

**Sufism in Late Mamlūk Cairo: The Mystical Teachings of Ibn Mughayzil (fl.  
895/1490)**

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared

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## Abstract

Sufism in Late Mamlūk Cairo: The Mystical Teachings of Ibn Mughayzil (fl. 895/1490)

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This dissertation is a study of the Egyptian Sufi Ibn Mughayzil in four chapters. Chapter 1 investigates his life, activity, and teachers, in addition to his place within the Egyptian Shādhiliyya. I show that his discipleship of Muḥammad al-Maghribī, a prominent Shādhilī master, and his studies under such notable scholars as Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī and Shams al-Dīn al-Sakhāwī linked him to the Sufi and scholarly elite of Cairo and created the opportunity for him to pursue the eighth deputyship of one of the two main lines of the Egyptian Shādhiliyya. Although it does not appear that he was ever recognized as that deputy, his legacy was ensured by his two known writings: *al-Kawākib al-zāhira fī ijtimā' al-awliyā' yaqḏatan bi-Sayyid al-Dunyā wa-l-Ākhira*, a comprehensive treatment of Sufi topics; and *al-Qawl al-'alī fī tarāduf al-mu'jiza bi-karāmat al-walī*, a brief treatise mainly on saints' miracles. I examine these works in Chapter 2, illustrating their pertinence to late Mamlūk Sufism through their focus on such themes as the relationship between Law (*sharī'a*) and Reality (*ḥaqīqa*), the saints' miracles, and Sufi epistemology. I reveal Ibn Mughayzil to be a strong defender of the Sufis and a devout Shādhilī, while distinguishing his text from two contemporary Shādhilī manuals by al-Suyūṭī and Aḥmad Zarrūq. Chapter 3 offers a close study of the author's treatment of select issues concerning God and His relation to the world, including His oneness and manifestations, the eternality and creation of the world, the Muḥammadan Spirit (*al-rūḥ al-muḥammadiyya*), the vision of God in this world and the next, and religious diversity. I introduce Ibn Mughayzil as a synthetic and creative thinker, engaging a rich body of literature to develop his positions. I suggest, nevertheless, that his determination to defend the orthodoxy of certain Sufi doctrines engenders his tolerance of diverse views and, in some cases, ambiguity in his own stances. Chapter 4 explores the key topic of the *Kawākib*, the waking vision of Prophet Muḥammad after his death. Beginning with a brief history of the phenomenon up until Ibn Mughayzil's time, I show that it had grown increasingly common—especially among the Shādhiliyya—and became the object of a heated debate in ninth/fifteenth-century Cairo. I argue that Ibn Mughayzil makes a crucial intervention by theorizing the waking vision in a way that honours traditional distinctions and views, thus appealing to scholars who had been skeptical about the possibility and orthodoxy of the vision. I also demonstrate that Ibn Mughayzil's attention to the waking vision anticipates its increased significance in later centuries in ritual and as a source of spiritual authority. In the conclusion, I contend that study of a late Mamlūk Sufi text like the *Kawākib* can help us appreciate scholarship of the period and challenge the notion of a literary decline.

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Table 2. The Ḥabashī Line of the Egyptian Shādhiliyya



## List of Abbreviations

*Kawākib* = *al-Kawākib al-zāhira fī ijtīmā‘ al-awliyā’ yaqzatan bi-Sayyid al-Dunyā wa-l-Ākhira*, by Ibn Mughayzil, 1999 edition<sup>1</sup>

*EP* = Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition

*EP*<sup>3</sup> = Encyclopaedia of Islam, Third Edition

*GAL* = *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, by Carl Brockelmann

*HAWT* = *History of the Arabic Written Tradition*, by Carl Brockelmann<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Another edition is occasionally cited, which is indicated by the inclusion of the publication date. For example: *Kawākib* (2011).

<sup>2</sup> An “S” before the volume number of *GAL* or *HAL* denotes the supplement. For example, “*GAL* S2:100” refers to page 100 of the supplement of volume 2 of *GAL*.

## Introduction

This study concerns the life and thought of Ibn Mughayzil (fl. 895/1490), a Shādhilī Sufi of late Mamlūk Cairo. Ibn Mughayzil was a close disciple of Muḥammad al-Maghribī (d. 911/1505-6), an illustrious Shādhilī shaykh who guided and inspired a number of important figures, such as Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūfī (d. 911/1505; also, for a time, a close teacher of Ibn Mughayzil) and ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha‘rānī (d. 973/1565). He was also a resident at a famous *khānqāh* called Sa‘īd al-Su‘adā’ and authored two works: *al-Kawākib al-zāhira*, a comprehensive treatment of Sufi topics, and *al-Qawl al-‘alī*, a concise treatise primarily on the saints’ miracles.

The contribution of this study pertains to three areas of scholarship: Ibn Mughayzil himself, the Egyptian Shādhiliyya, and the waking vision of the Prophet Muḥammad, one of the key topics of the *Kawākib*. Western scholars have almost entirely neglected Ibn Mughayzil. In 1853, Daniel Bonifacius von Haneberg published an article on al-Shādhilī’s (656/1258) life based on the *Kawākib*.<sup>3</sup> However, he mentioned little about the author himself and nothing about his own approach to Sufism or ideas. Denis Gril’s passing remark in his 1994 survey of Sufi texts at the Egyptian National Library that Ibn Mughayzil “perfectly mastered all the literature of *taṣawwuf* of the Ayyubid and Mamluk period,” and thus that “this text deserves a study,”<sup>4</sup> is the only assessment of the Sufi to date. This gap in research reflects Carl Ernst’s observation in 1996 that “the Sufi tradition is so immense that we are still only familiar with a fraction of the major figures. Only a small portion of Sufi texts in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and other languages have

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<sup>3</sup> Daniel Bonifacius von Haneberg, “Ali Abulhasan Schadeli. Zur Geschichte der nordafrikanischen Fatimiden und Sufis,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 7 (1853): 13-27.

<sup>4</sup> Denis Gril, “Sources manuscrites de l’histoire du soufisme à Dār al-Kutub: un premier bilan,” *Annales Islamologiques* 28 (1994): 143 (no. 62).

ever been printed, let alone critically edited, or translated and discussed in any European language.”<sup>5</sup> It also reflects the tendency of scholars to concentrate on early Shādhilī. After a lull of nearly a century following the publication of von Haneberg’s article, scholars resumed study of the order, focusing especially on al-Shādhilī. Works include a summary of al-Shādhilī’s life, thought, and practices based on Ibn al-Ṣabbāgh’s (d. 724 or 733/1324 or 1333) biography; an investigation into the origins and early development of the Shādhiliyya; translations of al-Shādhilī’s famous “Sea Prayer” (*ḥizb al-baḥr*) and Ibn al-Ṣabbāgh’s biography of the order’s founder; an outline of a lesser-known (and unpublished) biography by ‘Abd al-Nūr al-‘Imrānī (b. 685/1286); and a study of al-Shādhilī’s “Circle Prayer” (*ḥizb al-dā’ira*) that draws connections to Jewish traditions about Moses’ battle with the angel of death.<sup>6</sup> D.M. Dunlop’s (1945) translation of a biographical entry on Abū l-‘Abbās al-Mursī (d. 686/1287) is the only work on al-Shādhilī’s successor.<sup>7</sup> In contrast, al-Mursī’s own successor, Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh (d. 709/1309), has received considerable attention. In addition to many English, French, and German translations of his works or portions thereof,<sup>8</sup> scholars have studied various topics in his writings, including God as

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<sup>5</sup> Carl Ernst, *Rūzbihān Baqlī: Mysticism and the Rhetoric of Sainthood in Persian Sufism* (London: Curzon, 1996), ix.

<sup>6</sup> Elmer H. Douglas, “Al-Shādhilī, a North African Sufi, according to Ibn al-Ṣabbāgh,” *Muslim World* 38 (1948): 257-79; A.M. Mohamed Mackeen, “The Rise of al-Shādhilī (d. 656/1258),” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 91, no. 4 (Oct.-Dec., 1971): 477-86; Ron Barkai, “A Seafarer’s Prayer,” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 1, no. 1 (1986): 117-20; Ibn al-Ṣabbāgh, *The Mystical Teachings of al-Shadhili: Including His Life, Prayers, Letters, and Followers; A Translation from the Arabic of Ibn al-Sabbagh’s Durrat al-Asrar wa Tuhfat al-Abraz* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993); Kenneth Honerkamp, “A Biography of Abū l-Hasan al-Shādhilī dating from the fourteenth century,” in *Un voie soufie dans le monde: la Shādhiliyya*, ed. Éric Geoffroy (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 2005), 73-87; Dóra Zsom, “Defying death by magic. The circle of al-Shādhilī (*dā’irat al-Shādhilī*),” in *Les mystiques juives, chrétiennes et musulmanes dans l’Égypte médiévale (VIIe-XVIIe siècles): interculturalités et contextes historiques*, ed. Giuseppe Cecere, Mireille Loubet, and Samuela Pagani (Cairo: Institut français d’archéologie orientale, 2013), 275-302.

<sup>7</sup> D.M. Dunlop, “A Spanish Muslim saint: Abū l-‘Abbās al-Mursī,” *Moslem World* 35 (1945): 181-96.

<sup>8</sup> Paul Nwyia, *Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh (m. 709/1309) et la naissance de la confrérie sādilite* (Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 1972); Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, *Ibn ‘Aṭā’ illāh’s Sufi Aphorisms (Kitāb al-Ḥikam)*, tr. Victor Danner (Leiden: Brill, 1973); Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, *Traité sur le nom Allāh*, tr. Maurice Gloton (Paris: Les Deux Océans, 1981); Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, *Bedrängnisse sind Teppiche voller Gnaden*, tr. Annemarie Schimmel (Freiburg: Herder, 1987); Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, *The Key to Salvation & the Lamp of Souls. Miṭāḥ al-Falāḥ al-Miṣbāḥ al-Arwāḥ*, tr. Mary Ann Koury Danner (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1996); Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, *La sagesse des maîtres soufis. Latā’if al-minan fī manāqib al-shaykh Abī l-‘Abbās al-Mursī wa shaykhi-hi al-Shādhilī Abī l-Hasan*, tr. Éric Geoffroy (Paris: Grasset, 1998); Ibn ‘Aṭā’

manifest and hidden, *dhikr* and seclusion (*khalwa*), hagiography and hagiology, interreligious interactions, physiological aspects of morality and spirituality, reason and unveiling (*kashf*), and Sufi masculinity.<sup>9</sup> Other articles examine Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh’s social roles and his oral teachings according to his disciple Rāfi‘ b. Shāfi‘ī (fl. seventh/thirteenth century).<sup>10</sup> For the most part, only a single work has been devoted to each subsequent medieval Egyptian Shādhilī leader. This material includes an analysis of Yāqūt al-Ḥabashī’s (d. 707/1307) biography and representation in Mamlūk and Ottoman sources, a study of Ibn Bākhilā’s (d. 733/1332) concept of sainthood, an examination of Muḥammad al-Ḥanafī’s (d. 847/1443) life with a focus on his extraordinary social significance, and a translation of Abū l-Mawāhib al-Tūnisī’s (d. 882/1477) *Qawānīn Ḥikam al-Ishrāq*.<sup>11</sup> The exception to this dearth of scholarship on late-medieval Egyptian

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Allāh, *The Book of Illumination. Kitāb al-Tanwīr fī Isqāṭ al-Tadbīr*, tr. Scott A. Kugle (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2005); Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, *The Subtle Blessings in the Saintly Lives of Abu al-Abbas al-Mursi & His Master Abu al-Hasan: Kitāb Lata’if al-Minan fī Manaqib Abi ‘l-Abbas al-Mursi wa Shaykhihi Abi ‘l-Hasan*, tr. Nancy Roberts (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2005); Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, *Sufism for Non-Sufis? Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh al-Sakandarī’s Tāj al-‘arūs*, tr. Sherman A. Jackson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, *The Pure Intention: On Knowledge of the Unique Name. Al-Qaṣd al-Mujarrad fī Ma’rifat al-Ism al-Mufrad*, tr. Khalid Williams (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2018).

<sup>9</sup> Ernst Bannerth, “Er ist der Aufscheinende und der Verborgene. Erläuterungen einiger Sentenzen des Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh,” *Kairos* 8 (1966): 210–17; Ernst Bannerth, “*Dhikr* et *Khalwa* d’après Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh,” *Institut Dominicain d’Études Orientales du Caire: Mélanges* 12 (1974): 65–90; Éric Geoffroy, “Entre hagiographie et hagiologie: Les *Latā’if al-minan* d’Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh (m. 709/1309),” *Annales Islamologiques/Hawliyyāt Islāmiyya* 32 (1998): 49–66; Giuseppe Cecere, “Se faire nourrir par les mécréants? Soufisme et contact interreligieux dans les *Latā’if al-Minan* d’Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh al-Iskandarī,” in *Les mystiques juives, chrétiennes et musulmanes dans l’Égypte médiévale (VIIe-XVIe siècles): interculturalités et contextes historiques*, ed. Giuseppe Cecere, Mireille Loubet, and Samuela Pagani (Cairo: Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale du Caire, 2013), 189–207; Giuseppe Cecere, “Santé et sainteté: dimensions physiologiques de la vie morale et spirituelle chez Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh al-Iskandarī (m. 709-1309),” *Annales islamologiques/Hawliyyāt Islāmiyya* 48, no. 1 (2014): 203–36; Giuseppe Cecere, “Raison et ‘dévoilement’. Notes sur l’épistémologie soufie d’Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh al-Iskandarī (m. 709/1309),” *Rivista di Studi Indo-Mediterranei* 7 (2017): 1–22; Rose Deighton, “Performing Sufi Masculinity by Transcending Embodiment in Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh’s *Kitāb al-Ḥikam*,” *Journal of Islamic Ethics* 4, no. 1–2 (2020): 98–127.

<sup>10</sup> Denis Gril, “L’enseignement d’Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh al-Iskandarī, d’après le témoignage de son disciple Rāfi‘ Ibn Shāfi‘,” in *Un voie soufie dans le monde: la Shādhiliyya*, ed. Éric Geoffroy (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 2005), 93–106; Giuseppe Cecere, “Le charme discret de la Shādhiliyya ou l’insertion sociale d’Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh al-Iskandarī,” in *Les mystiques juives, chrétiennes et musulmanes dans l’Égypte médiévale (VIIe-XVIe siècles): interculturalités et contextes historiques*, ed. Giuseppe Cecere, Mireille Loubet, and Samuela Pagani (Cairo: Institut français d’archéologie orientale, 2013), 63–93.

<sup>11</sup> Giuseppe Cecere, “From Ethiopian Slave to Egyptian Sūfī Master? Yāqūt al-Ḥabashī in Mamluk and Ottoman Sources,” *Northeast African Studies* 19, no. 1 (2019): 85–138; Richard McGregor, “The Concept of Sainthood according to Ibn Bākhilā, a Šāḍilī shaykh of the 8th/14th century,” in *Le saint et son milieu ou comment lire les sources hagiographiques*, ed. Rachida Chih and Denis Gril (Cairo: Institut français d’archéologie orientale, 2000), 33–49; Abū l-Mawāhib al-Tūnisī, *Illumination in Islamic Mysticism: A Translation, with an Introduction and Notes*,

Shādhilīs is the substantial work on Muḥammad Wafā (d. 765/1363) and ‘Alī Wafā (d. 807/1405), primarily by Richard McGregor with his monograph on their conceptions of sainthood as well as numerous articles on aspects of this topic and other ideas.<sup>12</sup>

Fritz Meier has made the most substantial contribution to the study of the waking vision of the Prophet. The first of his three articles on or connected with the subject examines the notion of the Prophet’s life after his earthly death, which is a precondition for the waking vision. While Meier devotes almost the first half to discussing this notion itself and related ideas—primarily in the classical period—in the remainder of the article he draws mainly from al-Suyūṭī’s fatwa/treatise on the possibility of the vision, treating such issues as the forms in which the Prophet is seen.<sup>13</sup> The second article concentrates strictly on different aspects of seeing the

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*based upon a Critical Edition of Abu-al-Mawāhib al-Shadhili’s Treatise Entitled Qawānīn Hikam al-Ishrāq*, tr. Edward Jabra Jurji (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1938); Adam Sabra, “From Artisan to Courtier: Sufism and Social Mobility in Fifteenth-Century Egypt,” in *Histories of the Middle East: Studies in Middle Eastern Society, Economy and Law in Honour of A.L. Udovitch*, ed. Roxani Eleni Margariti, Adam Sabra, and Petra M. Sijpesteijn (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 213-32.

<sup>12</sup> Richard McGregor, “From Virtue to apocalypse: the understanding of sainthood in a medieval Sufi order,” *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 30, no. 2 (2001): 167-78; Richard McGregor, “New Sources for the Study of Sufism in Mamluk Egypt,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 65, no. 2 (2002): 300-22; Richard McGregor, “Being and Knowing according to an 8th/14th Century Cairene Mystic,” *Annales islamologiques/Hawliyyāt Islāmiyya* 36 (2002): 177–96; Richard McGregor, “The Existential Dimension of the Spiritual Guide in the Thought of ‘Alī Wafā’ (d. 807/1404),” *Annales islamologiques/Hawliyyāt Islāmiyya* 37 (2003): 315-27; Richard McGregor, “A Medieval Saint on Sainthood,” *Studia Islamica* 95 (2004): 95-108; Richard J. McGregor, *Sanctity and Mysticism in Medieval Egypt: The Wafā’ Sufi Order and the Legacy of Ibn ‘Arabī* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2004); Richard McGregor, “Akbarian Thought in a Branch of the Egyptian Shadhiliyya,” in *Un voie soufie dans le monde: la Shādhiliyya*, ed. Éric Geoffroy (Paris : Maisonneuve & Larose, 2005), 73-87; Richard McGregor, “Conceptions of the Ultimate Saint in Mamluk Egypt,” in *Le développement du soufisme en Égypte à l’époque mamelouke/The Development of Sufism in Mamluk Egypt*, ed. Richard McGregor and Adam Sabra (Cairo: Institut français d’archéologie orientale, 2006), 177-88; Richard McGregor, “A Fourteenth-Century Inheritance of Ibn ‘Arabī’s Hermeneutics: the Nafā’is al-‘Irfan of Muhammad Wafā’,” in *Symbolisme et herméneutique dans la pensée d’Ibn ‘Arabī*, ed. Bakri Aladdin (Damascus: Institut français du Proche-Orient, 2007), 163-74; Richard McGregor, “The Wafā’iyya of Cairo,” in *Tales of God’s Friends: Islamic Hagiography in Translation*, ed. John Renard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 63-75. See also Éric Geoffroy, “L’élection divine de Muḥammad et ‘Alī Wafā (VIII<sup>e</sup>/XIV<sup>e</sup> s.) ou comment la branche wafā’ī s’est détachée de l’arbre *shādhilī*,” in *Le saint et son milieu ou comment lire les sources hagiographiques*, ed. Rachida Chih and Denis Gril (Cairo: Institut français d’archéologie orientale, 2000), 51-60.

<sup>13</sup> Fritz Meier, “Eine auferstehung Mohammeds bei Suyūṭī,” *Der Islam* 62 (1985): 20-58; Fritz Meier, “A Resurrection of Muḥammad in Suyūṭī,” in *Essays on Islamic Piety and Mysticism*, tr. John O’Kane, ed. Bernd Radtke (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 505-47; Fritz Meier, “Une résurrection de Mahomet chez Suyūṭī,” tr. Anne-Laure Vignaux, *Trivium* 29 (2019): 1-31.

Prophet, both in dreams and while awake; Meier cites mainly post-medieval Sufi texts.<sup>14</sup> The third, brief article of roughly six pages addresses the use of the *taṣliya* (i.e., the invocation of God’s blessing upon Muḥammad) as a means for seeing the Prophet.<sup>15</sup> Apart from Meier, Abdul Muthalib investigated the history of the waking vision and its place in the mysticism of the twelfth/eighteenth-century Sufi ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān (d. 1189/1775) in his unpublished PhD dissertation on this figure,<sup>16</sup> while publishing an article on the refutation of the waking vision of fourteenth/twentieth-century scholar Muḥammad al-Shinqīṭī (d. 1405/1986).<sup>17</sup> Éric Geoffroy included a brief section on the phenomenon in his vast study of Sufism in Egypt and Syria during the late Mamlūk and early Ottoman periods.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to this introduction, this dissertation is divided into four chapters and a conclusion. Chapter 1 concerns the life and activity of Ibn Mughayzil and his place within the Egyptian Shādhiliyya. I detail our author’s education, literary and social activity as a Sufi and scholar, and teachers and masters with whom he closely associated. I also outline the formation of the Shādhiliyya and the development of its two main Egyptian lines up unto Ibn Mughayzil, thereby elucidating his place in the order. I show that Ibn Mughayzil was well connected to the scholarly and Sufi elite of contemporary Cairo through his intellectual and mystical training as well as his residence at a famous *khānqāh*. Especially important was his discipleship of Muḥammad al-Maghribī, a prominent shaykh and the seventh deputy (*khalīfa*) of an Egyptian

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<sup>14</sup> Fritz Meier, “Mohammeds erscheinung im traum und in der vision,” in Fritz Meier, *Nachgelassene Schriften*, ed. Gudrun Schubert and Bernd Radtke, vol. 1, *Die taṣliya in sufischen Zusammenhäng* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 369-86.

<sup>15</sup> Fritz Meier, “Die *taṣliya* als mittel für die schau des profeten,” in Fritz Meier, *Nachgelassene Schriften*, ed. Gudrun Schubert and Bernd Radtke, vol. 1, *Die taṣliya in sufischen Zusammenhäng* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 410-15.

<sup>16</sup> Abdul Muthalib, “The Mystical Teachings of Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān, an 18th Century Sūfi,” PhD diss., (McGill University, 2007), 109-36.

<sup>17</sup> Abdul Muthalib, “The Objection to the Claim of Meeting the Prophet Muḥammad in a State of Awakenedness according to Muḥammad al-Shinqīṭī,” *Refleksi* 13, no. 3 (April 2012): 294-302.

<sup>18</sup> Éric Geoffroy, *Le soufisme en Égypte et en Syrie: Sous les derniers Mamelouks et les premiers Ottomans; Orientations spirituelles et enjeux culturels* (Damascus: Institut français d’études arabes de Damas, 1995), 435-36.

