the fifth/eleventh century in the everyday culture of people in Khurāsān. No doubt such long tradition has had a great historical and literary impact on the content of *al-Shawāhid*, which for instance contains a line of supplication in an older form of Persian, *Hazār sāl bizī* ("May you live for a thousand years!"),¹²⁰ which were later translated into Arabic as *'Ish alf 'ām* ("Live for a Thousand Years"). Furthermore, *al-Shawāhid* also contains expressions that appear to be in the Khurāsānī dialect of Persian and the dialect of western Persia (Fahlawiyāt).

The significance of *al-Shawāhid wa-l-Amthāl* as a Sufi text is also considerable. Aside from complementing the views presented in Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī's *Risāla* and *Laṭā'if al-Ishārāt*, the substantial content of this work allows it to stand on its own, with materials no less significant than those found in his father's *Risāla* or other major Sufi works, such as Sulamī and Khwāja 'Abd Allāh Anṣārī's *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*, or Hujwīrī's *Kashf al-Mahjūb*. In fact, *al-Shawāhid* possesses unique literary beauty and elegance that mark much of Iranian Sufism. Thanks to Khwāja Anṣārī, we know, for instance, that "Abū al-Qāsim Qushayrī was Abū 'Alī Daqqāq's son in law and disciple, and he used to attend the latter's gatherings and could quote a lot of his sayings."¹²¹ Many of these quotations are extant in *al-Shawāhid* and can therefore be reconstructed. There are also other materials from Abū al-Qāsim's gatherings that have survived in this work, because Abū Naṣr constantly refers to them throughout this book.¹²²

¹²⁰ For example, see *al-Ṭabarī*. Jāmi' al-Bayān. Ed. Khalīl al-Mīṣ. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1415/1994. Vol. 1. P. 603.

¹²¹ *Al-Anṣārī*. Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya. Ed. 'Abd al-Ḥayy Ḥabībī. Tehran: Furūghī, 1380 S.H. (reprint). P.539; *ibid.* Ed. Muḥammad Sarwar Mawlawī. Tehran: Nashr-i Tūs, 1386/2007. P. 543; *Jāmi*. Nafahāt al-Uns. Ed. Maḥmūd 'Ābidī. Tehran: Ittilā'āt, 1370/1991. P. 297 (without the phrase *wa Sukhanan-i way bisyar dāshī*).

¹²² Abū Naṣr mentions this as *wa-su'ila raḍiya Allāh 'anhu*.

Al-Shawāhid can be regarded as a specimen of the genre of *maqāmat-nāma*, as it was developed by al-Daqqāq and Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī. One of the earliest works in this genre found in Khurāsān is the book devoted to Abū Sa'īd Abū al-Khayr and composed by his grandson Jamāl al-Dīn Abū Rūḥ (fl. ca. 537), who recorded Abū Sa'īd's sayings. We may in fact consider this *maqāmat-nāma* devoted to Abū Sa'īd, as well as the *Asrār al-Tawḥīd* (both books were composed by Abū Sa'īd's grandsons), an internal reaction to Abū Naṣr's *al-Shawāhid* from within the Sufi circles in Khurāsān, testifying to a certain sense of rivalry among them.

In fact, a close investigation of the content of the *Asrār al-Tawḥīd* shows that, among the number of anecdotes that are quoted from Abū Sa'īd in the *Asrār al-Tawḥīd*, more than thirty speak about Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī and his obedience to Abū Sa'īd. This clearly shows the presence of a powerful external motive that drove Abū Sa'īd's grandchildren to make up many of these anecdotes about their master to aggrandize his status, while no historical basis can be found for most of these stories. This implicit rivalry may have to do with the contrasting tendencies of the two parties: strongly Khurāsānī tendencies of the family of Abū Sa'īd and Baghdādī characteristics of the Qushayrī family.

Al-Shawāhid also indicates Abū Naṣr's antagonism toward philosophy (in particular, Ibn Sīnā's *al-Shifā'*¹²³), while we notice him avoiding the name of Ḥallāj. Ibn Fūrak, an important Ash'arī thinker, speaks about Abū Naṣr favorably. *Al-Shawāhid* clearly shows the Ash'arī perspective of its author, or rather its compiler, Abū Naṣr, while, in turn, he builds his Sufi ideas on the basis of Ash'arism.

Conclusion

It seems that it was the Qushayrī family's subscription to Ash'arism that increased the acceptability of their books as "orthodox" in the eyes of the Sunni scholars and the broader society. Moreover, Abū al-Qāsim's association with the ruling family of his time undoubtedly helped to publicize and disseminate his work to a much wider degree.

His son, Abū Naṣr, in turn, benefited from his father's prominence as a scholar in his mastery of the esoteric sciences, the classic fields of Islamic learning, including the studies of the Qur'an and Hadīth, and last but not least, Ash'arite theology. The wide learning of Abū Naṣr seems to have allowed him to bring the Sufism of the eastern province closer to the theological discourse of the west (in particular, Baghdad) on a firm basis of the Sharī'a. Likewise, the foregoing investigation also provides enough reasons for us to regard Abū Naṣr al-Qushayrī's

¹²³ *Ibn Taymīyya*. Al-Nubuwwāt. Ed. 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Ṭawayn. Riyadh: Dār Adhwā' al-Salaf, 1420/2000. P. 392; *idem*. Majmū' al-Fatāwā. Ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad. Medina: Majma' al-Mālik Fahd, 1416/1995. P. 253.

al-Shawāhid wa-l-Amthāl as one of the earliest overviews of Ash‘arī thought. Given the Sufi and literary elements in *al-Shawāhid*, we may even conclude that it is a theological-literary-Sufi miscellanea.

It is clear that, with the entrance of logical structure of the theological discourse and the unshakable dogmas based on the “orthodox” stance, the task of presenting Sufi ideas becomes a more orderly matter, as we can see in the type of works the Qushayrī family have produced. However, it is undeniable that this seems to be exactly where that agitation, intoxication, and excitement which have enlivened much of Sufism—something that we see in Ḥallāj, Bāyazīd, Abū Sa‘īd, Kharaqānī, among others—start to falter.

Appendix

Below I present a few selected passages from Abū Naṣr’s *al-Shawāhid wa-l-Amthāl* (the Arabic text and its English translation).

1) [The content and purpose of the book]

قال الإمام أبو نصر عبد الرحيم: "وقد ظهر لي أن أكتب بعض ما سمعته من الإمام الشهيد والذي رضى الله عنه مع ما قيد به كلامه من «الشواهد والأمثال» فقد كان لسان الصدق وترجمان الحق، على أنه كان البحر الذي لا ينزف والحبر الذي لا يندرك غوره ولا يعرف مكانه).
 إِنِّي لِأُنْكِرُهُمْ وَأُنْكِرُ وَصْفَهُمْ..... فَأُظِلُّ فِي بَحْرِ الْحَقَائِقِ أُغْرَقُ
 وأنا أستعين الله على تسهيل ما قصدت وتيسير ما أردت".

Master Abū Naṣr ‘Abd al-Raḥīm said: It occurred to me to write down some of what I have heard from the Grand Master (*al-Imām al-Shahīd*¹²⁴), my father (may God be pleased with him), since his speeches were full of (poetic) examples (*shawāhid*) and parables (*amthāl*). He was a tongue of truthfulness and interpreter of truth, though it is an inexhaustible and unfathomable ocean [whose place] is unknown.

*Indeed, I remember them, and when I remember their characteristics
 I keep drowning in the ocean of realities.*

I ask God for help in facilitating what I intend and wish to do.

2) [On divine preordination and forgiveness]

وقال: «لولا ما سبق من الحكم، لتلاشا ذنوب الأولين والآخرين في أقل جزء من بساط المغفرة».

He said: Were it not for [divine] preordination, the sins of people from the beginning of times until the end of times would vanish in the smallest part of the carpet of forgiveness.

¹²⁴ In this context, *al-shahīd* (or *al-shāhid*) should not be translated as “martyr,” or “witness,” or “evidence,” as its usual connotation in the historical works is “a man with great generosity and honor, high in ranking among the scholars of his society.”

3) [On the vision of God]

وسأل رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم جبريل عليه السلام فقال: هل ترون ربكم؟ فقال: لا بيننا وبينه كذا وكذا حجابا لو دوننا من واحدٍ منها احترقنا وانما هذا الوعد لكم. إذ قيل «وَجُودَةٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَاضِرَةٌ إِلَى رَبِّهَا نَاطِرَةٌ» (22:75).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) asked Gabriel (peace be upon him!): “Do you see your Lord?” He replied: “No. Between Him and us there is no such-and-such a veil. If we approach one of these [veils], we will be burnt. This is in fact a good news (*lit. promise*) to you.” For it was said, *On that day, faces shall be beaming, gazing at their Lord* (Q. 22:75).

4) [On sin and forgiveness]

وقد قال بعض الانبياء عليهم السلام في مناجاته لو عفوت عن آدم ذنوبه بعد عظيم نعمك عليه فاوحى إليه. ليس الذنوب في القرب كالذنوب في البعد.