Shādhilī line. I suggest that this relationship motivated Ibn Mughayzil to pursue the eighth deputyship, though it does not seem that he was ever recognized as such.

Chapter 2 examines Ibn Mughayzil's works, including their editions, aims, structure, main themes, and relation to two notable contemporary Shādhilī texts, the *Ta'yīd al-ḥaqīqa al-'aliyya wa-tashyīd al-tarīqa al-Shādhiliyya* by al-Suyūfī and the *Qawā'id al-taṣawwuf* by Aḥmad Zarrūq (d. 899/1494), in addition to the author's perspectives on select movements and figures. I demonstrate how Ibn Mughayzil's writings strongly reflect Sufism in the late Mamlūk period through their extensive treatment of the relationship between Law (*sharī'a*) and Reality (*ḥaqīqa*) as well as the nature and authenticity of the saints' miracles and Sufis' epistemological claims. I highlight how his apologetic approach to these topics likewise manifests in his defense of controversial Sufis such as Ibn 'Arabī (d. 638/1240) and dissociation from the Muslim philosophers, while showing his deep devotion to the Shādhiliyya. At the same time, I suggest that the *Kawākib* represents a rich and genuine engagement of Sufi thought and indicates the importance of the text in both premodern and modern times.

Chapter 3 begins our investigation of Ibn Mughayzil's mystical thought with a focus on issues pertaining to God and the world, including His unity and manifestations, the eternity and creation of the world, the Muḥammadan Spirit (*al-rūḥ al-muḥammadiyya*), the vision of God in this world and the next, and religious diversity. I illustrate how Ibn Mughayzil was a learned and creative Sufi thinker, drawing from a wide range of Sufi and scholarly sources to deal with subtle philosophical and psychological dilemmas. At the same time, he often aims, both explicitly and implicitly, to defend Sufis from accusations of adherence to unorthodox doctrines, which seems to account for his tolerance of differences of opinion among his brethren and sometimes his own indecisiveness in taking a stance.

Chapter 4 explores the central topic of the *Kawāḳib*, the waking vision of the Prophet Muḥammad after his death. I begin with a survey of reports of the waking vision and an outline of theoretical treatment prior to Ibn Mughayzil. I then examine his discourse on the phenomenon in two parts: first, his conception of the dream vision of the Prophet as preparation for the waking vision, covering the dream vision's veracity and legal implications as well as its function as a sign for the waking vision; and second, the waking vision itself, including objections to the possibility of the experience, the form in which the Prophet appears, requirements that authors have stipulated for its attainment, and legal implications. Finally, I outline the development of the waking vision after Ibn Mughayzil, emphasizing its increasing significance in ritual and as a source of spiritual authority. I reaffirm here my portrait of Ibn Mughayzil in Chapter 3 as an erudite and original author, though in stronger terms. He not only appears to be the first author to gather disparate stories and theories of the waking vision while offering his own views and analyses; he also does so in such a way as to defend the vision as a rationally conceivable miracle in face of skeptics, thus making a critical intervention to protect the reputation of Sufis and their mystical experience.

In the Conclusion, I summarize my findings in the previous chapters and propose that study of an author like Ibn Mughayzil can help us appreciate late Mamlūk Sufi literature.



## Chapter 1: Ibn Mughayzil and the Egyptian Shādhiliyya

### 1.1 Life and Activity

According to Shams al-Dīn al-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497), a famous historian and hadith scholar as well as the only biographer of our author, ‘Abd al-Qādir b. Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī b. ‘Umar al-Muḥīwī al-Qāhirī al-Shāfi‘ī al-Shādhilī, known as Ibn Mughayzil,<sup>19</sup> was born in Rajab 865/April or May 1461 near the dyers’ market in Cairo.<sup>20</sup> However, an important—and highly problematic—biographical note in the *Kawākib* seems to contradict this birthdate. Ibn Mughayzil tells us that he received his formal initiation into the Shādhiliyya on 14 Rabī‘ al-Awwal 874/September 21, 1469 with Abū l-‘Abbās al-Sarsī,<sup>21</sup> who then wrote him a certificate

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<sup>19</sup> The manuscript used by Ibn Barīka al-Būzaydī al-Ḥasanī in his 2011 edition of the *Kawākib* includes the title “al-Maghribī” after “Ibn Mughayzil.” Al-Ḥasanī thus deduces that the author was a Mālikī, since that school was predominant in the Maghreb. See *Kawākib* (2011), 13-14. But al-Sakhāwī may be correct in designating Ibn Mughayzil a Shāfi‘ī since he knew him personally and taught him. Furthermore, Ibn Mughayzil frequently cites Shāfi‘ī scholars in his writings. According to Ibn Mughayzil’s contemporary and renowned poet Shams al-Dīn al-Qādirī (d. 903/1497-98), the Sufi’s origins can be traced back to “Mughayzil.” See Abū l-Faḍl ‘Abd al-Qādir b. al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī b. ‘Umar b. Mughayzil, *al-Qawl al-‘alī fī tarāduf al-mu‘jiza bi-karāmat al-walī*, ed. Muḥammad Ṣalāh Ḥilmī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2008), 72. This name today signifies a village in Syria near Homs, although in his *Mu‘jam al-Buldān*, Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 626/1229) refers to it as a mountain as well as a well-known road in رغام (Raghghām?). See Shihāb al-Dīn Abī ‘Abdillāh Yāqūt b. ‘Abdillāh al-Ḥamawī, *Mu‘jam al-Buldān* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1977), 5:163.

<sup>20</sup> Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw‘ al-lāmi‘ li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsi‘* (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, n.d.), 4:266.

<sup>21</sup> Formal initiation into a Sufi order consisted of three elements: 1) transmission of a *dhikr* formula (*talqīn al-dhikr*), which was usually the first portion of the Islamic testimony of faith, “There is no god but God,” and was to be repeated in accordance with certain rules; 2) adornment with the Sufi mantle (*khirqā*), with the tassel of the aspirant’s turban draped down (*isbāl al-‘adhaba*); and 3) establishment of a pact with the shaykh (*mubāya‘a*), which included shaking hands and declaring one’s allegiance to him. See Geoffroy, *Le soufisme en Égypte et en Syrie*, 195-99; Éric Geoffroy, “Ṭarīqa,” in *EP*, 10:246; J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 182. Although the *Kawākib* specifies Shams al-Dīn al-Ḥanafī as Ibn Mughayzil’s formal initiator, I believe that it must be Abū l-‘Abbās al-Sarsī for multiple reasons. First, al-Ḥanafī died in 847/1443, twenty-six years before the initiation. Second, Ibn Mughayzil says that he received this initiation one degree higher than his informal initiation into the Shādhiliyya as emulation of al-Shādhilī through Muḥammad al-Maghribī (*iqtiḍā‘*, more commonly called *tarbiya*), who was the disciple of al-Sarsī (see *Kawākib*, 234). Third, he states that his formal initiator was in turn initiated by his shaykh before describing a chain of transmission identical to that of his informal initiation. It should be noted also that Ibn Mughayzil refers to al-Sarsī as “al-Mursī.” This is probably incorrect because he is called al-Sarsī by other authors, such as al-Batanūnī (d. ca. 900/1494), a fellow disciple and biographer of Muḥammad al-Ḥanafī, and al-Sakhāwī. See ‘Alī b. ‘Umar al-Batanūnī, *Kitāb al-Sirr al-ṣaḥfī fī manāqib al-sultān al-Ḥanafī* (Cairo: Shaykh Salīm Shirāra al-Qabbānī, 1306/1888), 1:22; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw‘ al-lāmi‘*, 2:125.

(*ijāza*) and granted him permission to do the same for suitable candidates.<sup>22</sup> Thus, if he was born in Rajab 865/April or May 1461, he would have been only eight years old at the time of this event, which is implausible. Al-Suyūṭī, Ibn Mughayzil’s contemporary and teacher, was initiated when he was roughly twenty years old.<sup>23</sup> Supposing a similar case for Ibn Mughayzil, we might propose an earlier birthdate around 854/1450-51. This suggestion accords with most of the other information al-Sakhāwī supplies about Ibn Mughayzil’s education—that is, it would still be plausible for him to have been the student of the masters and teachers whom al-Sakhāwī mentions given the birth and death dates recorded for their own lives—and better accounts for his profound knowledge of Sufism and traditional sciences such as hadith and exegesis as demonstrated in the *Kawāḳib*.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 235-36. According to J. Spencer Trimingham, a Sufi could receive one of three certificates: 1) that which qualified and permitted the disciple to practice in the name of his master; 2) that which was given to the shaykh’s deputy (*khalīfa* or *muqaddam*) as authorization for him to transmit a specific litany (*wird*) and thereby initiate others into the order; and 3) that which simply declared that the seeker had received guidance for the Sufi way. See Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders*, 192. It seems that Ibn Mughayzil is referring to the second type, though he never claims to have been the deputy of al-Sarsī, and his training master (with whom a Sufi would have been close) was al-Maghribī.

<sup>23</sup> E.M. Sertain, *Jalāl al-dīn al-Suyūṭī* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 1:34; Éric Geoffroy, “Al-Suyūṭī as a Sufi,” in *Al-Suyūṭī, a Polymath of the Mamluk Period: Proceedings of the themed day of the First Conference of the School of Mamlūk Studies (Ca’ Foscari University, Venice, June 23, 2014)*, ed. Antonella Ghersetti (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 9. Al-Suyūṭī reportedly authorized al-Sha’rānī to teach all his writings as well as the books he was himself permitted to teach when al-Sha’rānī was less than ten years of age; and when al-Sha’rānī came to Cairo when he was twelve years old, al-Suyūṭī invested him with the Sufi mantle. But this case seems rare, and indeed Muḥammad al-Malījī (fl. late eleventh/seventeenth century), a biographer of al-Sha’rānī, describes it as his miracle. See Michael Winter, *Studies in the Writings of ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha’rānī: Society & Religion in Early Ottoman Egypt* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 45.

<sup>24</sup> The problem with this proposition, however, is that al-Sakhāwī (*al-Ḍaw’ al-lāmi’*, 2:125) and al-Suyūṭī (*Husn al-muḥādara fī tārikh miṣr wa-l-qāhira*, ed. Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm [N.p.: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Kutub al-‘Arabiyya, 1967], 1:530) specify 861/1456-57 as the year in which al-Sarsī died. If this is accepted, and we suppose that Ibn Mughayzil was initiated in the year of his death at the age of twenty, then he would have been born in 841/1437-38. But this seems unlikely because it would make him a contemporary of some of his teachers, such as al-Suyūṭī and Abū l-Najā (d. 916/1510-11), and entails that al-Sakhāwī, who also taught Ibn Mughayzil and thus knew him personally, grossly underestimated his age. Hence, to maintain that Ibn Mughayzil was born around 854/1450-51, both the birthdate attributed to Ibn Mughayzil as well as the death date attributed to al-Sarsī must be incorrect. Although this likewise seems improbable, the possibility of such errors in these historical and biographical works is not inconceivable considering—especially in *al-Ḍaw’ al-lāmi’*—the massive amount of information transmitted. Ultimately, there is no simple or definite solution to this problem based on the available data.

Most of al-Sakhāwī's relatively brief account pertains to Ibn Mughayzil's education. Based on the texts he is said to have studied with different scholars, it can be established that he learned Arabic grammar with 'Alī b. 'Abdallāh al-Sanhūrī (d. 889/1484)<sup>25</sup> and al-Burhānī al-Karkī,<sup>26</sup> hadith with al-Sakhāwī and Abū l-Su'ūd al-'Irāqī (d. 889/1484-85),<sup>27</sup> Sufism with Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Maghribī and al-Zayn al-Abnāsī (d. 891/1486),<sup>28</sup> *faḍā'il* literature with al-Sakhāwī and Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Qumṣī (d. ca. 880/1475-76),<sup>29</sup> and prophetic eulogy with al-Zayn b. Muzhir (d. 893/1488).<sup>30</sup> Al-Sakhāwī mentions many other teachers without specifying what type of knowledge he acquired from them.

It is not clear whether Ibn Mughayzil held any official positions, but al-Sakhāwī implies that he was hoping to. He relates that al-Suyūfī had promised Ibn Mughayzil that he would appoint him to certain posts (*yuqarrir lahu kadhā wa-kadhā*) once he had himself become a judge; when this failed to transpire, their relationship soured. Ibn Mughayzil's pronouncement of a fatwa about the waking vision of the Prophet<sup>31</sup> indicates that his juristic expertise, if only in Sufism, was recognized to some extent. In any case, he appears to have been active at the Sa'īd al-Su'adā' (or al-Ṣalāḥiyya) *khānqāh* in Cairo. He says that he completed his first book there on 15 Rabī' al-Ākhir 894/March 18, 1489<sup>32</sup> and his second book roughly five months later, on 3

<sup>25</sup> On him, see al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi'*, 5:249-51.

<sup>26</sup> On him, see al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi'*, 1:59-64.

<sup>27</sup> I have found almost no information about this scholar. Ibn Iyās (d. 930/1524) states that he was outstanding in hadith. See Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Iyās, *Badā'i' al-zuhūr fī waqā'i' al-duhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (Mecca: Maktabat Dār al-Bāz, n.d.), 3:212.

<sup>28</sup> On these two Sufis, see below.

<sup>29</sup> On him, see al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi'*, 6:317-18 (no. 1046).

<sup>30</sup> On him, see al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi'*, 11:88-89; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 3:255.

<sup>31</sup> *Kawākib*, 26.

<sup>32</sup> *Kawākib*, 405.

Shawwāl 894/August 30, 1489,<sup>33</sup> while recounting that he heard a story there from Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṭandatāwī.<sup>34</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil's association with the Sa'īd al-Su'adā' *khānqāh* is not insignificant given the prominence of this institution. Founded by Ṣalāḥ al-dīn Ayyūbī (d. 589/1193; known in the West as Saladin) in 569/1173-74, it was the first *khānqāh* in Egypt and endowed with a special, supreme office known as the "Chief Master" (*shaykh al-shuyūkh*), whose holder was responsible for guiding the Sufis of the *khānqāh* and serving as an intermediary between the ruling elite and local Sufi communities in Egypt and Greater Syria. The center and its residents acquired such a reputation that on Fridays Egyptians would flock to Cairo to watch them travel to al-Ḥākim Mosque to pray the communal prayer, hoping thereby to receive divine blessings and favours. However, when in 724/1325 the Mamlūk sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (d. 741/1341) transferred the status and role of the Sa'īd al-Su'adā' as the center of state-sponsored Sufism—and thus also the office of the Chief Master—to his new *khānqāh* in Siryāqūs, it lost much of its prestige.<sup>35</sup>

As centers of devotion for the spread of correct beliefs, rituals, and spiritual practices, resident Sufis of the Mamlūk *khawāniq* were required to follow traditional Sufi rules (*ādāb*) as well as one of the four major Sunnī schools of law. They were provided lodging and food, including large amounts of bread and meat each day, as well as monthly monetary stipends and, on holidays and special occasions, gifts in the form of food, clothing, and cash. Although senior

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<sup>33</sup> Ibn Mughayzil, *al-Qawl al-'Alī*, 87.

<sup>34</sup> *Kawākib*, 42. On al-Ṭandatāwī, see 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Suḡhrā*, ed. Aḥmad 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-Ṣāyih and Tawfīq 'Alī Wahba (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfa al-Dīniyya, 2005), 81-83.

<sup>35</sup> Some important personalities did, however, continue to attach themselves to the *khānqāh*, such as the historian Ibn 'Arabshāh, who died there in 854/1450. On the Sa'īd al-Su'adā', see Th. Emil Homerin, "Saving Muslim Souls: The *Khānqāh* and the Sufi Duty in Mamluk Lands," *Mamluk Studies Review* 3 (1999): 65-66; Nathan Hofer, *The Popularisation of Sufism in Ayyubid and Mamluk Egypt, 1173-1325* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 35-38 and index; Annemarie Schimmel, "Sufismus und Heiligenverehrung im spätmittelalterlichen Ägypten: eine Skizze," in *Festschrift Werner Caskel zum siebzigsten Geburtstag 5. März 1966 gewidmet von Freunden und Schülern*, ed. Erwin Gräf (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 283.

Sufi masters offered counsel on mystical issues and endowments sometimes provided stipends for studies in other subjects, especially jurisprudence and hadith, the most important duty to be fulfilled by the *khānqāh* Sufis was the daily *ḥudūr* ritual consisting of communal prayers and Quran recitations for the spiritual benefit of the *khānqāh*'s donor and his family as well as all living and deceased Muslims. Attendance in this session was mandatory and strictly monitored, while during times of hardship, such as famine and plague, the Sufis also gathered outside the institution with other religious figures to conduct special services and prayers.<sup>36</sup>

Assuming that Ibn Mughayzil was a resident at the Sa'īd al-Su'adā', the *khānqāh*'s patronage likely granted him sufficient time to devote himself to writing as well as the opportunity to fulfill an important social role within the Cairene Sufi community. It is also possible that he taught informally at the Sa'īd al-Su'adā' or elsewhere. According to Jonathan Berkey, informal instruction was a common practice among medieval Cairene scholars before they acquired official teaching posts. 'Izz al-Dīn b. 'Abd al-Salām (d. 660/1262), for example, despite being already forty years old and a recognized expert in such fields as jurisprudence and exegesis, became a student of hadith at the Jamāliyya *khānqāh* and himself attracted students.<sup>37</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil's two known works are *al-Kawākib al-zāhira*, a comprehensive treatment of Sufi topics, and *al-Qawl al-'alī*, a brief treatise about the miracles of saints and sainthood. In the *Kawākib*, he mentions his intention to compose an extensive biography of Abū l-'Abbās al-Mursī "in our *Ṭabaqāt al-Shādhiliyya*,"<sup>38</sup> but, if he did write that work, it has yet to be recovered. According to al-Sakhāwī, Ibn Mughayzil was enthusiastic (*tawalla'a*) about writing on the *Sharḥ*

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<sup>36</sup> On the Mamluk *khawāniq*, see Homerin, "Saving Muslim Souls," 66-77.

<sup>37</sup> Jonathan Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: A Social History of Islamic Education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 89.

<sup>38</sup> *Kawākib*, 175.

*al-Mulḥa*<sup>39</sup> and other texts, which suggests that he may have written summaries, commentaries, or supercommentaries, although none have yet been found.<sup>40</sup>

A number of contemporary scholars have specified 894/1489 as the year of Ibn Mughayzil's death,<sup>41</sup> but I have not found any evidence for this claim. Rather, it is in this year (in Shawwāl/August) that he completed *al-Qawl al-‘Alī*, the last trace of his activity. The fact that he does not appear to have composed any other works after the *Qawl*—perhaps not even the *Ṭabaqāt al-Shādhiliyya* that he promised—does, however, support the assumption that he died shortly after 894/1489.

## 1.2 Teachers

Al-Sakhāwī mentions twenty teachers of Ibn Mughayzil, in addition to referencing “others.” Many of these teachers were said to have taught him a scholarly subject or text. To elucidate Ibn Mughayzil's Sufi background, I will outline the lives, personalities, and accomplishments of those teachers and masters who partook in the mystical tradition and with whom he is said to have been close and, as far as possible, detail his relationship to them.

### 1.2.1 Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī

As one of the most outstanding scholars in Islamic history, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī was undoubtedly the most eminent of Ibn Mughayzil's instructors. Born in 849/1445 to a Turkish or

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<sup>39</sup> This may be the *Sharḥ Mulḥat al-i-rāb* written by the author himself of *Mulḥat al-i-rāb*, Ibn ‘Alī al-Ḥarīrī (d. 516/1122). The *Mulḥat* is a versified grammatical treatise on inflectional endings for beginners. On al-Ḥarīrī, see Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, “al-Ḥarīrī,” *EP*.

<sup>40</sup> Only the *Kawākib* is mentioned in *GAL* 2:150 and S2:152; *HAWT* 2:128 and S2:156-57; Ismā‘īl Pāshā al-Baghdādī, *Hidāyat al-‘arīfīn asmā’ al-mu‘allifīn āthār al-muṣannifīn* (Istanbul: Maṭba‘at al-Bahiyya, 1951), 1:597.

<sup>41</sup> E.g., al-Ḥasanī in *Kawākib* (2011), 13-14; Éric Geoffroy, *Le soufisme en Égypte et en Syrie*, 34; Gril, “Sources manuscrites,” 142 (no. 63).