One of the prophets (peace be upon them) said in his supplication: “If You forgave Adam of his sins after [bestowing] such great blessings upon him and revealed [Yourself] to him, a sin in nearness [to You] cannot be the same as a sin in distance.”

5) [On slander, sin, and repentance]

وقال: لو قال لمغتابه ابرأتك لا يتم الأمر ولا بضمير القلب وهذا معنى قول ابن سيرين لرجل قال له اغتبتك فاعفُ عني، فقال: قد حرّم الله الغيبة فلا سبيل إلى تحليلها. فلا شك أنّ هذا الذي ظلم غيره جنى على حق العبد وحق الرب فالخصم أن ترك حق نفسه فحق الله باق فلا بدّ من التوبة.

He said: If he said to his slanderer, “I have exonerated you,” the matter has not been settled yet and [certainly] not by the conscience of [his] heart. This is the meaning of Ibn Sīrīn’s words to a man: “I have slandered you, so pardon me.” Then he replied: “God has forbidden slander, so there is no way to excuse that.” So, there is no doubt that the man who has wronged another has committed a sin against the right of the worshipper as well as against the right of God. Hence, [to be] an adversary is to abandon his own right. Yet, since the right of God remains, there is no escape from repentance.

6)¹²⁵

وسمعه رضي الله عنه يقول: تعلقت قلوب أقوام بالسابقة إذا لايجرى إلا ما علم واراد واخبر به في ازالة وإلى هذا اشار بقوله: هولاء في الجنة ولا أبالي وهولاء في النار ولا أبالي. وتعلقت قلوب اقوام بالخاتمة بيم يختم وهاهنا فرقه ثالثة لاينفرغون لذكر السابقه والعاقبة لاستيلاء ذكر الله عليهم.

I heard him (may God be pleased with him) say: “The hearts of some people are concerned with the past (*sābiqa*), since nothing happens except what [God] has known, desired, or informed about in eternity-without-beginning.” [God] has alluded to this in the following words: “These are in paradise, and I do not care; these are in hell, and I do not care.” The hearts of some other are concerned with the end—with how it will end. But there is the

¹²⁵ Cf. *al-Qushayrī. Laṭā’if al-Ishārāt*. Vol. 2. P. 614.

third group that never ponders on what has come and what will come, due to their being overpowered by the remembrance of God.

7) [On the transcendence of God (*tanzīh*)]

هؤلاء اليهود اخلوا بحق عيسى فكفروا، هؤلاء النصارى بالغوا في الاجلال فكفروا فترك ذلك الاجلال قيام بحق الخدمة وترك مجاوزة الحد في الاجلال وتنزيه الرب جلّ وعزّ عن أن تكون له ولد لانه الواحد الاحد قياّم بحق الحرمة.

The Jews violated the right of Jesus, therefore they became unbelievers. The Christians engaged in [excessive] veneration, therefore they became unbelievers. To abandon that [excessive] veneration is to serve [God] properly. To stop transgressing the limits in veneration and to purify the Lord (majestic and mighty is He!) from ascribing to Him children, because He is the Single and the One, is to observe the right of [His] sanctity (*hurma*).

8) [On divine benevolence (*lutf*)]

ولطف الله بالغريب واسترجاعه له اضعافاً ما يتصوره في حق المخلوقين فألطفه نقول قد تطوّحت في كلّ متطوح وطرّحت نفسك كلّ مطرح وجربت الخير والشّر وقاسيت البرد والحر وعرفت فترك عند الخلق. فقد حان أن تتبرّم بهم وترجع إلينا فليس لك قابلٌ مثلنا.

God's benevolence with the stranger and His making him return to Him are many times greater than what is conceivable regarding the creatures. His benevolence says: "You have strayed in every place possible, and you have thrown yourself in every place possible. You have tried out the good and the bad, and you have compared the cold and the hot. You have known your power among people. So the time has come for you to become vexed with people and to return to us, for you have no one who will accept you like Us..."

9) [On obedience and good manners (*adab*)]

وسمعه يقول: كان الأستاذ أبو عليّ يقول: العبد يصل بالطاعة إلى الجنة وبالادب في الطاعة إلى الله ومن ذلك الأدب أن تعلم في اثنا تلك الطاعة أنك بفضلته وصلت إلى تلك الطاعة لا بفعلك ومن ترك الأدب أن يتوهم أنه يمكن الوصول إليه اذ ليس صيد الطلب ولا بذلة الوهم.