Circassian slave and scholarly father, his education commenced early on, and by the age of eight he had memorized the Quran. He likewise committed to memory several legal works and an extensive poem on Arabic grammar before being granted a certificate of proficiency (*ijāza*) at the age of fourteen and his license to teach several years later. His expertise came to encompass a variety of fields, such as law, grammar, Quran exegesis, and belles-lettres, while he maintained a special interest in hadith. Some scholars have estimated the total number of al-Suyūṭī's works to be around 600, while others have more recently suggested 981, though not all are extant. Some of his well-known writings include the *Itqān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān* on the study of scripture; *Lubāb al-nuqūl fī asbāb al-nuzūl* concerning the occasions on which the verses of the Quran were revealed; *Tārīkh al-khulafā'*, a biographical history of the caliphs starting with Abū Bakr (d. 13/634) and covering some of the minor dynasties in regions such as Andalusia, Egypt, and Tabaristan; and *al-Ḥāwī lil-fatāwī*, a compilation of fatwas on difficult or weighty matters pertaining to an array of subjects. Even in his lifetime, many of his works spread as far as West Africa in the West and India in the East, thus ensuring his popularity and esteem throughout much of the Islamic world.<sup>42</sup>

In addition to producing a massive corpus, al-Suyūṭī was publicly active. After he retired in 891-92/1486 from formal teaching and delivering fatwas, the Mamlūk sultan Qāyit Bay (r. 872-901/1468-96) appointed him shaykh of the Baybarsiyya *khānqāh*, a position reserved for

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<sup>42</sup> Aaron Spevack, "Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (1445-1505)," in *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350-1850*, ed. Joseph E. Lowry and Devin J. Stewart (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 394-97; Sartain, *Jalāl al-dīn al-Suyūṭī* 1:22-23 and 74. For a list of many of al-Suyūṭī's writings, see Spevack, "Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī," 386-94. Not all scholars, however, have appreciated al-Suyūṭī's literary output. Al-Sakhāwī accused him of stealing works by several authors, such as himself and Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 852/1449), and claimed that al-Suyūṭī would find books in the Maḥmūdiyya Library and other places that were unknown to many of his contemporaries, slightly alter them, write an introduction and conclusion, and declare them as his own. See al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi'*, 4:66 and 68. Many early-modern Arab scholars and some contemporary scholars have tended to reduce al-Suyūṭī's accomplishments to mere compilation. See Marlis J. Saleh, "Al-Suyūṭī and His Works: Their Place in Islamic Scholarship from Mamluk Times to the Present," *Mamluk Studies Review* 5 (2001): 81.

highly esteemed and accomplished scholars that entrusted him with the institution's finances and administration. But his management at times caused dissension within the *khānqāh* and led to violent attacks against him. In 1501, he was dismissed and withdrew to Roda Island. There he lived in isolation, turning away most visitors and rejecting all offers of stipends and positions, including from the sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī (r. 906-22/1501-16). He spent his time revising previous works and wrote several new ones, including *Jam' al-jawāmi' fī l-ḥadīth*, a collection of hadīths in which he aimed to record every single one in alphabetical order. By the time of his death in 911/1505, it is said that al-Suyūṭī had already written down as many as 100,000 hadīths.<sup>43</sup>

In view of al-Suyūṭī's great learning and social standing, one can understand Ibn Mughayzil's interest in becoming his disciple. Al-Sakhāwī tells us that their relationship was initially very cordial. Ibn Mughayzil went to great lengths in praising and defending al-Suyūṭī and for a time devoted himself entirely to him, devouring (*adhaba*) those books of al-Suyūṭī that helped Ibn Mughayzil to summarize some of his most challenging works. But discord arose between the two after al-Suyūṭī failed to honour his promise to invest Ibn Mughayzil with a post once he became a judge. As E.M. Sartain explains, the promise was empty because al-Suyūṭī neither had any reason to believe he might be appointed judge nor had he ever been a deputy judge, while it was very improbable that a sultan would replace the respected Shāfi'ī chief judge Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī (d. 926/1520), who held office from 886-906/1481-1500, with a controversial figure like al-Suyūṭī.<sup>44</sup> Al-Sakhāwī mentions al-Suyūṭī's initial retirement from teaching and pronouncing fatwas as another cause for their conflict. When Ibn Mughayzil

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<sup>43</sup> Spevack, "Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī," 403 and 406-7; Sartain, *Jalāl al-dīn al-Suyūṭī*, 1:81; Schimmel, "Sufismus und Heiligenverehrung," 286.

<sup>44</sup> Sartain, *Jalāl al-dīn al-Suyūṭī*, 1:94.



witnessed al-Suyūṭī's increasing estrangement, he complained of his hatred and arrogance. In this respect he was not alone. Three of Ibn Mughayzil's other teachers likewise took issue with al-Suyūṭī: at first al-Burhānī al-Karkī and Muḥammad al-Maghribī, the latter of whom had also been al-Suyūṭī's shaykh and now decided to part ways with him, and eventually, more than a decade later, Abū l-Najā, who directly confronted al-Suyūṭī about his shortcomings and blunders.<sup>45</sup>

It seems likely that Sufism was one of the subjects Ibn Mughayzil studied with al-Suyūṭī, since besides administering the Baybarsiyya *khānqāh* and guiding Sufi aspirants, he wrote several works on the subject. Most prominent are the *Ta'yīd al-ḥaqīqa al-'aliyya wa-tashyīd al-ṭarīqa al-Shādhiliyya*, an apologetic defense of Sufism with emphasis on the virtues of the Shādhiliyya, and the *Tanbīh al-ghabī fī tabri'at Ibn 'Arabī*, a defense of the Andalusian mystic and his teachings. According to Éric Geoffroy, al-Suyūṭī was also the first scholar to formally treat Sufism as a legitimate topic for fatwas, having inserted three fatwas on Sufi issues in *al-Hāwī lil-fatāwī* in addition to addressing such matters elsewhere in the collection.<sup>46</sup> It will become evident in Chapter 2 how these Sufi aspects of al-Suyūṭī's writings are reflected in those of Ibn Mughayzil. Yet, whatever knowledge of Sufism and the mystical path al-Suyūṭī may have passed on to his disciple can only be inferred from Ibn Mughayzil's works. For despite citing

<sup>45</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw' al-lāmi'*, 4:69-70 and 266. Abū l-Najā's grievances, however, were perhaps more fuelled by a separate conflict between him and al-Suyūṭī. According to al-Sakhāwī (*al-Daw' al-lāmi'*, 11:144), Abū l-Najā's renown increased after frequenting major mosques and important places of assembly to attend appointments. Al-Suyūṭī became jealous when the employees attached to his post (*ahl khaṭṭatih*) in Ibn Ṭūlūn Mosque and the environs were captivated by Abū l-Najā and no longer paid attention to him. Indeed, they even reproached al-Suyūṭī and obliged Abū l-Najā to hold an assembly in the Baybarsiyya that proved to be highly popular.

<sup>46</sup> Geoffroy, *Le soufisme en Égypte et en Syrie*, 154. See Jalāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī, *al-Hāwī lil-fatāwī fī l-fiqh wa-'ulūm al-tafsīr wa-l-ḥadīth wa-l-uṣūl wa-l-naḥw wa-l-i'rāb wa-sā'ir al-funūn*, ed. 'Abd al-Laṭīf Ḥasan 'Abd al-Raḥmān (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2000), esp. 2:222-55. Admittedly, Ibn Taymiyya had already consecrated a long volume of his multi-volume compendium of fatwas to Sufi topics. However, he was often extremely critical, such as towards the notion of the "Seal of the Saints" (*khātim al-awliyā'*). See Taqī l-Dīn Aḥmad b. Taymiyya, *Majmū' Fatāwā Shaykh al-Islām Aḥmad b. Taymiyya*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Qāsim, vol. 11 ([Riyadh]: Wizārat al-Shu'ūn al-Islāmiyya wa-l-Da'wā wa-l-Irshād al-Su'ūdiyya, 2004). For more on al-Suyūṭī's connection to Sufism, see Geoffroy, "Al-Suyūṭī as a Sufi," 8-14; Sartain, *Jalāl al-dīn al-Suyūṭī*, 1:33-37.

numerous other Sufis, including contemporaries, al-Suyūṭī’s name does not appear a single time in either the *Kawākib* or *al-Qawl al-‘alī*. Moreover, although Ibn Mughayzil essentially reproduces al-Suyūṭī’s fatwa on the hadith, “One who knows himself knows his Lord,”<sup>47</sup> in the *Kawākib*, he does not, as is his usual custom, give the author’s name and the text from which it derives. Instead, he merely states that “there has appeared to me concerning the secret of this hadith that which is obligatory to disclose and commendable to describe.”<sup>48</sup> One assumes that this conspicuous neglect of his former master is due to their bitter dispute.

### 1.2.2 Muḥammad al-Maghribī

A far more apparent impact on Ibn Mughayzil’s development in Sufism was made by Muḥammad b. ‘Umar al-Maghribī, who, according to al-Sakhāwī, was of Turkish descent and acquired his surname “al-Maghribī” through his mother’s (second?) marriage to a Maghrebin man. His ideas and his interpretations of Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s (d. 632/1235) *al-Tā’iyya al-kubrā* are cited frequently in the *Kawākib*, where he is given lofty titles such as *quṭb* (Pole),<sup>49</sup> the supreme figure in the Sufī hierarchy of saints, and “the Shādhilī of his time.”<sup>50</sup> The second epithet reflects his status as the disciple of al-Sarsī and seventh head of the Shādhilī line of transmission into which Ibn Mughayzil was initiated as well as his function as the shaykh of such Cairene

<sup>47</sup> Many scholars have disputed the authenticity of this hadith, while Ibn ‘Arabī claimed that it was verified through unveiling (*kashf*). See Ismā‘īl b. Muḥammad al-‘Ajlūnī, *Kashf al-khifā’ wa-muzīl al-ilbās ‘ammā ishtahara mina l-ahādīth ‘alā alsinat al-nās*, ed. Yūsuf b. Muḥammad al-Ḥājj Aḥmad (Damascus: Maktabat al-‘Ilm al-Ḥadīth, 1421 [2000-1]), 2:309 (no. 2532).

<sup>48</sup> ظهر لي في سر هذا الحديث ما يجب كشفه ويستحسن وصفه

Cf. *Kawākib*, 151-53 (quotation from p. 151); al-Suyūṭī, *al-Hāwī lil-fatāwī*, 2:226-29.

<sup>49</sup> E.g., *Kawākib*, 305 and 315. According to al-Sha‘rānī, al-Maghribī is said to have occupied the office of the “Great Polehood” (*al-quṭbiyya al-kubrā*) for three years. See ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Wuṣṭā*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Qādir Naṣṣār (Cairo: Dār al-Iḥsān, 2017), 2:835.

<sup>50</sup> *Kawākib*, 234 and 261.

luminaries as al-Suyūṭī and al-Sha‘rānī.<sup>51</sup> Al-Sha‘rānī goes so far as to say that every single Egyptian scholar obeyed al-Maghribī in matters pertaining to the rational sciences and God-given knowledge (*‘ulūm wahbiyya*). More realistically, his sphere of influence may have been relatively restricted to the college of shaykhs (*mashīkha*) in Qarāqajā al-Ḥusnā madrasa where he resided and sought solitude. He is indeed portrayed as a reclusive figure in the biographical sources. It is said that he spoke little about the Sufi way (*ṭarīqa*) due to the inability of most people to comprehend expert discourse about it; when asked to write about the Way, he responded by inviting the inquirers to seek it sincerely with him, renouncing their property and family for the sake of God’s satisfaction.<sup>52</sup> Nonetheless, a Sufi treatise attributed to him circulated among his followers and was used by al-Sha‘rānī for his teachings and at least occasionally by Ibn Mughayzil as well.

Al-Maghribī’s social prominence was enhanced by his generosity. He would pay in full the debts of his needy companions from a small sack in his turban and give beggars 1000 dinars “as if it were mere dung.” At the same time, his asceticism allowed him to maintain his integrity. When Qāyit Bāy (r. 872–901/1468–95) once offered him 1000 dinars, he was brought to tears by al-Maghribī’s refusal and counsel: “Content yourself with a morsel of food, a sip of water, and

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<sup>51</sup> Sartain, *Jalāl al-dīn al-Suyūṭī*, 1:35; Geoffroy, “Al-Ṣuyūṭī as a Sufi,” 9; Winter, *Studies*, 71. Winter, however, disputes al-Sha‘rānī’s claim that al-Maghribī was his master, since he was only twelve years old when al-Maghribī died. In my view, it is not inconceivable, if we accept al-Suyūṭī adorned al-Sha‘rānī with the Sufi mantle at the same age.

<sup>52</sup> Perhaps this portrait accords with Ibn Mughayzil’s statement (*Kawākib*, 99) that while he witnessed in al-Maghribī a combination of love for God (*maḥabba*) and gnosis (*ma‘rifa*), the second was predominant, if one assumes that a preponderance of love engenders an ecstatic, animated type of mystic and a preponderance of gnosis creates a more contemplative, reserved type.

sackcloth as clothing.”<sup>53</sup> He died around 911/1505-6 and was buried near the gate of al-Qarāfa cemetery in Cairo, where his grave was visible and frequented.<sup>54</sup>

### 1.2.3 Al-Zayn al-Abnāsī

Although al-Maghribī was indisputably Ibn Mughayzil’s primary Sufi master, he may have received his initial mystical instruction from al-Zayn al-Abnāsī, considering that it was with al-Abnāsī that he studied Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī’s (d. 505/1111) elementary Sufi work, *Bidāyat al-hidāya* and al-Abnāsī taught him a *dhikr* formula (*talaqqanahu l-dhikr*).<sup>55</sup> Al-Abnāsī was born in 829/1425-26 in Cairo, where he memorized the Quran and scholarly works. He studied the traditional Islamic sciences under various scholars, including his uncle al-Shams Muḥammad and major savants of the day such as Shams al-Dīn al-Bisāṭī (d. 842/1439), Ibn al-Humām (d. 861/1457), and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī (d. 864/1459). Al-Abnāsī became especially interested in the writings of Ibn ‘Arabī, Ibn al-Fāriḍ, and other “unificationists” (*ittiḥādiyya*), as al-Sakhāwī calls them, and taught them to many eminent figures. In fact, says al-Sakhāwī, he became an authority for those who took up unificationist ideas and would strike those who refused to

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<sup>53</sup> اقنع بلقمة شربة ماء وليس الحيش

al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Wuṣṭā*, 2:838. The source of al-Maghribī’s wealth is not clear. Al-Sha‘rānī himself gives two different explanations. In *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, he suggests that he received it from kings, while in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Wuṣṭā* he says that he acquired it from the unseen world (*ghayb*) and would not accept anything from anyone. According to al-Sakhāwī, he was supported by his copyists (*yu’kal min nussākhatih*). See ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, ed. Aḥmad Ibrāhīm al-Sāyih and Tawfīq ‘Alī Wahba (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfa al-Dīniyya, 2005), 2:215; al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Wuṣṭā*, 2:837; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-lāmi’*, 8:252.

<sup>54</sup> On al-Maghribī, see al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 2:211-15; al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Wuṣṭā*, 2:835-38; Najm al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib al-sā’ira bi-a’yān al-mi’a al-āshira*, ed. Khalīl al-Manṣūr (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Arabiyya, 1997), 1:79-80; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-lāmi’*, 8:252.

<sup>55</sup> Although this would seem to contradict Ibn Mughayzil’s claim to have received a *dhikr* formula from al-Sarsī during his formal initiation into the Shādhiliyya, it perhaps reflects what Geoffroy calls the “vulgarization” of this ritual in the Mamlūk period through its extension to the public at large. Abū l-‘Abbās al-Ḥuraythī (fl. early tenth/sixteenth century) for example, is said to have conducted the *talqīm* with 10,000 people, while Ibn Abī l-Ḥamā’il (d. 932/1525) with 30,000. See Geoffroy, *Le soufisme en Égypte et en Syrie*, 197-98.

associate with him for that reason.<sup>56</sup> Out of humility and to avoid competition with jurists, he initially held gatherings in his home and rejected positions in al-Ashrafiyya al-Qadīma madrasa, Sa‘īd al-Su‘adā’, and other institutions, depending instead on the provisions of his father. However, he did at some point assume a more public role. When his master al-Taqī al-Ḥiṣnī performed the hajj in 876/1471-72, he replaced him as a teacher of Shāfi‘ism and later substituted for other teachers in various institutions. Al-Abnāsī also spent time writing. Al-Sakhāwī mentions that he composed supercommentaries and marginal notes (*taqāyīd*); a discourse on a hadith about the relationship between acts and intentions; and possibly some poetry, while al-Suyūfī says that he penned writings (*kataba ashyā’an*) on Sufism. Al-Abnāsī, passed away in 891/1486 and was buried next to his father in the *zāwiya* of a master by the name of Shihāb.<sup>57</sup>

#### 1.2.4 Abū l-Najā

The only other teacher of Ibn Mughayzil listed by al-Sakhāwī who is cited in his writings—twice in *al-Qawl al-‘Alī*<sup>58</sup> is Abū l-Najā Muḥammad b. ‘Alī (d. 916/1510-11). Born in 849/1445-46 to Khalaf b. Muḥammad (d. 874/1469), a student of Shams al-Dīn al-Ḥanafī and Abū l-‘Abbās al-Sarsī who settled in Fuwwa, Abū l-Najā memorized the Quran and portions of Ḥanafī legal and theological books before his father converted him to Shāfi‘ism. After

<sup>56</sup> Ibn Shāhīn (d. 920/1514) remarks that he was a Sufī who belonged to two orders and even delved into philosophy (*ṣūfiyyan ‘alā ṭarīqatayn hattā l-falsafa*). See Zayn al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ b. Khalīl b. Shāhīn, *Nayl al-amal fī dhayl al-duwal*, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmūrī (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-‘Aṣriyya, 2002), 8:23.

<sup>57</sup> On al-Abnāsī, see al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw’ al-lāmi’*, 4:164-66 (no. 437); Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām fī l-dhayl ‘alā duwal al-Islām*, ed. Bashshār ‘Awwād Ma’rūf, ‘Iṣām Fāris al-Ḥarastānī, and Aḥmad al-Khuṭaymī (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risāla, 1995), 984-85; Jalāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr al-Suyūfī, *Nazm al-‘iqyān fī a’yān al-a’yān*, ed. Philip Hitti (New York: al-Maṭba‘a al-Sūriyya al-Amrīkiyya, 1927), 127 (no. 109, spelled “al-Anbāsī”); Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’ al-zuhūr*, 3:227 (likewise spelled “al-Anbāsī”); ‘Umar Riḍā al-Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu’allifīn: tarājim muṣannifī l-kutub al-‘arabiyya* (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risāla, 1993), 2:128 (no. 7090).

<sup>58</sup> Ibn Mughayzil, *al-Qawl al-‘alī*, 49 and 59.

completing his studies under numerous scholars, he was granted a license to teach and deliver fatwas in 876/1471-72 at the age of twenty-seven and hired by the college at Ibn Naṣrillāh Mosque in Fuwwa, where he acquired a reputation for piety. He visited Cairo on several occasions, where he convened a gathering (*majlis*) about exegesis in al-Azhar Mosque on Fridays after the communal prayer. These sessions lasted several months and earned the approval of notable figures. Al-Sha‘rānī attended his final gathering, during which Abū l-Najā presented an exegesis from Chapter 104 (al-Humaza) to the end of the Quran, overwhelming the attendees’ rational capacities with his discussion of fourteen sciences in each verse. His writings include a six-volume commentary on Ibn Hishām’s (d. 761/1359) *Mughnī al-labīb ‘an kutub al-a‘arīb*; a four-volume supercommentary on ‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Qūnawī’s (d. 727/1327) *Sharḥ al-Ḥāwī al-ṣaghīr*; and many poems, including one on theology of over a thousand verses,<sup>59</sup> fitted with a commentary. Al-Sakhāwī reports hearing that he also wrote a commentary on the Ḥanafī theological text *al-Fiqh al-akbar* in a single night in fulfillment of a request by a prince.

Although Abū l-Najā possessed expertise in a variety of fields, both al-Sakhāwī and al-Sha‘rānī stress his specialization in Sufism, and it appears that he came to be viewed as a saint by the common people. Al-Sakhāwī says that when the people of Cairo heard that his boat had reached the shore of Baylāq, they flocked to him in droves and delighted in him as they did in a holiday. His virtues and fantastic deeds (*manāqib*) were also well known in the environs of Fuwwa, where word spread on the night of his death that he had just become a *quṭb*, thus remaining in the post only several hours.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> In accordance with Ash‘arī doctrine, according to Ibn Mughayzil, *al-Qawl al-‘alī*, 49.

<sup>60</sup> On Abū l-Najā, see al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw‘ al-lāmi‘*, 11:143-45; al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Wuṣṭā*, 2:1157-59.

### 1.2.5 *Nūr al-Dīn al-Jawjarī*

The final teacher of Ibn Mughayzil worthy of mention is ‘Alī b. Dāwud Nūr al-Dīn al-Jawjarī. Although al-Sakhāwī does not detail the nature of their relationship, he mentions that Ibn Mughayzil was a useful source for his biography; thus, it can be assumed that the two were at least somewhat close. Al-Jawjarī studied with important scholars such as al-Maḥallī and al-Nūr al-Ushmūnī, the judge of Damietta. He became well versed in the Arabic language and the laws of descent and distribution (*farā’iḍ*), but his focus was Sufism, which he learned with a certain al-Shirwānī. He was eventually appointed to prominent positions, first as preacher in Ibn Ṭūlūn Mosque and then by Qāyit Bāy as preacher and imam in his new madrasa on top of Mount Yashkur in Cairo. He also taught near Mecca for a time after performing the hajj. Based on al-Sakhāwī’s remark that he wrote on two grammatical works, Ibn Mālik’s (d. 672/1274) *Alfiyya* and Ibn ‘Alī l-Muṭarrizī’s (d. 610/1213) *al-Muqaddama al-Muṭarriziyya fī l-naḥw*, as well as other texts, it appears that he composed a number of summaries or commentaries. He died in 887/1483 at the age of sixty-three and was buried in al-Qarāfa cemetery.<sup>61</sup>

### 1.3 Within the Egyptian Shādhiliyya

The foregoing account of Ibn Mughayzil’s life and teachers reveals his strong connections to the intellectual and Sufi elite of late ninth/fifteenth-century Cairo. His links to al-Maghribī and Abū l-Mawāhib are crucial for understanding his place within the Shādhiliyya, for each shaykh connects him to one of the two Egyptian Shādhilī lines of transmission proceeding back to the order’s founder. To elucidate this link and establish a larger context for assessing Ibn

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<sup>61</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw’ al-lāmi’*, 5:219.

Mughayzil's contribution to and place within the Shādhiliyya, I will briefly outline the formation and development of the Egyptian branches of the order from their head master to our author.

Abū l-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī was born around 583/1187 in the region of Ghumāra in northwestern Morocco. After completing his traditional religious education in Fez, he applied himself to the Sufi way. Determined to meet the *quṭb* of the age, he traveled east, where he studied with Abū l-Faṭḥ al-Wāsiṭī (d. 632/1234), the main disciple and the representative of the founder of the Rifā'ī order, Aḥmad al-Rifā'ī (d. 578/1182). Al-Shādhilī was eventually instructed to return to the Maghreb to find the *quṭb*, whom he discovered to be a hermit and ascetic by the name of 'Abd al-Salām b. Mashīsh (d. 625/1228).<sup>62</sup> He became Ibn Mashīsh's only disciple and stayed with him for several years before migrating to a village called Shādhila halfway between Tunis and Kairouan, where he spent time in retreat in a cave on Mount Zaghwān and established relations with the Sufis of Tunis, especially the city's top master, Abū Sa'īd Khalaf al-Bājī (d. 628/1231). Upon al-Bājī's death, al-Shādhilī moved to Tunis and guided the deceased master's disciples. At some point, he aroused the ire of some prominent members of the Ḥafṣid court, most notably the chief judge of Tunis, Ibn al-Barā' (d. 676/1278).<sup>63</sup> The opposition against him only increased, reportedly leading to his appearance in court to defend his convictions before a council of scholars and even a brief imprisonment. In 642/1244-45, he migrated to Alexandria,

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<sup>62</sup> Some authors, adducing the presence of Ibn Mashīsh's teachings within the Shādhiliyya, refer to the order as the Mashīshiyya. These teachings include especially his views that self-mortification can be an obstacle on the mystical path and that Sufism is foremost a form of meditation and opening of the heart to receive divine grace. His invocation to acquire knowledge of the essence of Muḥammadan prophethood known as *al-Ṣalāt al-Mashīshiyya* is the main source for the study of his ideas and has been the object of numerous commentaries. See Zakia Zouanat, "Des origines de la Shādhiliyya chez le cheikh 'Abd al-Salām Ibn Mashīsh," in *Une voie soufie dans le monde: la Shādhiliyya*, ed. Éric Geoffroy (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 2005), 55 and 57-58.