I heard him say: Teacher Abū 'Alī said: "The servant attains paradise through obedience, and he attains God through good manners (*adab*) in obedience." An [example] of such good manners is that you know during that [state of] obedience that you have attained that obedience through His grace, not through your action. An example of the abandonment of good manners consists in imagining that one can attain God, since there can be no hunting by seeking or by base imagination.

10) [It is God who cures]

وقال داود عليه السلام: «الهي أنتيت أطباء عبادك ليذاووني فكلمهم ثم عليك دلوني».

David (peace be upon him!) said: "My God, I came to the physicians of Your worshippers so that they may treat me. But then all of them pointed me to You!"

11) [On God's speech and human hearing]

وسئل رضى الله عنه: كلام الحق مع موسى أكثر، أم مع محمد — صَلَّواتُ الله عَلَيْهِم أَجْمَعِينَ؟ فقال كلام الله قديم وهو واحد. فلا يقال فيه أكثر وأقل. وإنما أسمع موسى ذلك الكلام القديم في وقت مخصوص وكذا محمد/ صلى الله عليهم اجمعين وذلك الخطاب موجود الان إنما عدمننا الاسماع.

He was asked (may God be pleased with him): “Did God speak more with Moses or with Muhammad (peace be upon them all!)?” He replied: “God’s speech is eternal and one, so it cannot be said to be ‘more’ or ‘less’. Rather, He made Moses hear that eternal speech in a particular moment, and He did the same to Muhammad (peace be upon them all). That [divine] address still continues to exist now except that we are not able to hear it.”

12) [On witnessing]

انا لم نحضر تلك المشاهد لايوم الميقات ولا ليلة المعراج وإنما يعلم هذا بورود الخبر.

We were not present in those places of witnessing (*mashāhid*) either on the day of meeting or on the night of ascension. Rather this is known through the report.

13) [On the vision of God]

وسئل رضى الله عنه *«عن الرؤية في حال الحساب»*، فقال: *«الرؤية موعودة في الجنة وقبل دخولها. فالأمر موكول إلى المشيئة، ولكن سترى في ذلك الوقت من أهوال الحساب ما لا يفرغ معه إلى هذا.»*

He was asked (may God be pleased with him!) about vision during the Reckoning (*hisāb*). He said: “The vision is promised in paradise and before entering it, and this matter is entrusted to the [divine] will. However, you will see at that time some of the terrors of the Reckoning, and you will not be able to pay attention to it, while you will be overwhelmed with them.”

14) [Unbelievers and the hearing of God's speech]

وسئل رضى الله عنه *«هل يسمع الكافر كلامه في وقت الحساب؟»*، فقال: *«خطاب الحق يتعلق بكل مكلف. فالكفار مخاطبون بنفاصيل الشرع لقوله تعالى «قَالُوا لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّينَ» (74:43) بشرط تقديم الإيمان. وقد قال «أَفَنَضْرِبُ عَنْكُمْ الذِّكْرَ صَفْحًا أَنْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا مُسْرِفِينَ» (43:5) وحيث قال «لَا يَكْلِمُهُمْ» يريد: لا يسمعهم ما يؤنسهم.*

He was asked (may God be pleased with him): “Does the unbeliever hear His speech at the time of Reckoning?” He replied: “God’s address pertains to everyone who is obliged [to observe the Revealed Law]. Hence, the unbelievers are addressed in accordance with the details of the Revealed Law—*They would say: ‘We were not among those who prayed’* (Q. 74:43)—on the condition of the precedence (*taqdim*) of faith, since [God] said: *Shall We turn away the remembrance from you, for you were a prodigal people?* (Q. 43:5), and because He said, *It does not speak to them* (Q. 7:148), He wanted to say: they do not hear [in it anything] that would appeal to them.”

15) [Possibility of the vision of God]

وقال: «سئل الأستاذ *أبوسهل* عن دليل جواز الرؤية، فقال: دليل جوازها تمنى المسلمون أن يروه». فقال السائل: «ومن الذي يتمنى ذلك؟» فقال: «كل مسلم عارف؛ فأما من كان جاحداً مثلك فلا».

He said: Teacher Abū Sahl was asked about a proof for the possibility of vision, and he replied: “The proof for the possibility is the Muslims’ wish to see Him.” Then the questioner said: “Who wishes for that?” He replied: “Every Muslim who knows (*ārif*). As for those who want to deny that—like yourself—this will not be the case.”