<sup>63</sup> The source of hostility has been a matter of debate. 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd contended that al-Shādhilī posed a threat to the authority of Ibn al-Barā'; 'Alī Ṣāfi Ḥusayn that he claimed to have had prophetic visions; 'Alī 'Ammār that he was accused of declaring himself the Fatimid messiah (*mahdī*); and Jamil M. Abun-Nasr that he represented a challenge to the religious authority that the Ḥafṣid sultan Abū Zakariyya (d. 647/1249) was hoping to acquire after pronouncing himself caliph. See Hofer, *The Popularisation*, 115; Abun-Nasr, *Muslim Communities*, 105.



where he enjoyed far more success. Al-Shādhilī instructed his disciples and preached from his home in a tower of the city’s defensive wall while delivering sermons in the famous Attarine Mosque. He also gained followers among the religious scholars, the most prominent being Makīn al-Dīn al-Asmar (d. 692/1293). Each year, he traveled to Mecca to perform the hajj. On his journey there in 656/1258, he died in the town of Ḥumaythara on the Red Sea coast.<sup>64</sup>

Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh divides al-Shādhilī’s early followers into three groups: 1) those who remained in the Maghreb, 2) those who migrated with him to Egypt, and 3) those who joined him after resettlement in Egypt.<sup>65</sup> To the second group belonged Abū l-‘Abbās al-Mursī, who met al-Shādhilī after a capsizing on the way to Mecca forced him to swim to the Algerian coast. Al-Mursī functioned as al-Shādhilī’s deputy during his lifetime and was appointed his successor shortly before his death. Although like his master he occasionally traveled to Cairo to deliver lectures on Sufism to religious scholars, he generally remained in Alexandria and, unlike al-Shādhilī, shunned worldly authorities, including the provisions and stipends they offered. During the thirty years of his leadership, the nascent Shādhilī order attracted new adherents and developed its teachings.<sup>66</sup>

It does not appear that al-Mursī designated a successor before his death. Nathan Hofer argues that his silence resulted in a power struggle for leadership of the emergent order among three groups: 1) an Egyptian faction led by Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh; 2) another Egyptian faction led by Yāqūt al-Ḥabashī, also known as al-‘Arshī; and 3) a North African faction led by Muḥammad b. Sulṭān al-Masrūqī (d. after 701/1301) and his brother Mādī b. Sulṭān al-Masrūqī (d. 718/1318).

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<sup>64</sup> Jamil M. Abun-Nasr, *Muslim Communities of Grace: The Sufi Brotherhoods in Islamic Religious Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 104-6; Alexander Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 208-9; Mackeen, “The Rise of al-Shādhilī,” 482-84.

<sup>65</sup> Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, *Laṭā’if al-minan*, ed. ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 2006), 88.

<sup>66</sup> Victor Danner, “The Shādhiliyya and North African Sufism,” in *Islamic Spirituality: Manifestations*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 32; Mackeen, “The Rise of al-Shādhilī,” 484-85.

Hofer contends that two famous hagiographies of al-Shādhilī, Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh’s *Laṭā’if al-minan* and Ibn al-Ṣabbāgh’s *Durrat al-asrār*, should be read in the light of this conflict. He points out that although al-Ḥabashī was one of al-Mursī’s favourite students and married his daughter (who was al-Shādhilī’s granddaughter), Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh refers to him only once in the *Laṭā’if al-minan* and does not indicate his authority, while he speaks hardly at all of the Masrūqī brothers; in this way, he strengthened his own claim to be the next head of the order. In contrast, Ibn al-Ṣabbāgh strives noticeably to cast the Masrūqīs, especially Muḥammad b. Sulṭān, as the immediate and authoritative link to al-Shādhilī in North Africa, while citing Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh only once as a source for some teachings of al-Mursī that he had not encountered elsewhere.<sup>67</sup> Giuseppe Cecere observes that Ibn al-Ṣabbāgh also consistently refers to al-Ḥabashī with such respectful titles as “our master” and “our lord, the righteous master,” while casting him as the closest disciple of al-Mursī. In this way, Cecere explains, “Ibn al-Ṣabbāgh presents a multipolar view of the nascent *Shādhilī* community as a network whose two main hubs, Tunis [led by the Masrūqīs] and Alexandria [led by al-Ḥabashī], enjoy equal spiritual authority.”<sup>68</sup>

Hofer draws the conclusion that it “would be a mistake to imagine that [Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh] al-Iskandarī was the ‘third *khalīfa*’ of the Shādhilīya in any uncritical way” resulting from belief in “the teleological nature of the literature from the Sufī orders whereby late-stage social formations and rhetorics of legitimation are projected back to an earlier, less coherent social origin.”<sup>69</sup> In any case, for the Egyptian Shādhiliyya, Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh’s *Laṭā’if al-minan* became the authoritative source for the lives and teachings of al-Shādhilī and al-Mursī. Hofer attributes at least partial responsibility for this to Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh’s social and political prominence in Cairo.

<sup>67</sup> Hofer, *The Popularisation*, 116-17.

<sup>68</sup> Cecere, “From Ethiopian Slave to Egyptian Ṣūfī Master?”, 89-90.

<sup>69</sup> Hofer, *The Popularisation*, 117.

In addition to teaching jurisprudence at the Maṣūriyya madrasa, he preached the Shādhilī way at al-Azhar and in 707/1307 led 500 Sufis to the citadel to protest Ibn Taymiyya's (d. 728/1328) attacks on Sufism and Sufis.<sup>70</sup>

Whereas Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh's two predecessors left behind only prayers (*aḥzāb*), he authored many important Sufi works.<sup>71</sup> Apart from the *Laṭā'if al-minan*, his principal composition is *al-Ḥikam*, a concise text dictated to his student Taqī l-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 756/1355) that is concerned mainly with gnosis (*ma'rifa*) and grounded in the idea that only God truly exists. Many commentaries have been written on the text, mostly by Shādhilīs. The most popular commentary is that of Ibn 'Abbād al-Rundī (d. 792/1390), while Aḥmad Zarrūq alone wrote thirty. Another noteworthy writing by Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh is the *Kitāb al-Tanwīr fī isqāt al-tadbīr*, which deals with spiritual virtues such as patience and fear and places special emphasis on denouncing self-reliance (*isqāt al-tadbīr*) that is claimed to encompass all other virtues.<sup>72</sup>

The figure subsequently recognized as Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh's successor in what might be called the "Iskandarian" line of the Egyptian Shādhiliyya was Ibn Bākhilā (or Ibn Mākhilā, d. 733/1332). Al-Sha'rānī describes him as an illiterate guard of the household of the governor of Alexandria, who would signal the guilt or innocence of an accused to his patron by pulling his beard down to his chest or upwards. He is characterized in a less eccentric fashion in

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<sup>70</sup> Hofer, *The Popularisation*, 117 and 119-20.

<sup>71</sup> Danner, "The Shādhiliyya," 38-39.

<sup>72</sup> Two other important works are often attributed to Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh: the *Miftāḥ al-falāḥ wa-miṣbāḥ al-arwāḥ*, which treats the Sufi practice of *dhikr* in a brief but broad manner and remains popular among contemporary Sufis; and *al-Qaṣd al-mujarrad fī ma'rifat al-ism al-mufrad*, which addresses the supreme divine name, "God" (*Allāh*), and its relation to the other divine names. However, doubts have been raised about their authenticity, especially by Hofer. He points out that their style and content differ from those of Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh's other books. Whereas he usually makes constant reference to al-Shādhilī and al-Mursī, he does not mention them at all in these two texts, while none of the biographies of Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh written in the eighth/fourteenth and ninth/fifteenth centuries list these writings despite mentioning his other ones. Furthermore, the *Miftāḥ* depicts a highly institutionalized form of seclusion (*khalwa*) that is almost completely absent from his other works. See Hofer, *The Popularisation*, 130-31. On Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh's works, see Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh, *Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh's Sufi Aphorisms*, 12-22; *GAL* S2:145-47; *HAWT* S2:150-51.

contemporary biographical works by Mālikī jurists. He is said to have studied in Cairo before moving to Alexandria, where he grew fond of Sufism and became the follower first of al-Mursī and then of al-Ḥabashī. Ibn Bākhilā eventually became a clerk in the canonical summary court (*al-maḥkama al-sharʿiyya*) and retained that position until his death in 733/1332. While he wrote several works on jurisprudence, grammar, and rhetoric, his two extant writings concern Sufism. One is the *ʿUyūn al-ḥaqāʾiq*, a collection of his statements on common mystical themes, such as the soul’s battle against the lower self (*nafs*) and the distinction between exoteric and esoteric knowledge, as well as more abstract metaphysical issues, such as God’s self-disclosure (*tajallī*) and the functions of the Muḥammadan image (*mithāl*) and shadow (*ẓill*) in creation and destruction. The other Sufi work is *al-Laṭīfa al-marḍiyya*, which focuses largely on al-Shādhilī’s famous supplication *Ḥizb al-baḥr*, addressing such issues as its sources and spiritual benefits. According to Richard McGregor, this text may be the first systematic commentary on a Sufi prayer.<sup>73</sup>

Geoffroy observes that Ibn Bākhilā was only of secondary importance in the Shādhiliyya.<sup>74</sup> This is confirmed by Ibn Mughayzil’s books in which, in contrast to the other Shādhilīs discussed here, he is not mentioned. Perhaps Ibn Bākhilā’s greatest significance lies in his Sufi tutelage of Muḥammad Wafā, the originator of a subbranch of the Shādhiliyya known eponymously as the Wafāʾiyya. Muḥammad was born in Alexandria in 702/1301, to where his grandfather Muḥammad al-Najm, a follower of Aḥmad al-Badawī (d. 675/1276), had migrated from Sfax in Tunisia. He later moved first to Akhmīm, where he established a large *zāwiya* and attracted many people, and subsequently to Cairo, where he settled on Roda Island and occupied himself with acts of devotion and *dhikr*. It was also in the capital that he is alleged to have

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<sup>73</sup> On Ibn Bākhilā, see McGregor, *Sanctity and Mysticism in Medieval Egypt*, 32-35.

<sup>74</sup> Geoffroy, “L’élection divine de Muḥammad et ‘Alī Wafā,” 56n31.

acquired his nickname: “One day, the Nile stopped its yearly rise, falling short of its completion (*wafā*). The people of Cairo were resolved to flee the land [in anticipation of famine] when Muhammad Wafā’ appeared at the river’s edge and said, ‘By the grace of God, rise!’ The river then rose, and the water reached its proper level.”<sup>75</sup>

After Muḥammad erected a minbar in his residence from which he preached to his companions and followers during the Friday communal prayer, his home became the center of the nascent subbranch. He is reported to have declared that although he was first instructed by Ibn Bākhilā, his connection to him and all others had been severed. Perhaps he was partly inspired to take this action by skill in writing. One legend states that he composed his many works on the Sufi path before reaching the age of ten. The most notable of these is the *Kitāb al-Azal*, which clearly displays the influence of the ontological teachings of Ibn ‘Arabī and his followers. He also authored a collection of poetry, prayers, and a legal work.<sup>76</sup>

Muḥammad inspired not only his followers, like any other Sufi master, but also his son ‘Alī, who was just six years old when his father passed away.<sup>77</sup> ‘Alī described Muḥammad as “a storehouse of mystical knowledge from which he continues to draw”<sup>78</sup> and signaled his rupture with the Shādhiliyya proper in strong language: “Our teacher is the Master of the Greatest Seal, and al-Shādhilī along with all the other saints [before] are simply the soldiers of his kingdom [...] Surely he who is among the troops is not the one in command! It is our teacher who commands; he is not subject to command in the other circles.”<sup>79</sup> ‘Alī also emulated Muḥammad by

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<sup>75</sup> Maḥmūd Abū l-Fayḍ al-Minūfī, *Jamharat al-awliyā*’ (Cairo: Mu’assasat al-Ḥalabī, 1967), 2:254-55; translated by McGregor, *Sanctity and Mysticism*, 50.

<sup>76</sup> On Muḥammad Wafā, see McGregor, *Sanctity and Mysticism*, 50-55 and 73-83; *GAL* S2:148; *HAWT* S2:152-53.

<sup>77</sup> McGregor, *Sanctity and Mysticism*, 53.

<sup>78</sup> McGregor, *Sanctity and Mysticism*, 53.

<sup>79</sup> استاذنا صاحب الختم الاعظم فالشاذلي و جميع الاولياء من جنود مملكته [...] و ليس هو في زمرة ذي حكم لان استاذنا يحكم و لا يحكم عليه في سائر الدوائر

McGregor, *Sanctity and Mysticism*, 146-47 and 213n102.

composing a collection of poetry, a legal work, a defense of preachers and religious storytellers, a Quran commentary (seemingly lost), and numerous mystical treatises, which likewise evince the influence of Akbarian ontology.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, as head of the Wafā'īyya, 'Alī made an important contribution to the new suborder. His *Waṣāyā Sayyidī 'Alī Wafā*, covering various topics and written in rather straightforward prose, resembles a handbook for novices and may be considered a key source for Wafā'ī teachings;<sup>81</sup> while his overall oeuvre, especially his poetry, was at the turn of the tenth/sixteenth century more influential than the works of his Wafā'ī successors.<sup>82</sup> Nonetheless, while the Wafā'īyya did attract some notable figures, such as the sultan Jaqmaq (d. 857/1453),<sup>83</sup> it retained a base mainly in Cairo and restricted its leadership to members of the Wafā family.<sup>84</sup>

According to al-Sha'rānī, 'Alī's spokesman was Abū l-Mawāhib al-Tūnisī. After studying the traditional Islamic sciences at the famous Zaytūna Mosque in Tunis, this rather eccentric figure migrated to Cairo at the age of twenty-two and joined the Wafā'īyya. His spirituality is said to have been very intense. He was so immersed in spiritual states and writings that some judged him to be insane and others to be a saint. While Cairene Sufis and scholars alike valued his mystical poems and litanies (*awrād*) and chanted them in the mosque, his fellow Wafā'īs grew jealous. They accused him of imitating 'Alī's poetry and once attacked him in the Wafā'ī center, leaving his head wounded and bloody.

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<sup>80</sup> On his writings, see McGregor, *Sanctity and Mysticism*, 73-75 and 83-87.

<sup>81</sup> McGregor, *Sanctity and Mysticism*, 84.

<sup>82</sup> Geoffroy, *Le soufisme en Égypte et en Syrie*, 209.

<sup>83</sup> McGregor, *Sanctity and Mysticism*, 57.

<sup>84</sup> McGregor, *Sanctity and Mysticism*, 56-57. One of the noteworthy ways in which the Wafā'īyya distinguished itself from the Shādhiliyya was transmission of a special mantle (*khirqā*) consisting of a crown and belt, though this practice was not introduced by Muḥammad or 'Alī. See Geoffroy, "L'élection divine de Muḥammad et 'Alī Wafā," 57.

Like Muḥammad and ‘Alī Wafā, Abū l-Mawāhib was heavily influenced by Akbarian metaphysics. His *Kitāb al-Tajalliyyāt* contains entire passages from Ibn ‘Arabī’s book of the same title. Some of his other works include the *Risāla fī l-taṣawwuf* about fundamental Sufi tenets and the divine names; the *Faraḥ al-asmā’ bi-rukhaṣ al-samā’* in which he defends the practice of mystical audition, including with the use of musical instruments; and a collection of poetry (*dīwān*).<sup>85</sup>

Abū l-Mawāhib is one of the Shādhilīs through whom Ibn Mughayzil connects with the Shādhiliyya (and in a sense with the Wafā’iyya). Before quoting a passage from his *Ikhbār al-adhkiyā’ bi-akhbār al-awliyā’*, Ibn Mughayzil tells us: “I met him more than once. He supplicated for me when I requested [his] prayer. Once, when I saw him in a mosque after sunset, he uttered a phrase to me, the allusions of which I have understood only now that I have occupied myself with the sciences of the [Sufi] Folk.”<sup>86</sup>

Table 1. The Iskandarian Line of the Egyptian Shādhiliyya

Abū l-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī (d. 656/1258)

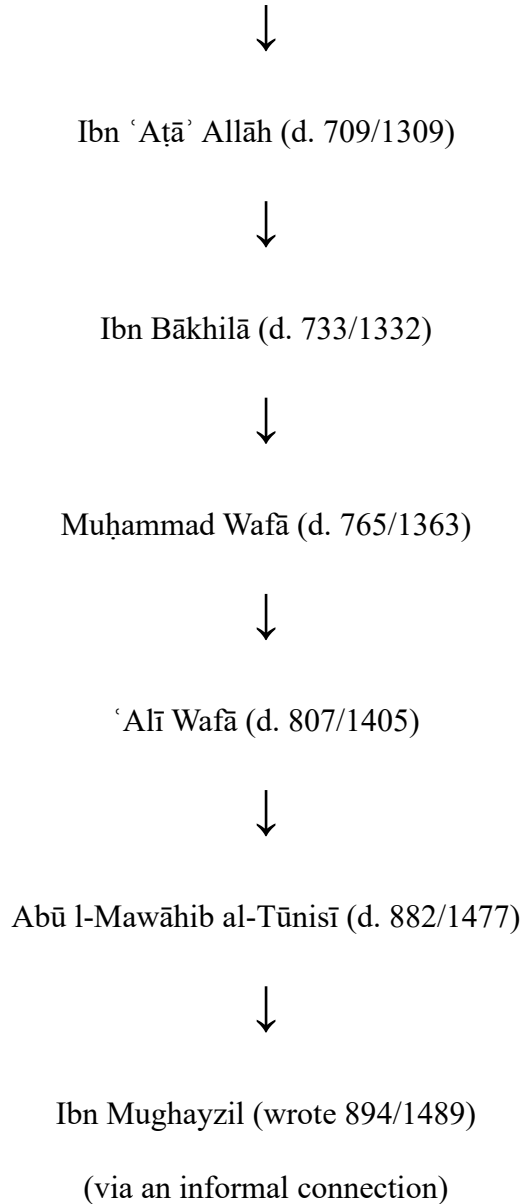


Abū l-‘Abbās al-Mursī (d. 686/1287)

<sup>85</sup> On Abū l-Mawāhib, see Jurji, *Illumination in Islamic Mysticism*, 20-23; Éric Geoffroy, “Abū l-Mawāhib al-Shādhilī,” *EP*.

<sup>86</sup> اجتمعت به غير مرة و دعا لي لما سألته الدعاء و قال لي لما رأيته في بعض المساجد بعد الغروب كلمة لم أفهم إشاراتها إلى الآن لما اشتغلت بعلوم القوم

*Kawākib*, 181. Abū l-Mawāhib seems to have had a habit of divulging mystical secrets to the unprepared. He confesses that he was once prevented from seeing the Prophet, and when he did eventually see him, the Prophet informed him that he was not qualified for the vision because “you disclose our secrets to people.” See al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, 2:150.



However spiritually significant Ibn Mughayzil’s encounters with Abū l-Mawāhib might have been, his formal initiation into the Shādhiliyya by al-Sarsī incorporated him into a lineage that proceeds back to al-Shādhilī through al-Ḥabashī rather than Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh. The competition for control of the order upon al-Mursī’s death resulted also in divergent images of al-Ḥabashī in Shādhilī literature. On the one hand, Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, his adversary, refers to him on



only one occasion. Although he calls him a gnostic (‘*arif*’), the story he relates is designed to warn readers about negative qualities: al-Mursī rebukes al-Ḥabashī for behaving like an ignorant Sufi novice in being overconfident in his inner inspiration.<sup>87</sup> By the same token, Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh’s student Rāfi‘ b. Shāfi‘ contends that even al-Ḥabashī believed his teacher to be the *quṭb* of his time.<sup>88</sup> On the other hand, later biographers tended, like Ibn al-Ṣabbāgh, to prefer al-Ḥabashī over his competitor. This includes al-Sha‘rānī, who was the first author to present a complete bio-hagiographical portrait of al-Ḥabashī, which significantly influenced his image in the following centuries.<sup>89</sup> Al-Sha‘rānī describes Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh as al-Ḥabashī’s disciple (*tilmīdh*), thus implying that al-Ḥabashī was al-Mursī’s immediate successor, and emphasizes his ability to offer intercession, including for his disciple Ibn al-Labbān, who had offended the deceased Aḥmad al-Badawī, and even a dove whose offspring had been repeatedly killed by a muezzin every time they hatched in the minaret (i.e., he asked the muezzin to stop killing them upon the dove’s request).<sup>90</sup> Inspired by al-Sha‘rānī, ‘Abd al-Ra‘ūf al-Munāwī (d. 1031/1622) speaks of al-Ḥabashī as al-Mursī’s “loftiest disciple” (*ajall talāmīdhih*) and claims that he married the master’s daughter at his request.<sup>91</sup> Such endorsement would have been crucial given that, unlike Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, al-Ḥabashī made no literary contribution to the Shādhiliyya.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, *Laṭā’if al-minan*, 100; Cecere, “From Ethiopian Slave to Egyptian Ṣūfī Master?”, 89.

<sup>88</sup> Cecere, “From Ethiopian Slave to Egyptian Ṣūfī Master?”, 91.

<sup>89</sup> Cecere, “From Ethiopian Slave to Egyptian Ṣūfī Master?”, 108-11.

<sup>90</sup> Cecere, “From Ethiopian Slave to Egyptian Ṣūfī Master?”, 109-10.

<sup>91</sup> Cecere, “From Ethiopian Slave to Egyptian Ṣūfī Master?”, 111-12. Although he was likely not invested in this dispute, the famous traveler Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (d. 770 or 779/1368 or 1377) met al-Ḥabashī in Alexandria in 726/1307 and described him as a preeminent man (*min afrād al-rijāl*) and the *tilmīdh* of al-Mursī, which, as Cecere (“From Ethiopian Slave to Egyptian Ṣūfī Master?”, 92-93) convincingly argues, should probably be understood to signify “successor” rather than merely “disciple.”