17) [On sin]

وكان في دعاء بعض الاكابر: «أعوذُ بك من ان ازنى ومن ان اعصى». فقيل: «ما هذا الدعا بعد كبر السن وذهاب القوة؟» فكانوا يقولون مادام التكاليف باقيا فلا امن.

It was in the supplication of one of the great figures: “I take refuge in you from committing adultery and disobedience.” Then it was asked: “What is this supplication after you have grown so old and lost the capacity?” [He answered:] “They were saying that as long as there remains the [religious] obligation, there is no safety.”

18) [Vision of God]

وسئل رضى الله عنه «هل يتساوي الناسُ غدا في الرؤية؟»، فقال: «لا يدرك هذا بالفعل وليس فيه نقل مقطوع به وأحوال اهل الجنة مختلفة»؛ وفي الخبر: «انكم لترون اهل عليين كما ترون الكوكب الدرى في افق السماء»... وقد قيل: «رؤية الأَبصار غدا، على حسب رؤية الأسرار اليوم».

He was asked (may God be pleased with him): Will people be equal in [their capacity for] visions in the future? He replied: This is actually not known, nor is there any definitive report about it. The states of the people of paradise differ [from one another]. It has been reported: “Indeed, you will see the people of the highest heaven just as you would see shining stars on the horizon of the heaven.” ... It has been said: “The vision of the eyes tomorrow will occur in proportion with the vision of the secrets today.”

19) [Anthropomorphism]

وقد قال الحكماء الخارجون عن الملة: «سببُ تَوَرُّانِ الأَفلاكِ، عَشَقُ الباري»؛ فهذا قول الكفار والمسلم يحتشم من إطلاق أمثاله فكان العلم بوجود صانعٍ ضروريٍّ والشأن في التعبير.

The sages from outside [our] religious community have said: The cause of the turning of the spheres is the passionate love of the creator.¹²⁶ This is a saying of the unbelievers. Muslims are ashamed of attributing suchlike affairs [to God]. The knowledge of the creating existence is unavoidable, while dignity is in the expression.

¹²⁶ Cf. *Aristotle*. *Metaphysics*. Trans. Hugh Tredennick. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989. Book 12, 1072b.

20) [Addressing the commoners]

قال: «ولا ينبغي أن يخاطب العوام بهذا الكلام».

He said: It is not necessary to address the commoners with this speech.

21) [On traveling along the path]

وقال: «الطَّرِيق سلوك طريق البرهان ثم التَّرْقِي منه إلى البيان ثم التَّحَقُّق حتى يصير الأمر كالعيان».

He said: The path is [first] to travel along the path of demonstration (*burhān*), then to advance from it to clear explanation (*bayān*), then to realization (*tahaqquq*), until the affair becomes [evident] as if seen with one's own eyes.

22) [Obedience and disobedience]

وقد قال الأكابر: «من كان قصده الخير فوقع بغيره في معصية لم تكن في حساب ولم يكن صمّم فيها، فهو من آثار الشقاوة. وعلى الضدّ منه إن من وقع في طاعة لم يكن صمّم عزمه عليها وألزم قصده إليها، فهو من علامات السعادة. ومن علامات السعادة قبول قلوب أوليائه لشخص».

The great ones have said: "If someone whose intention is goodness falls into disobedience suddenly against his will and intention, this is one of the effects of disaster. In turn, if someone shows obedience against his will and intention, this is a sign of bliss. Among the signs of bliss is the acceptance of the hearts of [God's] friends (*awliyā'ihī*) for someone."

23) [Divine contentment]

وعلى الجملة ما يصل العبد إليه بجهده فهو فعل من افعال الحق ولطف من الطّافه، وقد قال موسى (ع) في مناجاته: «كيف اصل إلى رضاك؟» فقال: «رضاي عنك في رضاك بقضاي».

In sum, what the worshipper attains through his effort is one of the acts of God and an instance of His benevolence. Moses asked in his supplication: "How can I attain Your contentment?" [God] replied: "My contentment with you is in your contentment with My decree."

24) [On the vision of God]

وتكلم العلماء في جواز رؤية الحق اليوم على طريق الكرامة للأولياء وجوزة المحققون... وقالت رابعة العدوية: «أحرق الله قلوب نفاة الرؤية».

The scholars speak about the possibility of the vision of God today¹²⁷ through the miracles granted to the saints. The realizers (*muḥaqqiqūn*) have admitted this possibility... Rābi'a al-'Adawiyya said: "May God burn the hearts of those who deny vision."

¹²⁷ Ibn Khafif believed the vision of God in this world to be impossible; cf. Al-Mu'taqad. P. 303.