<sup>92</sup> Cecere, “From Ethiopian Slave to Egyptian Ṣūfī Master?”, 86. While he was traditionally referred to as an “Ethiopian slave” (‘*abd ḥabashī*’), al-Sha‘rānī (*al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, 2:41) states that he earned his sobriquet “al-‘Arshī” either because his heart was always under the Throne while his body was on the earth, or because he heard the call to prayer of the Throne bearers. For more on al-Ḥabashī and his portrait in Shādhilī writings, see Cecere, “From Ethiopian Slave to Egyptian Ṣūfī Master?”, 85-138.

The next two leaders in the Ḥabashī line are known by the surname Maylaq. Essentially nothing is known about the first in succession, Shihāb al-Dīn b. al-Maylaq (749/1348-49), though Ibn Mughayzil notes that he was initiated into the Shādhiliyya by both al-Ḥabashī and Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh (!), while attributing a *Dīwān al-Murāsālāt* to him.<sup>93</sup> The second, Nāsir al-Dīn Ibn bn. al-Maylaq, was a maternal relative of Shihāb al-Dīn.<sup>94</sup> According to his younger contemporary Ibn Ḥajar, Ibn bn. al-Maylaq had little interest in jurisprudence and became popular as a preacher. Ibn Jamā‘a,<sup>95</sup> who nevertheless considered him a jurist, employed him as a teacher and preacher in the al-Nāṣir Ḥasan madrasa before sultan Barqūq (d. 801/1399) appointed him judge. During the rebellion of Tripoli governor Miṭāsh against his former patron Barqūq, Ibn bn. al-Maylaq, who had been writing fatwas for Barqūq, withdrew from public life (*i tazala*) in 791/1388-89. Sometime after Barqūq returned to power in 792/1390, Ibn bn. al-Maylaq bought a garden in the citadel and lived obscurely until his death in 797/1395. Several centuries later, Ibn al-‘Imād (d. 1089/1679) provides us with a somewhat contradictory account of this Sufi. He tells us that although Ibn bn. al-Maylaq performed his duties as judge with dignity and severity, his work went unappreciated, and he ended up being humiliated for a time after being discharged (how precisely is not specified). If we accept the claim of a certain Ibn al-Qaṭṭān mentioned by Ibn al-‘Imād that Ibn bn. al-Maylaq was very greedy for his salary (*wazā’if*), this may have been the reason for the disdain he earned. In any case, the shaykh helped ensure his legacy by leaving behind some poetry and mystical treatises.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> *Kawākib*, 130 and 234.

<sup>94</sup> *Kawākib*, 234.

<sup>95</sup> Not the well-known Ibn Jamā‘a, who died in 733/1333, but perhaps one of his sons? On him and his family, see Mohamad El-Merheb, “Ibn Jamā‘a and family,” *EP*.

<sup>96</sup> Or at least their titles suggest that they concern mystical themes: *Hādi l-qulūb ilā liqā’ al-mahbūb*, *al-Anwār al-lā’iḥa fī asrār al-Fātiḥa*, and *Jawāb man istafhama ‘an ism Allāh al-a’zam*. On him, see Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Aḥmad b. Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina fī a’yān al-mi’a al-thāmina* (Hyderabad: Dā’irat al-Ma’ārif al-‘Uthmāniyya, 1993), 3:494; Shihāb al-Dīn Abī l-Falāḥ ‘Abd al-Ḥayy b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab fī akhbār man dhahaba*, ed. ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Arnā’ūt and

In contrast to the limited information available about the Maylaq masters, an extensive biography of Ibn bn. al-Maylaq's illustrious disciple, Muḥammad Shams al-Dīn al-Ḥanafī (d. 847/1443), was written by al-Ḥanafī's follower 'Alī b. 'Umar al-Batanūnī (d. ca. 900/1494).<sup>97</sup> After being orphaned at a young age, al-Ḥanafī was raised by a maternal aunt. Her husband brought him to various tradesmen to learn their crafts, but he repeatedly fled to the Quran school. After graduating, he acquired basic training in hadith and Sufism before finding employment as a teacher and bookseller.<sup>98</sup> At the age of fourteen, he decided to seclude himself and emerged only seven years later.<sup>99</sup> One year before his reappearance, he is said to have been initiated into the Shādhiliyya by Ibn bn. al-Maylaq, and traditions attributed to al-Shādhilī began spreading that cast him as the master's successor: "There will appear in Egypt a man known as Muḥammad al-Ḥanafī. He will expand this way, be well known in his age, and possess a mighty character,"<sup>100</sup> and, more explicitly, "Muḥammad al-Ḥanafī will be the fifth deputy [to come] after me."<sup>101</sup> Al-Ḥanafī in fact conceived his significance in much larger terms, believing himself to be both the renewer (*mujaddid*) of the century, which he requested his followers to recognize formally through an oath, and the current *quṭb*, a post that he claimed to inherit from 'Alī Wafā upon his death.<sup>102</sup>

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Maḥmūd al-Arnā'ūt (Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1992), 8:598-99. For his mystical writings, see *GAL*, S2:148; *HAL*, S2:153. On Mintāsh's rebellion, see Carl F. Petry, *The Mamluk Sultanate: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 24-25.

<sup>97</sup> al-Batanūnī, *Kitāb al-Sirr al-ṣafī*, 2 vols.

<sup>98</sup> Sabra, "From Artisan to Courtier," 215.

<sup>99</sup> al-Batanūnī, *Kitāb al-Sirr al-ṣafī*, 1:6-7; al-Sha'rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 2:175.

<sup>100</sup> سيظهر بمصر رجل يعرف بمحمد الحنفي يكون فاتحاً لهذا البيت و يشتهر في زمانه و يكون له شأن عظيم  
al-Sha'rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 2:176.

<sup>101</sup> محمد الحنفي خامس خليفة بعدي

al-Batanūnī, *Kitāb al-Sirr al-ṣafī*, 1:13; al-Sha'rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 2:176.

<sup>102</sup> al-Batanūnī, *Kitāb al-Sirr al-ṣafī*, 1:16 and 22-23.

Ibn Taghrībirdī (d. 875/1470) portrays al-Ḥanafī as a polarizing figure: people were either excessively devoted or extremely opposed to him.<sup>103</sup> Among his admirers were Mamlūk kings and notables, especially al-Zāhir Ṭaṭar (d. 824/1421), as well as Turkish soldiers, religious scholars, and common people.<sup>104</sup> The authority he wielded over many was manifest. According to al-Sha‘rānī, he would neither rise nor adjust his sitting position when someone entered the room, whether a king, prince, or chief judge; they were not permitted to sit beside him or cross-legged in front of him, instead having to kneel with their knees against his own and refrain from turning to the left or right.<sup>105</sup> His influence caused people to request his assistance in settling issues and mediating disputes. One case involved Ibn Ḥajar. When he was dismissed from his post, al-Ḥanafī sent his slave Baraka to order Ṭaṭar to reinstate him, and Ṭaṭar readily complied.<sup>106</sup> The devotion he attracted was naturally greater among ordinary folk. Maghrebins gathered soil from his *zāwiya* and placed it in copies of the Quran (*fī waraq al-maṣāḥif*), while people from western Andalusia (*ahl al-gharb*) wrote his name on the doors of their homes to obtain blessings.<sup>107</sup> Perhaps his worst enemy was a prince who attempted to assassinate him with poisoned food. Despite ingesting it, al-Ḥanafī was unharmed, while two of the prince’s sons unknowingly ate from the same vessel and died.<sup>108</sup> His request to be buried in his *zāwiya* was honoured, and he is said to have briefly opened his eyes before dying to inform those around him that they could still benefit from his intercession by visiting his tomb and stating their

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<sup>103</sup> Jamāl al-Dīn Abī l-Maḥāsīn Yūsuf b. Taghrībirdī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk miṣr wa-l-qāhira*, ed. Ibrāhīm ‘Alī Tarkhān (Cairo: al-Hay‘a al-Miṣriyya al-‘Āmma lil-Ta‘līf wa-l-Naṣh, 1971), 15:500.

<sup>104</sup> Sabra, “From Artisan to Courtier,” 217-32.

<sup>105</sup> al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 2:179-80.

<sup>106</sup> al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 2:180.

<sup>107</sup> al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 2:182.

<sup>108</sup> al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 2:183.

complaints.<sup>109</sup> Al-Ḥanafī left behind a commentary on a legal work by ‘Abdullāh al-Mūṣalī, a prayer book entitled *Hizb al-nūr*, and a collection of poetry.<sup>110</sup>

Al-Ḥanafī’s relationship to his successor in the Ḥabashī line and Ibn Mughayzil’s formal initiator, Abū l-‘Abbās al-Sarsī (d. 861/1457), began early on at the Quran school. Seeing the poor al-Ḥanafī walk to school, al-Sarsī invited him to travel together on his donkey and eventually let him ride alone while he walked alongside.<sup>111</sup> His wealth continued to benefit al-Ḥanafī in the years to follow. He built the cell in which al-Ḥanafī passed his seven years of seclusion as well as his *zāwiya*, and he complied with al-Ḥanafī’s request to dedicate the remainder of his capital to charity by paying off debtors and casting some into the Nile.<sup>112</sup> This is perhaps why al-Suyūṭī describes al-Sarsī as “greater” (*a ‘zam*) than al-Ḥanafī.<sup>113</sup> Al-Sakhāwī, however, attributes al-Sarsī’s superiority to his intellectual capacities, claiming that he surpassed al-Ḥanafī in the sciences to such an extent that it was in fact through him that al-Ḥanafī’s fame spread (*rāja amr al-Ḥanafī bihi*). He adds that al-Sarsī’s shrine in al-Qarāfa (al-Ṣuḡhrā) cemetery is enormous (*‘aẓīm*).<sup>114</sup>

Table 2. The Ḥabashī Line of the Egyptian Shādhiliyya

Abū l-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī (d. 656/1258)



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<sup>109</sup> al-Batanūnī, *Kitāb al-Sirr al-ṣafī*, 2:58.

<sup>110</sup> al-Baghdādī, *Hidāyat al-‘arifīn*, 2:195; *GAL* S2:150; *HAWT* S2:155.

<sup>111</sup> al-Batanūnī, *Kitāb al-Sirr al-ṣafī*, 1:8.

<sup>112</sup> al-Batanūnī, *Kitāb al-Sirr al-ṣafī*, 1:10-11 and 14.

<sup>113</sup> al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara*, 1:530.

<sup>114</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-lāmi’*, 2:125.

Abū l-‘Abbās al-Mursī (d. 686/1287)



Yāqūt al-Ḥabashī (d. 707/1307)



Shihāb al-Dīn b. al-Maylaq (d. 749/1348-49)



Nāṣir al-Dīn Ibn bn. al-Maylaq (d. 797/1395)



Muḥammad al-Ḥanafī (d. 847/1443)



Abū l-‘Abbās al-Sarsī (d. 861/1457)



Muḥammad al-Maghribī (d. 911/1505-6)



Ibn Mughayzil (wrote 894/1489)

There is at least one notable difference between these two lines of the Egyptian Shādhiliyya. Whereas all Sufis in the Iskandarian line—from Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh to Abū l-Mawāhib—were accomplished authors, those of the Ḥabashī line wrote little or nothing, especially al-Ḥabashī himself, al-Sarsī (so it seems), and al-Maghribī. Thus, however fortuitous

Ibn Mughayzil's meetings with Abū l-Mawāhib may have been, they can be seen at least as a symbolic initiation into the Shādhilī literary tradition.

There are subtle indications in Ibn Mughayzil's works that he was hoping to be recognized as the eighth *khalīfa* of the Ḥabashī line. First, while Ibn Mughayzil's decision not to reference his former teacher al-Suyūṭī might be best explained by their bitter dispute, it is perhaps also intended to sideline al-Suyūṭī as a candidate successor. Certainly, his role as master at the Baybarsiyya *khānqāh* and authorship of works on Sufism, especially the *Ta'yīd* in favour of the Shādhiliyya, would have qualified him for that position. Second, Ibn Mughayzil's frequent reliance on al-Maghribī's views without mention of the book or treatise from which they derive, in contrast to his habit of specifying textual sources, suggests that he wanted to highlight his intimacy with the seventh *khalīfa* as someone who learned directly from him rather than via his writings. Third, although boasting was not uncommon in Muslim scholarship, Ibn Mughayzil strongly emphasizes the originality and significance of the *Kawākib* by including two lengthy laudatory qasidas about the text and its author in *al-Qawl al-'alī*, one by "the poet of the age" Shams al-Dīn al-Qādirī (d. 903) and another by "the imam of the historians of Egypt" Ibn al-Wazīr al-Ḥanafī (d. 920). The qasidas are adduced as evidence that the book "combines Law and Reality in a way never before seen."<sup>115</sup> Lastly, as a disciple of such notable Shādhilīs as al-Maghribī and al-Suyūṭī as well as a member of the prestigious Sa'īd al-Su'adā' *khānqāh*, it would have been only natural for Ibn Mughayzil to aspire to even greater social prominence and renown within the ranks of the Shādhiliyya.

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جمع بين الشريعة و الحقيقة جمعاً لم تر العيون مثله<sup>115</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil, *al-Qawl al-'alī*, 71-76 (quotation from p. 71). On Shams al-Dīn al-Qādirī, see al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi'*, 7:188. On Ibn al-Wazīr, see al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi'*, 4:27.

Whether or not Ibn Mughayzil did aspire to be the eighth *khalīfa* of the Ḥabashī line, it does not seem that he was ever acknowledged as such in light of his absence, as far as I can tell, in subsequent Shādhilī *salāsīl*. For example, in the Shādhilī *silsila* of Aḥmad al-Qushshāshī (d. 1071/1660), al-Maghribī is followed by al-Sha‘rānī,<sup>116</sup> while in that related by Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Sanūsī (d. 1276/1859), founder of the Sanūsī order, he is followed by a certain Muḥammad Qāsim al-Maghribī.<sup>117</sup> Ibn Mughayzil also does not appear in the many *salāsīl* of Shādhilī scholars detailed by the Syrian Sufī Muḥammad al-Qāwuqjī (d. 1305/1888).<sup>118</sup> Furthermore, I have not located Ibn Mughayzil in the voluminous bio-hagiographical works of al-Sha‘rānī and al-Munāwī, even though they belonged to the next generation of Cairene Sufis.<sup>119</sup> This suggests either that Ibn Mughayzil served no major function for the Cairene Shādhilīs such as the eighth Ḥabashī *khalīfa* or that, in view of al-Sha‘rānī’s admiration for al-Suyūfī, Ibn Mughayzil’s dispute with him prompted al-Sha‘rānī to neglect him, which then influenced his student al-Munāwī.

#### 1.4 Conclusion

Ibn Mughayzil was a late ninth/fifteenth-century Shādhilī Sufi and author. He was well connected to the scholarly and Sufi elite of contemporary Cairo through his residence at the Sa‘īd al-Su‘adā’ *khānqāh* as well as his studies and mystical training under a number of

<sup>116</sup> Ṣafī l-Dīn Aḥmad al-Anṣārī al-Madanī al-Dajānī al-Qushshāshī, *al-Simṭ al-majīd bi-sha‘n al-bay‘a wa-talqīnih wa-salāsīl ahl al-tawḥīd*, ed. ‘Aftar Zakariyyā (Damascus: Dār al-Manhal, 2008), 162. That al-Qushshāshī was aware of Ibn Mughayzil is shown by his citation of the *Kawākib* on the next page (p. 163) for al-Shādhilī’s *silsila* back to the Prophet.

<sup>117</sup> Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Sanūsī, *Kitāb al-Manhal al-rawī al-rā‘iq fī asānīd al-‘ulūm wa-uṣūl al-ṭarā‘iq* (N.p.: Dār al-Tawfīqiyya, 2011), 113. Al-Sanūsī also cites the *Kawākib* on the next page (p. 114) for the same *silsila*.

<sup>118</sup> Abū l-Maḥāsīn Muḥammad b. Khalīl al-Qāwuqjī, *Shawāriq al-anwār al-jaliyya fī asānīd al-sāda al-Shādhiliyya*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Iwaḍ al-Manqūsh and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Ma‘rūf (Cairo: Dār al-Wābil al-Ṣayyib, 2022), 61-65.

<sup>119</sup> That is, al-Sha‘rānī’s *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Wuṣṭā*, and *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣuḡhrā*; and al-Munāwī’s *al-Kawākib al-durriyya fī tarājim al-sāda al-ṣūfiyya*.



important teachers and masters. It appears that he received his first instruction for the mystical way from al-Zayn al-Abnāsī, who taught him al-Ghazālī's *Bidāyat al-hidāya* and a *dhikr* formula. However, he was formally initiated into the Shādhiliyya by al-Sarsī, and his training master was Muḥammad al-Maghribī. While his intimacy with al-Maghribī is evident from the prominence of his teachings in the *Kawākib*, the total absence of al-Suyūṭī despite Ibn Mughayzil's earlier devotion to him reflects the degeneration of their relationship.

The Egyptian Shādhiliyya can be divided into two main lineages. The Iskandarian line, or that which proceeds from al-Mursī's disciple Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh, is characterized by Sufi literati, such as the two Wafās and Abū l-Mawāhib al-Tūnisī. The Ḥabashī line, or that which proceeds from Yāqūt al-Ḥabashī, is characterized by charismatic shaykhs, such as Ibn Bākhilā and Muḥammad al-Ḥanafī. Although by virtue of his literary talent and erudition Ibn Mughayzil might seem a better fit for the Iskandarian line, and he met Abū l-Mawāhib at least several times, his initiation by al-Sarsī and emulation of al-Maghribī link him to the Ḥabashī line.

Ibn Mughayzil's relationship to al-Maghribī was especially important, for it created the opportunity for him to make a claim to the eighth Ḥabashī deputyship. While there are indications in his writings that he hoped to attain that position, it does not seem that he ever did, and his absence in the hagio-biographical works of al-Sha'ṛānī and al-Munāwī suggests either that he assumed no prominent role in the Shādhilī milieu of Cairo or that his conflict with al-Suyūṭī caused these authors to neglect him. As seen also in the biographies of the other figures presented above, Sufism in Mamlūk Egypt was marked by keen competition for prestige and advancement within the hierarchal structure of the *ṭarīqa* system. Although Ibn Mughayzil apparently failed in those contests, he did leave behind a record of considerable learning and a

valuable and even original synthesis of the Sufi thought of his age, which we will now begin to explore.

## Chapter 2: Works

### 2.1 Introduction

Ibn Mughayzil authored at least two works: *al-Kawākib al-zāhira fī ijtīmā' al-awliyā'* *yaqzatan bi-Sayyid al-Dunyā wa-l-Ākhira*, which he also calls *al-Fath al-mubīn fī ma'rifat maqāmāt al-ṣiddīqīn*,<sup>120</sup> and *al-Qawl al-'alī fī tarāduf mu'jiza bi-karāmat al-walī*. Whereas the *Kawākib* offers a comprehensive treatment of Sufi topics in nearly 400 pages, the *Qawl* is a brief treatise of almost 70 pages concerning saints' miracles and sainthood, and it mostly repeats—often verbatim—ideas and passages found in the *Kawākib*. Therefore, I discuss here mainly the *Kawākib*, while noting important aspects of the *Qawl*.

### 2.2 Editions

Ibn Mughayzil likely began writing the *Kawākib* in or shortly after 891/1486, when, he tells us, he delivered a fatwa in response to a question as to whether the waking vision of the Prophet represents a miracle vouchsafed to saints (*karāma*) and then decided to treat the issue in more depth, in addition to covering other topics, in an independent work.<sup>121</sup> He completed the text in the Sa'īd al-Su'adā' *khānqāh* on al-Arba'ā', 15 Rabī' al-Ākhir, 894/Wednesday, March 18, 1489 shortly before the midday prayer ('*aṣr*').<sup>122</sup> At least five manuscripts of the work are extant, three of which have been variously used by modern editors to produce the four editions now available. The first edition, and the only critical one (thus why I mainly cite it here), was edited in 1999 by a group of al-Azhar professors and is based on two manuscripts: one from Al-

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<sup>120</sup> *Kawākib*, 28.

<sup>121</sup> *Kawākib*, 26 and 28.

<sup>122</sup> *Kawākib*, 405.

Azhar library, which is largely intact and includes the copyist’s commentary on difficult expressions (*‘ibārāt*); and another from the Egyptian National Library, which was originally a donation (*waqf*) to the Moroccan quarter at al-Azhar and is considerably damaged, missing a block of text equivalent to roughly half of the entire book in addition to containing other gaps.<sup>123</sup> The copyist of one of these manuscripts finished his copy on al-Khamīs, 12 Rabī‘ al-Awwal, 1131/Thursday, February 2, 1719.<sup>124</sup> The second edition, completed in 2010 by Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Raḥīm al-Sāyih and Tawfiq ‘Alī Wahba, is based on the same two Egyptian manuscripts, but the editors neither describe their method of redaction or contributions nor specify, as the editors of the first edition do, variances between the manuscripts.<sup>125</sup> The third edition, produced one year later in 2011 by Muḥammad b. Barīka al-Būzaydī al-Ḥasanī, is based on a manuscript copied by the poet Aḥmad al-Dulanjāwī (al-Mālīkī al-Rifā‘ī) on 19 Ramaḍān 1098/July 7, 1687.<sup>126</sup> Al-Ḥasanī does not mention where he acquired the manuscript, though he notes that it is the property of a certain Aḥmad b. ‘Abdillāh Efendī al-Ḥasanī.<sup>127</sup> The fourth edition appeared in 2013. Rather than edited, it was modified, “corrected” (*ṣaḥḥaha*), and annotated by ‘Āṣim Ibrāhīm al-Kayyālī al-Ḥusaynī (al-Shādhilī al-Darqāwī). Al-Kayyālī takes note of the previous editions, but he does not indicate his own aims or contributions. It is evident that he provides sources for the hadiths that Ibn Mughayzil cites and a more detailed table of contents.<sup>128</sup>

This account of the editions of the *Kawākib* reveals some of the book’s significance and impact. It was copied once in 1098/1687 and again in 1131/1789, which reflects interest in the

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<sup>123</sup> *Kawākib*, 15-16.

<sup>124</sup> *Kawākib*, 405.

<sup>125</sup> For their remarks on the manuscripts, see *Kawākib* (2010), 13.

<sup>126</sup> *Kawākib* (2011), 450. On al-Dulanjāwī, see *HAWT* S2:403.

<sup>127</sup> *Kawākib* (2011), 12.

<sup>128</sup> One of the two manuscripts not employed by the editors is located at the Abbey of St. Boniface in Munich, while the other is in Fes. See *HAWT* 2:128; René Basset, *Les manuscrits arabes de deux bibliothèques de Fas* (Algiers: Imprimerie de l’association ouvrière P. Fontana et C<sup>e</sup>, 1883), 17.

text during this period, including even for a Rifā'ī, al-Dulanjāwī. Two manuscripts have been preserved at al-Azhar; thus, along with the *Qawl*, whose only known manuscript was also originally a donation to the Moroccan students of al-Azhar,<sup>129</sup> it may have been used for teaching. And in the span of only fourteen years, four separate editions of the book were published. Finally, at least some of the editors are affiliated with Sufi orders—al-Kayyālī with the Darqāwiyya-Shādhiliyya and al-Ḥasanī with the Balqāyadiyya-Shādhiliyya—and indeed al-Ḥasanī informs us that he was prompted to produce his edition by the head of his order, Muḥammad 'Abd al-Laṭīf Balqāyad, for the benefit of aspirants.<sup>130</sup> Hence, the *Kawākib* has been studied by some contemporary Sufis.<sup>131</sup>

### 2.3 Objectives

Ibn Mughayzil was inspired to compose the *Kawākib* by a desire to treat the waking vision of the Prophet in depth (along with other topics). As I will show in Chapter 4, prominent Sufis discussed this issue prior to the ninth/fifteenth century. But it appears that a dispute surrounding the possibility of this experience became particularly heated around this century in Cairo. For instance, al-Sakhāwī mentions that he wrote a treatise whose title—*al-Irshād wa-l-maw'izā li-zā'im ru'yat al-nabī ba'da mawtih fī l-yaqza*—indicates his stance,<sup>132</sup> while he included his skeptical thoughts in a collection of responses to queries about hadiths.<sup>133</sup> Al-Sakhāwī's student, the traditionist Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qaṣṭallānī (d. 923/1517), reiterated his

<sup>129</sup> Ibn Mughayzil, *al-Qawl al-'alī*, 109.

<sup>130</sup> *Kawākib* (2011), 11.

<sup>131</sup> Ahmed Ziyaüddin Gümüshanevī (d. 1311/1893), a prolific Turkish Sufi, lists the text, in addition to three other writings, as a source for Shādhilī teachings. See Aḥmad al-Kumushkhānawī, *Jāmi' al-uṣūl fī l-awliyā'* (Surabaya: Al-Ḥaramayn, n.d.).

<sup>132</sup> al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi'*, 8:19.

<sup>133</sup> Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ajwiba al-marḍiyya fīmā su'ila al-Sakhāwī 'anhu mina l-aḥādīth al-nabawiyya*, ed. Muḥammad Ishāq Muḥammad Ibrāhīm (Riyadh: Dār al-Rāya, 1418 [1997-98]), 3:1100-11.

teacher's position in his well-known history of the Prophet's life, *al-Mawāhib al-laduniyya fī l-minaḥ al-Muḥammadiyya*.<sup>134</sup> Among proponents of the waking vision (apart from Ibn Mughayzil), al-Suyūfī composed a lengthy fatwa called *Tanwīr al-halak fī ru'yat al-nabī wa-l-malak*<sup>135</sup> in addition to a brief defense in his Sufi work *Ta'yīd al-ḥaqīqa*.<sup>136</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil writes that in 891/1486 a question was raised as to whether seeing the Prophet while awake constitutes a saintly miracle (*karāma*). He responded with a fatwa that the occurrence of this experience is possible from a legal standpoint (*shar'an*) in addition to being conceivable in a rational sense (*'aqlan*). Following this, a disagreement arose among a group of his contemporaries. Some denied that it is possible to see the Prophet in a waking state due to, in Ibn Mughayzil's view, their lack of study of the traditions of the imams and stories of the pious forebears (*salaf*). Others affirmed the possibility of this phenomenon while understanding from the expression of some scholars that it is possible to see the Prophet's physical body itself, which, as we will see, Ibn Mughayzil argues is incorrect.<sup>137</sup>

Having noted this dispute, Ibn Mughayzil describes the next step in his reasoning as well as the aims, methods, and significance of the *Kawākib*:

It then occurred to me that I [ought to] devote discussion of this issue to an independent work replete with remarks of [Sunni] imams. I would mention statements of the enlightened, the eminent authorities of Islam, regarding the exoneration of Sufi masters from [belief in] incarnation and unification in a comparative and excursive manner, since this waking vision [of the Prophet] is one of the saints' miracles; thus, an excursus about that is relevant. I will elaborate

<sup>134</sup> Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Qaṣṭallānī, *al-Mawāhib al-laduniyya bi-l-minaḥ al-Muḥammadiyya*, ed. Ṣāliḥ Aḥmad al-Shāmī (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 2004), 2:669-75.

<sup>135</sup> al-Suyūfī, *al-Hāwī lil-fatāwā*, 2:242-55. For another Arabic edition that includes a French translation, see Jalāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr al-Suyūfī, *Illumination des ténèbres: sur la possibilité de voir le Prophète et les anges*, tr. Hichām al-Mālikī al-Ḥassanī (N.p.: Éditions Héritage Mohammadien, 2021).

<sup>136</sup> Jalāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr al-Suyūfī, *Ta'yīd al-ḥaqīqa al-'aliyya wa-tashyīd al-ṭarīqa al-Shādhiliyya*, ed. 'Āṣim Ibrāhīm al-Kayyālī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2006), 70. See also (slightly later) Aḥmad Shihāb al-Dīn b. Ḥajar al-Haytamī, *al-Fatāwā al-Ḥadīthiyya* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifa, n.d.), 297-299. In Syria, Ibn 'Arrāq (d. 933/1526) wrote *Kashf al-ḥijāb bi-ru'yat al-janāb*. See *GAL* 2:333; *HAWT* 2:383; Geoffroy, *Le soufisme en Égypte et en Syrie*, 436n172.

<sup>137</sup> *Kawākib*, 26-27.

it to the furthest extent in terms of [furnishing] rare traditions that God has made me aware of, and I will solve some of the Sufis' dilemmas. I will write clearly in elucidating their ambiguity and meanings through an exposition brought down into [this] book. Therefore, [my book] is a combination of Law (*sharī'a*) and Reality (*ḥaqīqa*) that I have not found anyone precede me [in producing], and nobody but me has come upon [such a project].<sup>138</sup>

To support this claim to originality, Ibn Mughayzil cites the view of the grammarian Ibn Mālik (d. 672/1274) that since sciences are divine gifts and special talents, it is not unlikely that what was difficult for many early scholars (*mutaqaddimīn*) to understand was preserved for the comprehension of some later scholars (*muta'akhhirīn*).<sup>139</sup> In the *Qawl*, Ibn Mughayzil reiterates his conviction of the significance of the *Kawāḳib* even more emphatically, stating that “the ages were not permitted the likes of it, for it combines Law and Reality in a way that has never been witnessed. Every author among the scholars, the possessors of [expertise in] the sciences, testifies to this.”<sup>140</sup> As evidence, he excerpts, as noted earlier, two lengthy qasidas, one by Shams al-Dīn al-Qādirī and another by Ibn al-Wazīr al-Ḥanafī, that lavish praise on the text.<sup>141</sup>

## 2.4 Structure

Below I offer an outline of the contents of the *Kawāḳib*. I have created the titles myself, since Ibn Mughayzil rarely indicates that he is beginning a new section with a title, though he

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ثم خطر لي أن أفرد الكلام على هذه المسألة في مصنف مستقل حافل مشحون بكلام الأئمة و أذكر نقولاً من كلام المحققين أعلام الإسلام في تبرئة<sup>138</sup> السادة الصوفية من الحلول و الاتحاد على سبيل التنظير و الاستطراد لأن هذه الرؤية اليقظية من كرامات الأولياء فناسب استطراد ذلك و أبسط الكلام على ذلك بسطاً إلى الطرف الأقصى من حيث النقول الغربية التي أطلعني الله عليها و أحل شيئاً من مشكلات أهل التصوف فأفصح عن فتح مغلقها و إيضاح معانيها بتقرير منزل على الكتاب فهو جمع على الشريعة و الحقيقة لم أجد أحداً سبقني إليه و لا عثر أحد غيري عليه

*Kawāḳib*, 28. Al-Ḥasanī suggests that either Ibn Mughayzil wrote the *Kawāḳib* on a single occasion (*waqt wāḥid*) with al-Suyūṭī or that al-Suyūṭī urged Ibn Mughayzil to provide a detailed response to the request for a fatwa about the waking vision. See *Kawāḳib* (2011), 15-16. In my view, both scenarios are unlikely given the hostility between Ibn Mughayzil and al-Suyūṭī that began after al-Suyūṭī's initial seclusion, which Sartain (*Jalāl al-dīn al-Suyūṭī*, 1:81-82) dates to around 891/1486, three years before the *Kawāḳib* was written.

<sup>139</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 28.

<sup>140</sup> لم تسمح الأعصار بمثله فإنه قد جمع بين الشريعة و الحقيقة جمعاً لم تر العيون مثله يشهد بذلك كل منصف من العلماء ذوي الفنون  
Ibn Mughayzil, *al-Qawl al-'alī*, 71.

<sup>141</sup> Ibn Mughayzil, *al-Qawl al-'alī*, 71-76.

sometimes says simply, “Chapter” (*faṣl*). These titles represent only the main topic they cover, as he occasionally enters into an excursus on an unrelated issue.

- Law and Reality (pp. 22-26)
- Aims and Topics of the *Kawāḳib* (pp. 26-29)
- Visions I (pp. 30-86)
- The Saints’ Miracles (pp. 86-162)
- Mystical Knowledge I (pp. 163-75)
- Sainthood (pp. 176-85)
- Mystical Knowledge II (pp. 185-89)
- Defense of Sufism I (pp. 189-208)
- Virtues of the Shādhiliyya and the Life of al-Shādhilī (pp. 208-38)
- Defense of Sufism II (pp. 239-62)
- Mystical Knowledge III (pp. 262-92)
- God’s Oneness (pp. 293-303)
- Mystical Knowledge IV (pp. 303-34)
- Defense of Specific Sufi Teachings and Statements (pp. 335-78)
- Visions II (pp. 378-405)
- Conclusion (p. 405)

As this outline indicates, the *Kawāḳib* is not particularly well organized. In addition to excurses, Ibn Mughayzil often addresses aspects of a topic, such as mystical knowledge, before taking up the same and other components later in the book. For example, in the first section on mystical knowledge, he discusses unveiling (*kashf*), intuition (*firāsa*), and the unseen world (*al-ghayb*), while in the second section he treats intuition again as well as inspiration (*ilhām*).

We can learn Ibn Mughayzil’s rationale for his arrangement of some topics from the block quote above. He says that he wanted to write an independent work about the waking vision of Muḥammad. This explains why that vision is essentially the first subject covered, following only the introductory material. He further writes that his book would include a defense of Sufi masters from the accusation of belief in incarnation (*hulūl*) and unification (*ittiḥād*), “since this waking vision [of the Prophet] is one of the saints’ miracles; thus, an excursus about that is relevant.” Ibn Mughayzil’s logic, it seems, is that because incarnation and unification are



erroneous and blameworthy teachings, it is essential to dissociate Sufis from them to demonstrate that the waking vision is a genuine miracle resulting from the piety and spiritual quality of those who experience it. Although this particular defense, consisting of two segments, is not presented until the middle of the book, Ibn Mughayzil's placement of his section on miracles, since it comprises a notable defense of their veracity, appears likewise designed, in part, to buttress his treatment of the waking vision: by proving saints' miracles in general, he helps prove the miracle of the waking vision. Lastly, he may have viewed the final section of the book on seeing God in the afterlife, which he announces in his introduction,<sup>142</sup> as an important complement to his discussion of the waking vision of Muḥammad: having explored and extolled that vision, he subtly reminds his readers about the superior vision of the divine to come in the next world.

The reason behind the organization of the other sections of the *Kawāḳib* is not clear to me. Ibn Mughayzil's tendency to return to a subject, such as mystical knowledge or visions, suggests that he had not planned out the entire structure of the text and considered it appropriate and important to add to his treatment of issues as necessary. It is possible that he at first intended to restrict himself to the waking vision and related issues such as miracles but got carried away in exploring other topics. Alternatively, he had wanted from the beginning to treat a wide array of issues but stressed his engagement with the waking vision, as reflected especially in the title and its arrangement as the first subject, to boost his originality and demonstrate his contribution to a contemporary debate.

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<sup>142</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 28.

## 2.5 Major Themes

### 2.5.1 Law and Reality

The objective of “combining Law and Reality” that Ibn Mughayzil stressed in his introduction to the *Kawāḳib* is central to the text and contributes to a tendency or movement in the major cities of the Mamlūk empire to achieve a relative symbiosis between the “exoteric” sciences, such as law and hadith, and the “esoteric” science par excellence, Sufism. At the close of the Mamlūk era, this harmonious relationship was represented by the prototypical figure known as the “Sufi scholar” (*al-‘ālim al-ṣūfī*), characterized by a robust education in the exoteric sciences and devotion to the Sufi way. While some of these Sufi scholars became attracted to Sufism at an early age, such as Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī, most began to engage in the mystical tradition only later in their lives after having served as important figures in charge of various offices; while some remained invested in the exoteric sciences, others ceased their scholarly activities and withdrew entirely from worldly life.<sup>143</sup>

One result of the Mamlūk jurists’ embrace of Sufism was the pronouncement of fatwas on mystical matters, which challenged the “pure” jurists by using their own tool against them. This phenomenon first appeared in the *Hāwī lil-fatāwī* of al-Suyūṭī, who not only reserved a special section for Sufi fatwas, but also addressed mystical issues throughout the work. Scholars such as Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d. 974/1567) in his *al-Fatāwā al-ḥadīthiyya* continued this tradition in the following century, which formed part of a broader tenth/sixteenth-century movement led by the Sufi scholars to establish Sufism as a formal Islamic science that also involved the composition of commentaries on important mystical works, such as that on al-Qushayrī’s (d. 465/1072) *al-Risāla*, written by the “Shaykh al-Islām” Burhān al-Dīn Ibn Abī

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<sup>143</sup> See the section on the “Sufi scholar” in Geoffroy, *Le soufisme en Égypte et en Syrie*, 149-65.

Sharīf (d. 921/1516), and the commentary on Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* written by the Shāfi‘ī judge Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ḥiṣkafī (d. 1003/1594).<sup>144</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil’s commitment and contribution to the movement to “combine Law and Reality” or the exoteric and esoteric is evident already in the opening chapter of the *Kawākib*, which precedes even his description of the book. There, he outlines the basis for his aim by demonstrating both the superiority of esoteric or mystical knowledge (*‘ilm al-ḥaqīqa* or *‘ilm al-bāṭin*) to exoteric or rationalist and traditionalist knowledge (*‘ilm al-sharī‘a* or *‘ilm al-zāhir*) and their essential harmony and complementarity.<sup>145</sup>

According to Ibn Mughayzil, esoteric knowledge is the most extensive and abundant (*aghraz*) type of knowledge because, being the internal component (*bāṭin*) of exoteric knowledge, it allows one to penetrate the secrets of that knowledge. It is accessible only “to one upon whom a divine flood pours forth and whose heart is illuminated with gifts of divine providence,”<sup>146</sup> enabling him to speak clearly about divine truths and allusions. He finds evidence for the high rank of esoteric knowledge in a hadith: “There exists a type of knowledge that resembles a hidden object. Nobody possesses it except those who know God, and when they express it, nobody rejects it but those deluded about God.”<sup>147</sup> Yet, exoteric knowledge is essential to esoteric knowledge because one cannot understand Sufi discourse before mastering the transmitted sciences (*‘ulūm naqliyyāt*, usually *‘ulūm naqliyya*).<sup>148</sup> In this regard, Ibn Mughayzil

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<sup>144</sup> Geoffroy, *Le soufisme en Égypte et en Syrie*, 154-56 and 402-5.

<sup>145</sup> *Kawākib*, 22-26.

<sup>146</sup> لمن صب الله عليه فيضاً إلهياً و استنار قلبه بمواهب العنايةات  
*Kawākib*, 22.

<sup>147</sup> إن من العلم كهينة المكنون لا يعلمه إلا أهل العلم بالله فإذا نطقوا به لم ينكره إلا أهل الغرّة بالله

*Kawākib*, 22. Cf. Abū Manṣūr al-Daylamī, *al-Firdaws bi-ma’thūr al-khiṭāb*, ed. al-Sa‘īd b. Basyūnī Zaghālūl (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2010), 1:210 (no. 802).

<sup>148</sup> Cf. al-Ghazālī’s view that the aspiring Sufi should first master the demonstrative sciences (*‘ulūm burhāniyya*) in Binyamin Abrahamov, “Al-Ghazālī and the Rationalization of Sufism,” In *Islam and Rationality: The Impact of Al-Ghazālī; Papers Collected on His 900th Anniversary*, ed. Georges Tamer (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 1:41-42.

highlights the significance of Quran exegesis, arguing that while the external dimension (*ẓāhir*) of the Quran consists of legal rulings, its inner dimension (*bāṭin*) consists of knowledge of realities. He analogizes the relationship between these two types of knowledge to that between *‘ilm al-ma‘ānī* (the science of meanings) and *‘ilm al-bayān* (the science of rhetoric) on the one hand and grammar on the other: one must likewise master grammar before penetrating the secrets of the other two sciences. Furthermore, in the view of gnostics and saints, Ibn Mughayzil claims, there is no contradiction between Law and Reality; thus, when a miracle occurs, the scholar who has mastered both types of knowledge judges it by the Quran and Sunnah.<sup>149</sup>

Although Ibn Mughayzil considers Sufism its own science, he notes that some theoretical scholars (*ahl al-uṣūl*), in addition to Tāj al-Dīn Ibn al-Subkī (d. 771/1370), view some aspects of Sufism as jurisprudence (*fiqh*). In accordance with this, he interprets a hadith in which the Prophet responds to someone asking him about righteousness and sin: “Consult your heart, even if a qualified expert offers you an opinion.”<sup>150</sup> Ibn Mughayzil explains that this is because experts or muftis rely on exegesis and dispensations (*rukhaṣ*), whereas the heart illuminated with faith derives the opinion from God. By the same token, he refers to the claim of an unnamed gnostic that when exoteric scholars struggle to determine the correct view on a matter due to varying proofs, they ask gnostics (*ahl al-‘ilm bi-Llāh*), since they are closer to success and farther from desire (*hawā*). This is why, according to Ibn Mughayzil, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) and Yaḥyā b. Ma‘īn (d. 233/847) frequently visited Ma‘rūf al-Karkhī, even though he was not as proficient in the (exoteric) sciences and the Sunna as they were.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> *Kawākib*, 22-25.

<sup>150</sup> استفت قلبك و إن أفتاك المفتون

Cf. Aḥmad b. Ya‘lā, *Musnad Abī Ya‘lā al-Mawṣilī*, ed. Ḥusayn Salīm Asad (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa al-‘Arabiyya, 1992), 3:160-61 (no. 1586).

<sup>151</sup> *Kawākib*, 24. In contrast, Abū l-Najīb al-Suhrawardī (d. 563/1168) advises one having trouble with understanding hadith, jurisprudence, or Sufism to consult their respective experts. See Abū l-Najīb al-Suhrawardī, *A*

In this introductory discussion of Law and Reality, Ibn Mughayzil singles out Shams al-Dīn al-Bisāṭī as an example of a later figure who managed to combine the two, while he later identifies many others, such as Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, Ibn ‘Abbād al-Rūndī (d. 792/1390), and ‘Afīf al-Dīn al-Yāfi‘ī (d. 768/1367).<sup>152</sup> He indicates, though, that the combination of the two types of knowledge does not involve a perfect symbiosis, remarking that scholars who have acquired both are of two kinds: 1) those in whom esoteric knowledge is preponderant, such as al-Junayd (d. 298/910–11) and al-Shādhilī; and 2) those in whom exoteric knowledge is preponderant, such as al-Shāfi‘ī (d. 204/820) and Ibn Ḥanbal. Ibn Mughayzil bases this categorization on the story of Moses and Khidr: the predominance of Moses’ exoteric knowledge caused him to reject Khidr, whose esoteric knowledge was predominant.<sup>153</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil’s conception of Law and Reality and his desire to unify them are apparent throughout the *Kawākib*. For instance, he draws on sources by scholars known mainly for their expertise in the exoteric sciences to elucidate Sufi issues, such as in his discussion of the waking vision of the Prophet in which he deals extensively with the ideas of hadith commentators. Other examples include his defense of certain controversial Sufis, such as al-Ḥallāj and Ibn al-Fāriḍ, in which he highlights the approval or lack of condemnation of these figures by exoteric scholars (see below), and his defense of Sufis in general from accusations of espousing the doctrines of incarnation (*ḥulūl*) and unification (*ittiḥād*) in which he emphasizes the strong historical connections between orthodox authorities and Sufis:

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*Sufi Rule for Novices: Kitāb Ādāb al-Murīdīn of Abū l-Najīb al-Suhrawardī*, tr. Menahem Milson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 35.

<sup>152</sup> *Kawākib*, 25 and 190. Cf. al-Sha‘rānī’s view that only a minority of individuals have been capable of uniting Law and Reality within themselves. See Geoffroy, *Le soufisme en Égypte et en Syrie*, 368.

<sup>153</sup> *Kawākib*, 262. In contrast, al-Maghribī identifies three “seekers” (*sālikūn*): the majestic (*al-jalālī*), who inclines towards Law; the beautiful (*al-jamālī*), who inclines towards Reality; and the perfect (*al-kamālī*), who combines both stations and is superior to and more perfect than the other two seekers. See al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Wuṣṭā*, 2:837; al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 2:212.

Know that the imams among the scholars of jurisprudence and theology as well as the great, eminent authorities of Islam have always associated with the People of the Way, attended their preaching sessions, praised them profusely, and transmitted their statements and allusions in their classes and writings. If they saw anything that in any way suggested [those two doctrines], they were the first to flee and prompt to reject it.<sup>154</sup>

As an example of such an imam, Ibn Mughayzil mentions Ibn Surayj (d. 306/918). According to him, this Shāfi‘ī scholar attended the gathering of al-Junayd and heard his speech, commenting that it “possesses an assault (*ṣawla*), [though] not an invalid one.”<sup>155</sup> In the pages that follow, Ibn Mughayzil notes other examples of such imams before describing the praiseworthy qualities of Sufis and jurists’ praise for them. He also details a dispute between Ibn Ḥanbal and al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857), seemingly to show that it concerned al-Muḥāsibī’s use of *kalām* and not his Sufism.<sup>156</sup> Hence, Ibn Mughayzil’s overall message is that the Sufis, being orthodox, would not accept the erroneous and blameworthy doctrines of incarnation and unification; moreover, they have always been on good terms with the scholarly authorities.<sup>157</sup>

### 2.5.2 *The Miracles of the Saints*

Equally reflective of the state of Sufism in the Mamlūk period is Ibn Mughayzil’s extensive attention to the *karāmāt*. The importance of this phenomenon grew exponentially at this time.<sup>158</sup> Around the mid-eighth/fourteenth century, Taqī l-Dīn al-Subkī penned one of the

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<sup>154</sup> إعلم أن الأئمة من أهل الفقه والكلام وأكابر أعلام الإسلام ما زالوا يصحبون أهل الطريق و يحضرون مجالس وعظهم و يببالغون في الثناء عليهم و ينقلون عباراتهم و إشاراتهم في دروسهم و تصانيفهم فلو رأوا ما يشعر بشيء من ذلك لكانوا أول نافرين و إلى الإنكار مبادرين

*Kawākib*, 191.

<sup>155</sup> أشهد أن لهذا الكلام صولة ليست بصولة مبطل

*Kawākib*, 191. Perhaps, the “assault” refers to a trenchant critique of exoteric knowledge by al-Junayd or the powerful and challenging character of his mystical discourse.

<sup>156</sup> *Kawākib*, 191-201.

<sup>157</sup> For Ibn Mughayzil’s more direct treatments of incarnation and unification, which involve refutation of the ideas themselves, dissociation of specific Sufis from them, and showing how *ittiḥād* might be interpreted or defined in an acceptable sense, see *Kawākib*, 239-42, 290-92, and 298.

<sup>158</sup> Jonathan A.C. Brown, “Faithful Dissenters: Sunni Skepticism about the Miracles of Saints,” *Journal of Sufi Studies* 1 (2012): 128.

most comprehensive treatments of the *karāmāt* in Islamic literature, while biographies of Sufis often consisted largely or entirely of miracle stories, which authors felt increasingly less obliged to authenticate with chains of transmission.<sup>159</sup> This trend is reflected in the stress Egyptian Sufis placed on accepting the *karāmāt*. For example, Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh implied that rejecting them is tantamount to disbelief in observing that they result from God’s power, so denying them entails rejection of His power;<sup>160</sup> while Muḥammad al-Ḥanafī warned against rejecting them due to their basis in the Quran and Sunnah.<sup>161</sup> On a popular level, miracle reports generated profound reverence for individuals who were considered saints.<sup>162</sup> For instance, the veneration accorded to a slave named Sa‘dān (fl. 854/1450) for opposing the emir Jamāl al-Dīn Ustādār and the authorities’ initial incapacity to arrest him (which was perceived as miraculous) caused such commotion that they exiled him to Damietta.<sup>163</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil’s main aim in discussing the *karāmāt* is to demonstrate their veracity. This demonstration is important for proving the reality of the waking vision as a miracle and thus, in a way, is subordinate to his treatment of the vision (which is one reason why I do not examine his discourse on the *karāmāt*). Ibn Mughayzil goes so far, in fact, as to assert that rejection of the *karāmāt* is disbelief, which he contends in commenting on a statement attributed to Abū Turāb al-Nakhshabī (d. 245/859) asserting precisely that. Ibn Mughayzil points out that whereas Ibn al-Subkī suggested that al-Nakhshabī is referring to a kind of semi-disbelief (*kufr dūna kufra*) rather than that which invalidates one’s adherence to Islam, al-Zarkashī considered him to mean the disbelief of the innovator (*mubtadi*). Our author argues that since the *karāmāt* are traceable to

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<sup>159</sup> Brown, “Faithful Dissenters,” 135 and 148; Geoffroy, *Le soufisme en Égypte et en Syrie*, 37.

<sup>160</sup> Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, *Laṭā’if al-minan*, 69.

<sup>161</sup> al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 2:175.

<sup>162</sup> Boaz Shoshan, *Popular culture in medieval Cairo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 18-20.

<sup>163</sup> Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, *al-Tibr al-masbūk fī dhayl al-sulūk* (Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-Amīriyya, 1896), 302-3; Shoshan, *Popular culture in medieval Cairo*, 19.

the *mu'jizāt* (because saints inherit them from prophets), one who denies the *karāmāt* also rejects the *mu'jizāt*, which in turn entails a denial of the prophets themselves and thus disbelief.<sup>164</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil directs his defense of the *karāmāt* at three classes of opponents. The first class rejects them entirely. Although Ibn Mughayzil attributes this position to the Mu'tazila and Qadariyya, he states that those who deny all breaches of the customary order of things (*khawāriq*) due to their ignorance and lack of study of the traditions of the pious forebears are especially prominent in his age.<sup>165</sup> Since the Qadariyya disappeared already before the mid-second/eighth century,<sup>166</sup> and the Mu'tazila vanished by the eighth/fourteenth century,<sup>167</sup> he seems to be referring to some other kind of rationalist thinkers. He details and responds to four arguments advanced by the earlier groups. An example, which was their central claim,<sup>168</sup> is that were the *karāmāt* to exist, they would resemble the *mu'jizāt*, so there would remain no signs for the establishment of prophethood. Ibn Mughayzil argues that they do not resemble one another, since the *mu'jizāt* are connected with a prophet's mission (*da'wā*), while the *karāmāt* are connected with obeying the prophet, accepting him, and following his way. He also refers to al-Maghribī's argument based on the hadith, "I sense an odour of mercy from the direction of Yemen."<sup>169</sup> Al-Maghribī notes that this hadith affirms the *karāmāt* of Uways al-Qaranī (d. 37/657), a younger contemporary of Muḥammad. Now, he reasons, if such were possible in the Prophet's time for a non-prophet, they are also possible now, for they are the effect of love

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<sup>164</sup> *Kawākib*, 91; Ibn Mughayzil, *al-Qawl al-'alī*, 48. Adducing a passage from Ibn al-Subkī's *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya*, Ibn Mughayzil argues that he in fact agreed with al-Nakhshabī. See *Kawākib*, 92; Ibn Mughayzil, *al-Qawl al-'alī*, 48.

<sup>165</sup> *Kawākib*, 72.

<sup>166</sup> Steven C. Judd, "The Early Qadariyya," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*, ed. Sabine Schmidtke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 53.

<sup>167</sup> Daniel Gimaret, "Mu'tazila," in *EP*, 7:785.

<sup>168</sup> Brown, "Faithful Dissenters," 139.

<sup>169</sup> Abū l-Qāsim Sulaymān b. Aḥmad b. Ayyūb al-Lakhmī al-Ṭabarānī, *Musnad al-Shāmiyyīn*, ed. Ḥamdī 'Abd al-Majīd al-Salāfi (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1989), 2:149-50 (no. 1083).



resulting from the wonder of true obedience and companionship. Al-Maghribī adduces Q 3:31, “Say, ‘If you love God, follow me; God will love you’”; that is, God will ennoble you with various types of knowledge, subtle gifts, success, and assistance.<sup>170</sup>

The second class rejects the miracles of contemporary saints while affirming those of earlier ones (*mutaqaddimūn*), such as al-Junayd, Ma‘rūf al-Karkhī, Sarī al-Saqāfī (d. 253/867 or 257/870), Ibn Adham (d. 161/778), and the like. Ibn Mughayzil points out that about them al-Shādhilī commented, “By God, they are nothing but Jews, who accept Moses but reject Muḥammad!”<sup>171</sup> While Ibn Mughayzil does not ascribe this idea to anyone, it resembles that of the hadith commentator Ibn Baṭṭāl (d. 449/1057). Commenting on a tradition in which a Muslim prisoner in Mecca during the Prophet’s time eats a fruit that is currently not in season in the city, Ibn Baṭṭāl admits that while such could be a miracle (*āya*) brought about by God to demonstrate the truth of the Prophet’s mission to the unbelievers of the region, it would not happen today because “all Muslims have entered the religion of God in waves and believe in Muḥammad with certainty.”<sup>172</sup>

The third class concedes the existence of saints who perform miracles but do not specify any such individuals among their contemporaries. Ibn Mughayzil considers these deniers deprived because a person who fails to recognize such a saint does not benefit from him.<sup>173</sup>

In addition to this formal classification, Ibn Mughayzil accuses those who possess only exoteric knowledge of sometimes denying *karāmāt*.<sup>174</sup> The historian al-Dhahabī might, in his

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<sup>170</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 103-7 and 109-10.

<sup>171</sup> و الله ما هي إلا إسرائيلية صدقوا بموسى و كذبوا محمداً ﷺ  
*Kawāḳib*, 147; Ibn Mughayzil, *al-Qawl al-‘alī*, 55-56.

<sup>172</sup> فأما من يذكر اليوم مثل هذا بين ظهراني المسلمين فليس لذلك وجه إذ المسلمون كلهم قد دخلوا في دين الله أفواجا و آمنوا بمحمد و أيقنوا به  
Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Khalaf b. ‘Abd al-Malik b. Baṭṭāl, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ed. Abū Tamīm Yāsir b. Ibrāhīm (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, n.d.), 5:208; Brown, “Faithful Dissenters,” 146.

<sup>173</sup> For the three classes of opponents, see *Kawāḳib*, 147; Ibn Mughayzil, *al-Qawl al-‘alī*, 55-56.

<sup>174</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 26.

view, represent one such person. He vigorously argued that a miracle report must be reliably transmitted in order to be accepted. Thus, he rejected, for instance, a story in which Ibn Manda (d. 395/1005) enters and exits the Prophet's grave to ask him about a hadith because the tale's line of transmission (*isnād*) is interrupted.<sup>175</sup>

Apart from defending the authenticity of the *karāmāt*, Ibn Mughayzil covers a broad range of theoretical issues relating to the phenomenon, such as their types, limits, and legal implications; what distinguishes them from other types of “supernatural” events, such as *mu'jizāt* and magic (*siḥr*); and uprightness (*istiqāma*) as a condition for their occurrence. One may also include his treatment of various aspects of the miracle of vision (*ru'ya*), whether that of God, the Prophet, angels, or other beings, in addition to his narration of countless *karāma* stories, including those of Sufis as well as those of the Prophet's Companions and Successors.

### 2.5.3 Sufi Epistemology

Another major theme in the *Kawākib* is Sufi epistemology. In line with the importance that Ibn Mughayzil attaches to the “esoteric” knowledge of the mystics, he applies himself to elaborating its various types, such as unveiling (*kashf*), intuition (*firāsa*), inspiration (*ilhām*), God-given knowledge (*ilm ladunī*), and inner vision (*baṣīra*), and to explaining related concepts such as the unseen world (*al-ghayb*). Although Ibn Mughayzil does not specify adversaries, one assumes that he is motivated by some opposition to Sufi epistemological notions and claims. One instance of skepticism that appears in the *Kawākib* is voiced by a certain Abū Yazīd, who observes that most scholars consider inspiration nothing but “imagination” (*khayāl*). Further

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<sup>175</sup> Al-Dhahabī was also skeptical about certain miracles on rational grounds. See Brown, “Faithful Dissenters,” 156-59. For Ibn Manda's story, see Chapter 4. Ibn Mughayzil attempts to show the falseness of the claim that the Ash'arī al-Isfarāyīnī (d. 418/1027) rejected the *karāmāt*. See *Kawākib*, 89-90; Ibn Mughayzil, *al-Qawl al-'alī*, 44-47.

examples from the Mamlūk age can be cited from other sources. For instance, a group of religious notables interrogated the Syrian master Abū l-Rijāl al-Manīnī (d. 694/1294) about his unveilings; the judge ‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Buṣrawī considered those of the Egyptian Sufi Abū Bakr al-Dalyawātī (d. after 914/1509) to lack any foundation; al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442) believed that unveiling is nothing but chimeras and storytelling; and according to Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, most jurists believed that inspiration consists of mere thoughts (*khawāṭir*) on which no legal proof can be based.<sup>176</sup>

## 2.6 Intertextual Comparison

The presence of these themes in the *Kawākib* reveals the major impact of Mamlūk-era Sufism on Ibn Mughayzil. The significance and originality of his book within its immediate intellectual environment can be further demonstrated through comparison to the structure, aims, and content of two important Shādhilī texts written around the same time: the *Ta’yīd al-ḥaqīqa al-‘aliyya wa-tashyīd al-ṭarīqa al-Shādhiliyya* by al-Suyūṭī and the *Qawā’id al-taṣawwuf* by Aḥmad Zarrūq.

The *Ta’yīd* resembles the *Kawākib* in both its apologetic tone and content. The preface to the work reveals al-Suyūṭī’s defensive posture:

Know—may God grant me and you success—that the science of Sufism is in itself a noble science, exalted in rank and Sunnī in character. The leaders of Islam and guides of humankind have always, in both ancient and recent times, raised its beacon, exalted its degree, extolled its adherents, and affirmed its masters, for they are God’s saints and the elite among His creatures after the prophets and messengers. However, both previously and recently, newcomers have joined and imitated them, though they are not [truly] among them. They speak without knowledge and spiritual realization, so they are in error and misguided, and they cause [others] to stray. Among them is one who confines himself to the title

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<sup>176</sup> Geoffroy, *Le soufisme en Égypte et en Syrie*, 480-81 and 484.

[“Sufism”], using it as a means to attain the rubble of the world, and one who does not achieve spiritual realization and affirms incarnation and the like, which leads to negative assumptions about all [Sufis]. The eminent among [the Sufis] have warned about this grave matter, noting that these evil things originate from those newcomers. So, I have composed this brief treatise (*kurrāsa*) and called it *Confirming the Sublime Truth and Strengthening the Shādhilī Way* based upon judgments that God has rendered for His own sake.<sup>177</sup> He gave us sincerity in [our] intentions and security from error, prattle, and the like.<sup>178</sup>

In just over 100 pages in a modern edition, al-Suyūṭī covers a wide range of issues. Most prominent are those connected with Sufi epistemology, such as the nature of mystical knowledge and its relationship to exoteric knowledge; sainthood and the saints’ miracles; theological tenets espoused by Sufis; scholars and Sufis who supported Sufism; and controversial or heretical doctrines such as incarnation and unification. The brevity of al-Suyūṭī’s work that amplifies the author’s apologetic orientation is what contrasts most with the *Kawākib* and its protracted discussions. In other words, whereas al-Suyūṭī only briefly touches on topics, most often in defense of their orthodoxy, Ibn Mughayzil both defends Sufis and their teachings while exploring their theoretical dimensions and disagreements among them.<sup>179</sup>

Although Zarrūq, similar to Ibn Mughayzil, describes the aim of his *Qawā’id al-taṣawwuf* as “the introduction of the principles and foundations of Sufism in a manner that combines Law and Reality, and links the principles [of belief] and jurisprudence with the

<sup>177</sup> That is, al-Suyūṭī seems to mean, judgments that God has made him sincere in pronouncing for His sake alone.

<sup>178</sup> إعلم وفقتي الله و إياك أن علم التصوف في نفسه علم شريف رفيع قدره سني أمره لم تنزل أئمة الإسلام و هداة الأنام قديماً و حديثاً يرفعون مناره و يجلون مقدارها و يعظمون أصحابها و يعتقدون أربابها فإنهم أولياء الله و خاصته من خلقه بعد أنبيائه و رسله غير أنه دخل فيهم قديماً و حديثاً دخل تشبهوا بهم و ليسوا منهم و تكلموا بغير علم و تحقيق فزلوا و ضلوا و أضلوا فمنهم من اقتصر على الاسم و توسل بذلك الى حطام الدنيا و منهم من لم يتحقق فقال بالحلول و ما شابهه فأدى ذلك إلى إساءة الظن بالجميع و قد نبه المعتبرون منهم على هذا الخطب الجليل و نصوا على أن هذه الأمور السيئة من ذلك الدخيل و قد وضعت هذه الكراسة و سميتها تأييد الحقيقة العلية و تشييد الطريقة الشاذلية مرتبة على فصول جعلها الله خالصة لوجهه و رزقنا الصدق في المقاصد و السلامة من الخطأ و الخطل و شبيهه

al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’yīd al-ḥaqīqa*, 7.

<sup>179</sup> For a summary of the *Ta’yīd*, see Jean-Claude Garcin, “Histoire, opposition, politique et piétisme traditionaliste dans le *Ḥusn al Muḥādarat de Suyūṭi*,” *Annales Islamologiques* 7 (1967): 83-86. For a discussion of its law and theology, see Aaron Spevack, “Al-Suyūṭī, the Intolerant Ecumenist: Law and Theology in *Ta’yīd al-ḥaqīqa al-’aliyya wa-taṣhīd al-tarīqa al-Shādhiliyya*,” in *Al-Suyūṭī, a Polymath of the Mamlūk Period: Proceedings of the themed day of the First Conference of the School of Mamlūk Studies (Ca’ Foscari University, Venice, June 23, 2014)*, ed. Antonella Gherseti (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 15-46.

Path,”<sup>180</sup> the text differs from the *Kawākib* in multiple ways. Most notable is in its aphoristic, dry, and somewhat abstruse style. Zarrūq divides the work into an epilogue and sixteen sections (*fuṣūl*), each of which contains a number of loosely connected “Principles” (*qawā'id*) that amount to 217. Emulating legal works, he generally commences each Principle on a theoretical note by describing the meaning of a concept or word before considering its application to a given topic, sometimes with examples and references.<sup>181</sup> These two excerpts illustrate this approach:

Principle [11]

Every thing has its adherents, a purpose, a place, and a reality. Sufism is suitable for whomsoever has true guidance, or for a gnostic who has achieved realization, or for a sincere lover, or for a righteous seeker, or for a scholar who is bound by truths, or for a jurist who is bound by the extended meanings of words. [Sufism is not suitable for] whomsoever is prejudiced by reason of his ignorance, or pretends to be knowledgeable, or speaks rashly in disputation, or is a foolish common man, or is a reluctant seeker of truth, or is a person determined to blindly imitate the great men he has known in general.<sup>182</sup>

Principle [107]

Accustoming the self to take and relinquish something, while driving it onwards slowly, is easier [than other methods] for reaching one's goal with it. This is why it has been said, “Refraining from sin is easier than asking for repentance. He who abandons a desire seven times, abandoning it every time it presents itself to him, is not burdened with it. God is too kind to punish a heart with a desire abandoned for His sake.”<sup>183</sup>

The *Qawā'id* also differs from the *Kawākib* in its lack of definition of Sufi terms and biographies of masters as well as little transmission of anecdotes. Zarrūq says that he sees no benefit in writing about the life of a saint whose standing is well known, while he judges al-Qushayrī's

<sup>180</sup> Abū l-'Abbās Aḥmad b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Īsā Zarrūq, *Qawā'id al-taṣawwuf*, ed. 'Abd al-Majīd Khayālī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2005), 21 (no. 60); Zaineb S. Istrabadi, “The Principles of Sūfism (*Qawā'id al-Taṣawwuf*),” PhD diss., (Indiana University, 1988), 52 (no. 59).  
Zarrūq, *Qawā'id al-taṣawwuf*, 21; Istrabadi, “The Principles of Sufism,” 52.

<sup>181</sup> Istrabadi, “The Principles of Sufism,” 30.

<sup>182</sup> لكل شيء أهل و وجه و محل و حقيقة و أهلية التصوف الذي توجه صادق أو عارف محقق أو محب مصدق أو طالب منصف أو عالم تقيده الحقائق أو فقيه تقيده الاتساعات لا متحامل بالجهل أو مستظهر بالدعوى أو مخالف في النظر أو عامي غبي أو طالب معرض أو مصمم على تقليد أكابر من عرف في الجملة

Zarrūq, *Qawā'id al-taṣawwuf*, 25-26 (no. 11); Istrabadi, “The Principles of Sufism,” 60 (no. 11).

<sup>183</sup> تمرين النفس في أخذ الشيء و تركه و سوقها بالتدرج أسهل لتحصيل المراد منها فلذلك قيل ترك الذنوب أيسر من طلب التوبة و من ترك شهوة سبع مرات كلما عرضت له تركها لم يبطل بها و الله أكرم من أن يعذب قلباً بشهوة تركت لأجله  
Zarrūq, *Qawā'id al-taṣawwuf*, 74 (no. 107); Istrabadi, “The Principles of Sufism,” 130 (no. 105).

*Risāla* to be too diffuse and anecdotal.<sup>184</sup> Lastly, whereas poetry (especially that of Ibn al-Fāriḍ) and its interpretation is central to the *Kawāḳib*,<sup>185</sup> Zarrūq’s attitude to such literature is ambivalent. On the one hand, he admits that since it is easier to benefit the soul by attracting it through its natural inclination, poetry that defines the mystical path and alludes to its realities may profit it. On the other hand, he contends that someone enamoured by poetry does not have a true sense of his religion or, if he does, only with confusion and pretension. Moreover, celebrating someone in love poetry (*taghazzul*)—among other things—indicates one’s remoteness from witnessing (God), for divine majesty and beauty prevent the operation of the self (*qiyām al-naḥs*), while poetry is one of that self’s praiseworthy products. One in whose heart the Light of God shines is not preoccupied by anything but Him, so what proceeds from him is more desirable than fresh water. This is why, Zarrūq explains, little poetry has been composed by preeminent figures such as al-Junayd, ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 561/1166), and al-Shādhilī.<sup>186</sup>

Istrabadi points out that Zarrūq wrote the *Qawā‘id* at a time of political instability in ninth/fifteenth-century Morocco that resulted in the Maraboutic Crisis, in which wandering holy men, or marabouts, emerged throughout the land vying for power. Zarrūq, she notes, directed his work at their “miracle-mongering and self-delusion,” or their beliefs about themselves and the methods that they employed to legitimate their claims to power.<sup>187</sup> Thus, while his text informs us about Sufism and Shādhilī literature in ninth/fifteenth-century Morocco, it does not, like the *Kawāḳib*, reflect their state in contemporary Egypt.

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<sup>184</sup> Zarrūq, *Qawā‘id al-taṣawwuf*, 49 (no. 55); Istrabadi, “The Principles of Sufism,” 30 and 93 (no. 54).

<sup>185</sup> Ibn Mughayzil (*Kawāḳib*, 217) claims that the large amount of poetry composed by Shādhilīs indicates their exalted status because poetry is a string on which the pearls of the (divine) attributes are strung that causes pure natures to tremble before sublime meanings.

<sup>186</sup> Zarrūq, *Qawā‘id al-taṣawwuf*, 91-92 (nos. 137 and 139); Istrabadi, “The Principles of Sufism,” 155-56 (nos. 135 and 137).

<sup>187</sup> Istrabadi, “The Principles of Sufism,” 28.

## 2.7 Perspectives

In this final section of the chapter, I investigate the positionality and character of Ibn Mughayzil by considering his relationship to and opinions about various movements and figures, especially those that have proven controversial among Sufis and other Muslim scholars, since it is in these cases that he takes decisive stands that reveal his commitments and emotions.

### 2.7.1 *The Shādhiliyya*

It was common, especially around the end of the medieval period, for Sufis to affiliate with multiple orders.<sup>188</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, for example, had initiatory connections to such orders as the Aḥmadiyya-Rifāʿiyya, Qādiriyya, and Suhrawardiyya,<sup>189</sup> even though his main Sufi treatise extolled the Shādhilī way. Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī was initiated into all “orthodox” orders in Egypt (twenty-six, according to al-Shaʿrānī),<sup>190</sup> while Aḥmad al-Qushshashī claimed affiliation with more than twenty orders and devoted a significant portion of his Sufi handbook to detailing his chains of transmission.<sup>191</sup> Nevertheless, it does not appear that Ibn Mughayzil belonged to any order besides the Shādhiliyya, whose supremacy he emphasizes at length. After citing a long passage from the *Shawāhid al-taṣawwuf* of a certain al-Iṣfahānī<sup>192</sup> containing a history of Sufism in which the deaths of great masters around the turn of the fourth/tenth century leads to decadence in the tradition and in Islam overall, Ibn Mughayzil implies that al-Shādhilī initiated a

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<sup>188</sup> Geoffroy, *Le soufisme en Égypte et en Syrie*, 199-201; Geoffroy, “Ṭarīqa,” in *EP*, 10:245.

<sup>189</sup> Sartain, *Jalāl al-dīn al-Suyūṭī*, 1:34.

<sup>190</sup> Geoffroy, *Le soufisme en Égypte et en Syrie*, 200.

<sup>191</sup> Rachida Chih, “Discussing the Sufism of the Early Modern Period: A New Historiographical Outlook on the *Tariqa Muhammadiyya*,” in *Sufism East and West: Mystical Islam and Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Modern World*, ed. Jamal Malik and Saeed Zarrabi Zadeh (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 109-16. On al-Shaʿrānī’s connections to and opinions about various orders, see Winter, *Studies*, 69-96.

<sup>192</sup> Presumably, Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī (d. 430/1038), author of the well-known biographical work *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ wa-ṭabaqāt al-aṣfiyāʾ*. However, I do not find a work by him under this title. See *GAL* S2:617; *HAWT* S2:636.

revival by next relating that when he came to Egypt, he called people to God, and “the people of the East and West without exception” humbled themselves before him; he points out that the most eminent scholars of al-Shādhilī’s time, such as Ibn ‘Abd al-Salām and Ibn Daqīq al-‘Īd (d. 701/1302), attended his gathering.<sup>193</sup> Ibn Mughayzil demonstrates the superiority of the Shādhiliyya more explicitly by narrating traditions and poetry. For example, according to Shams al-Dīn al-Ḥanafī, the Shādhiliyya are distinguished with three features that neither anyone before them had nor anyone after them will have: 1) they were already selected (*mukhtārūn*; to be Shādhilīs, or saints?) in the Preserved Tablet; 2) an “attracted” (*majdhūb*) Shādhilī returns to sobriety (*ṣaḥw*); and 3) the *quṭb* will be a Shādhilī until the Day of Judgment, a request by al-Shādhilī that was granted by God.<sup>194</sup> Ibn Mughayzil indeed refers to many Shādhilīs as *aqṭāb*, including the founder himself,<sup>195</sup> al-Mursī,<sup>196</sup> Shams al-Dīn al-Ḥanafī,<sup>197</sup> and al-Maghribī.<sup>198</sup>

One story portrays Shādhilīs with greater supernatural power than Rifā‘īs. After being attacked by a wild beast while walking in the countryside, a Rifā‘ī master is rescued by a man after calling Aḥmad al-Rifā‘ī. When the shaykh comes to Alexandria, he tries to find a saint and is instructed to visit a follower of al-Ḥabashī by the name of ‘Alī al-Badawī, who asks him, “Do you call someone besides us? Do you not know that the time is ours until the Day of Resurrection? Where was [Aḥmad] Ibn al-Rifā‘ī when you called him during the beast’s attack?”<sup>199</sup> An unnamed Shādhilī told Ibn Mughayzil that he saw Abū l-Mawāhib al-Tūnisī and some of his students in a dream with sheets of paper inscribed with the declaration, “The

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<sup>193</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 201-8.

<sup>194</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 217.

<sup>195</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 129.

<sup>196</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 94.

<sup>197</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 217.

<sup>198</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 305 and 315.

<sup>199</sup> أتذكر غيرنا أما علمت أن الوقت لنا إلى يوم القيامة أين ابن الرفاعي حين ذكرته لما خرج عليك السبع  
*Kawāḳib*, 219.



Shādhiliyya excel, and they are not excelled.”<sup>200</sup> One should perhaps even understand Ibn Mughayzil’s designation of ‘Alī Wafā merely as a Shādhilī and his interpretation of statements by the two Wafās as support for the Shādhiliyya as attempts to ensure the cohesion of the brotherhood.<sup>201</sup> The upshot of the preeminence of the Shādhiliyya, in Ibn Mughayzil’s view, is that “you must love them, so perchance you will succeed by virtue of their proximity, enter under their protection, and join their party.”<sup>202</sup>

### 2.7.2 *The Malāmatiyya*

In the late third/ninth and early fourth/tenth centuries, a group emerged in Khurasan (especially Nishapur) known as the Malāmatiyya (Path of Blame). Their distinctive feature was constant suspicion of the lower self (*nafs*) based on the conviction that, left uncontrolled, it would assail the pious believer through self-conceit, pretence, and hypocrisy, thereby obstructing him from attaining his true goal of sincere, selfless devotion to God. They held that the only way to hold the lower self in check is to restrict its area of activity by avoiding all public display of piety and praiseworthy acts while relentlessly blaming it. As preserving anonymity was thus an integral component of their pursuit, the Malāmatīs tried to blend into society by refusing to adorn special clothing and by earning a living, while conducting *dhikr* silently and refraining from holding *samā* ‘sessions.’<sup>203</sup> Their title, however, was soon appropriated by the Qalandars, a group

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<sup>200</sup> الشاذلية تعلقو ولا يعلى عليها

*Kawākib*, 213. This is a variation of the statement of the Companion ‘Āidh b. ‘Amr (d. 61/680-81), “Islam excels, and it is not excelled.” See al-Daylamī, *al-Firdaws bi-ma’thūr al-khiṭāb*, 116 (no. 195).

<sup>201</sup> *Kawākib*, 25 and 219. In a story related from Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh’s *Laṭā’if al-minan* (p. 79; *Kawākib*, 84), al-Shādhilī’s former master Abū Madyan announces that his disciple possesses forty additional sciences than he does and is “a limitless sea.”

<sup>202</sup> فعليك يا هذا بحبهم فعسى تظفر بقربهم و تدخل في حمايتهم و تصير في حزبهم  
*Kawākib*, 213. For more praise of the Shādhiliyya, see *Kawākib*, 208-19.

<sup>203</sup> Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *Sufism: The formative period* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 48-49.

that actively sought the blame of others through asocial behaviour.<sup>204</sup> The antinomianism of the Qalandars and similar groups manifested in diverse forms, such as nudity; shaving of the hair, beard, moustache, and eyebrows; carrying of strange objects such as hatchets and ankle bones; neglect of ritual practices prescribed by Islamic law such as prayer and fasting in favour of music and dance; self-laceration and self-cauterization; consumption of intoxicants and hallucinogens; and possibly sexual libertinism. They also proposed radical reinterpretations of Sufi doctrines to support their lifestyles: self-annihilation (*fanā'*), for example, was understood as a voluntary “death” that deprives one of his social and legal statuses.<sup>205</sup>

Although perhaps not organized into social groups, deviant Malāmatīs were common in the late Mamlūk period, especially in Cairo.<sup>206</sup> Al-Sha‘rānī identifies his contemporary Barakāt al-Khayyāt (d. 923/1517-18) as one such Malāmatī. Apart from earning condemnation for wearing a striped muslin turban in the manner of a Christian, Barakāt would create a foul stench in his shop by filling it up with all the dead dogs, cats, and sheep that he came across, thus making it unbearable for anyone to sit down with him. One Friday, the mufti of al-Azhar and other scholars invited him to join them for the congregational prayer. While noting that he was “not in the habit” of performing this ritual, he accepted their invitation. On the way to the mosque, he stopped to make his ablutions in a reservoir for dogs before entering a urinal for donkeys. Barakāt explained once his entourage left him behind that the reservoir symbolized the unlawful source of the scholars’ subsistence while the urinal represented their impure faith.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Hamid Algar, “Malāmatīyya,” in *EP*, 6:225.

<sup>205</sup> Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *God’s Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Period; 1200-1550* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), 18-21.

<sup>206</sup> Geoffroy, *Le soufisme en Égypte et en Syrie*, 347.

<sup>207</sup> This story is found only in the older edition of *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*. See ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* (Cairo: Maktabat wa-Maṭba‘at ‘Alī Ṣabīḥ wa-Awlāduh, n.d.), 2:130; Geoffroy, *Le soufisme en Égypte et en Syrie*, 348. Henceforth, only the 2005 edition of *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* is cited.

Ibn Mughayzil refers to the Malāmatīs with this title and as “destroyers” (*mukhrībūn*). He delineates two types of “destruction” (*takhrīb*) that they embody: 1) acting scandalously to show negligence in religion; and 2) speaking grandiosely in claiming to have attained an exalted state beyond what would be expected of him, thus causing people to turn away from and think negatively of him. Like al-Maghribī, who, commenting on poetry by Ibn ‘Arabī, describes the Malāmatiyya as those who outwardly fashion themselves with reprehensible things (*munkarāt*) while inwardly have nothing to do with them, Ibn Mughayzil’s attitude towards the Malāmatiyya is positive. This is revealed by his commentary on a story about Ibrāhīm al-Khawāṣṣ (d. 291/903-4). When this mystic stole a man’s clothes and wore them in order to destroy his reputation for piety, a jurist asked a Sufi for a proof that would make such an act permissible from a legal perspective. The Sufi pointed out that just as it is permissible to use certain forbidden things during emergencies, such as impure substances for medication, al-Khawāṣṣ treated his heart with a forbidden act. According to Ibn Mughayzil, if it is permissible to treat physical illnesses with something forbidden, the permissibility of treating the heart, which is the locus of gnosis and light, with something forbidden is all the more important and even less dangerous (than employing the forbidden for medical purposes). Indeed, he continues, there is a major difference between the two types of illness. Whereas a physical illness is mercy and a benefit, an illness of the heart is a punishment and destruction. Furthermore, something that destroys one’s religion, in contrast to something that destroys one’s body, displeases God, distancing him from His mercy and drawing him nearer to Satan. And in any case, a healthy heart leads to a healthy body, as the Prophet stated: “In the body is a morsel; when it is in good order, the entire body is as well. Verily, it is the heart.”<sup>208</sup>

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ألا وإن في الجسد مضغة إذا صلحت صلح الجسد كله ألا وهي القلب<sup>208</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil does, however, stipulate conditions for the Malāmatī. Following al-Yāfi‘ī, he states that the Malāmatī must not treat his heart with something extremely forbidden (*ḥarām mughallaḏ*), such as a major sin (*kabīra*). He adds that one should only commit the forbidden act when he knows by the light of God that refraining from it would cause him greater harm, and he is to make amends for his act later by asking God for forgiveness and pardoning one who wronged him due to his violation of what religious law literally required of him. Furthermore, when the Malāmatī can attain his goal with a merely reprehensible act (*makrūh*), it is not permissible for him to perform the forbidden act.<sup>209</sup>

### 2.7.3 Ibn ‘Arabī

Mamlūk Egypt was the site of a fierce polemic against Ibn ‘Arabī and his thought. Ibn Taymiyya was an early and pivotal contributor to the movement, writing at least four works and many legal responsa against Ibn ‘Arabī’s ideas, especially what he viewed as the Shaykh’s tendency to erase all distinctions between God and the world.<sup>210</sup> In the ninth/fifteenth century when Ibn Mughayzil wrote, the polemic intensified with the composition of at least nineteen comprehensive refutations of Ibn ‘Arabī’s thought and countless legal responsa condemning the Shaykh and his followers.<sup>211</sup> This polemical outpouring was accompanied by persecution at the hands of some Mamlūk authorities. After being granted a position in the Cairene military administration, the Turk Taghrī Birmish b. Yūsuf (d. 823/1420), for example, ordered the banning and destruction of all of Ibn ‘Arabī’s works, while during the reign of Sayf al-Dīn

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*Kawākib*, 344–46. For the hadith, see Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Damascus: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 2002), 23–24 (no. 52); Abū l-Ḥusayn Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, ed. Naẓār b. Muḥammad al-Fāriyābī (Riyadh: Dār al-Tayyiba, 2006), 750 (no. 1599).

<sup>209</sup> *Kawākib*, 346.

<sup>210</sup> Alexander D. Knysh, *Ibn ‘Arabī in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 87–111.

<sup>211</sup> Knysh, *Ibn ‘Arabī in the Later Islamic Tradition*, 201.

Jaqmaq (r. 842-57/1438-53), an Egyptian shaykh was punished with lashes and exiled after several works by Ibn ‘Arabī were discovered in his home.<sup>212</sup> Ibn ‘Arabī’s partisans in the eighth-ninth/fourteenth-fifteenth centuries countered this opposition by penning up to ten apologies and ten fatwas in support of the Shaykh, while earning official support from the Mamlūk officer Barqūq (d. 877/1472).<sup>213</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil’s teachers were among Ibn ‘Arabī’s supporters and admirers. Al-Suyūṭī, for example, wrote the influential treatise *Tanbīh al-ghabī fī takhṭi’at Ibn ‘Arabī (Rousing the Ignorant about Faulting Ibn ‘Arabī)* in response to the polemic by Burhān al-Dīn al-Biqā’ī (d. 885/1480) with the similar title, *Tanbīh al-ghabī ilā takfīr Ibn ‘Arabī (Rousing the Ignorant to Declare Ibn ‘Arabī an Infidel)*.<sup>214</sup> According to al-Sha‘rānī, al-Maghribī stated that just as al-Junayd was the trainer of novices, Ibn ‘Arabī was the trainer of gnostics. Al-Sha‘rānī also relates that al-Maghribī referred to Ibn ‘Arabī with such titles as “The Spirit of the Divine Descents” (*rūḥ al-tanazzulāt*) and “The Intimate of Being” (*ilf al-wujūd*).<sup>215</sup>

<sup>212</sup> Knysh, *Ibn ‘Arabī in the Later Islamic Tradition*, 201-2; Geoffroy, *Le soufisme en Égypte et en Syrie*, 455-56.

<sup>213</sup> Knysh, *Ibn ‘Arabī in the Later Islamic Tradition*, 201 and 204. For overviews of the disputes in Mamlūk and/or early Ottoman Egypt, see Knysh, *Ibn ‘Arabī in the Later Islamic Tradition*, 201-23; Geoffroy, *Le soufisme en Égypte et en Syrie*, 452-65.

<sup>214</sup> Al-Suyūṭī’s rebuttal proved influential among later scholars such as Ibrāhīm al-Ḥalabī (d. 956/1546), Ibn Ṭūlūn (d. 955/1548), Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, and the mufti of the Ottoman Empire, Kemalpaşazade (d. 940/1534), who formalized his support for the Shaykh by adding his signature to a fatwa defending him in addition to penning his own apologetic work. See Geoffroy, *Le soufisme en Égypte et en Syrie*, 457-58.

<sup>215</sup> ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Yawāqūt wa-l-jawāhir fī bayān ‘aḳā’id al-akābir* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, n.d.), 1:27. According to al-Sakhāwī (*al-Ḍaw’ al-lāmi’*, 8:252), al-Maghribī mastered (*dhakara bi-itqān*) the commentary on Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s *al-Tā’iyya* by the Akbarian ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī (d. ca. 730-36/1329-35). Al-Abnāsī, as I mentioned in his biography, became so infatuated with the writings of Ibn ‘Arabī, Ibn al-Fāriḍ, and other “monists” that he rejected teaching positions in various institutions and became an authority for students of their thought. Al-Sakhāwī claims to have been one of the people who repeatedly counseled al-Abnāsī (to renounce his passion), who responded by affirming that these masters’ teachings were indeed repulsive if read literally (according to al-Sakhāwī, al-Abnāsī interpreted them in a highly metaphorical sense: *ikhrājuhu ‘an ḡāhirihi bi-ba’īd al-ta’wīl*). Al-Sakhāwī also tells us that the father of Abū l-Najā (another teacher of Ibn Mughayzil), whom he once met in a Qādirī zāwiya, was one of the eminent people to incline towards Ibn ‘Arabī and read his *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*. See al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-lāmi’*, 3:185-86 and 4:165.

Like his teachers, Ibn Mughayzil profoundly respected and admired Ibn ‘Arabī. His positive remarks about the Shaykh surface at various points in the *Kawākib*. His first comments, which strongly reflect the Egyptian polemic, are the most powerful and telling:

I am utterly astonished at one who puts his faith in Ibn Sīnā—about whom Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ said, “He is the Satan among the human devils!”<sup>216</sup> and, due to his ignorance, criticizes the Sea of Truths, Flagbearer of Knowledge of God, and Reviver of Religion Ibn ‘Arabī, whose sanctity Sufis unanimously affirm; [indeed] no two of them differ over his Polehood, let alone his sainthood [...] He [this ignoramus] is not aware of the exaltedness of the station of this divine, learned man, the likes of whom women will not deliver after him nor had they done so before him for a long time [...] As for one whose understanding is hindered and becomes cowardly, inflexibly [confining himself] to the exoteric sciences so that he does not advance beyond them: he is veiled from comprehending experiential, God-given knowledge [and] distanced from degrees of perfection. He acts haphazardly until God declares war on him without his awareness, so he is like [one] God spoke of, “As for one to whom the evil of his deeds has been made alluring so that he views them as good” (Q 35:8). Indeed, God has made his evil acts [appear] good in his eye so that they are a means for his destruction. This is the case for some people in our time [...] They will not realize their error until they [enter] the afterlife, for there the distinction between the felicitous and the wretched materializes. Oh the loss of the deniers! Oh their humiliation when they witness Ibn ‘Arabī in the procession of the pure and the veracious! [...] What are they saying about he whom the Prophet ordered to write on the sciences of the realities?<sup>217</sup> It is sufficient [to point out] what a difference there is between someone the Messenger ordered to write and someone whose writing he ordered him to cleanse.<sup>218</sup> And what are they saying about he whom God ennobled with [the miracle of] time expansion so that his writings on the sciences of realities and allusions exceed 5000?<sup>219</sup> And what are they saying about he whom God ennobled with hearing the discourse of the food plates?<sup>220</sup>

<sup>216</sup> He pronounced this in a fatwa. See Anke von Kügelgen, “The Poison of Philosophy: Ibn Taymiyya’s Struggle For and Against Reason,” in *Islamic Theology, Philosophy and Law: Debating Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya*, ed. Birgit Krawietz and Georges Tamer (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), 263-64.

<sup>217</sup> In the preface to the *Fuṣūṣ*, Ibn ‘Arabī claims that in a vision in Damascus in 627/1229 he received the text from the Prophet and was commanded to disseminate it. See Muḥyī l-Dīn b. ‘Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, ed. Abū l-‘Alā’ ‘Afīfī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1946), 47.

<sup>218</sup> This refers to Abū Ḥafṣ al-Suhrawardī, who claims to have washed away Avicenna’s *al-Shifā’*. See *Kawākib*, 160; Shihāb al-Dīn ‘Umar b. Muḥammad al-Suhrawardī, *Kashf al-faḍā’ih al-Yūnāniyya wa-rashf al-naṣā’ih al-īmāniyya*, ed. ‘Āisha Yūsuf al-Mannā’ī (Cairo: Dār al-Islām, 1999), 86.

<sup>219</sup> The modern estimate of Osman Yahia is that Ibn ‘Arabī wrote 700 works, including books, treatises, and collections of poetry. See Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-‘Arabī’s Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), xi.

<sup>220</sup> إني لأعجب أشد العجب ممن يعتقد ابن سينا الذي قال فيه ابن الصلاح إنه شيطان من شياطين الإنس و ينتقد بجهله على بحر الحقائق حامل لواء العلم بالله محيي الدين ابن العربي الذي أطبقت على ولايته الصوفية و لم يختلف منهم اثنان في ذلك بقطيبيته فضلاً عن ولايته [...] لا يعرف علو مقام هذا الحبر الرباني الذي لم تلد النساء مثله بعده و لا قبله من دهر طويل [...] و أما من وقف فهمه و صار جباناً جامداً على ظواهر العلوم الظاهرة بحيث لا يترقي عنها فذلك محجوب عن فهم العلوم الذوقية اللدنية مبعد عن درجات الكمل فهو لم يزل يخبط خبط عشوى حتى برز الله بالمحاربة من غير أن يشعر

Notably, by describing Ibn ‘Arabī as “the likes of whom women will not deliver after him nor had they done so before him for a long time,” Ibn Mughayzil seems to even exalt him above al-Shādhilī and his followers, who lived either at the same time as the Shaykh or after him. The story about Ibn ‘Arabī hearing food plates speak is recounted much later in the *Kawākib* in Ibn Mughayzil’s discussion of Sufi hermeneutics. The tale, which implies Ibn ‘Arabī’s spiritual superiority (at least in one capacity) to some Sufi masters, is related to demonstrate that an expression can be understood in multiple ways:

Some ascetics invited us to preach in Zuqāq al-Qanādīl in Cairo. A number of masters gathered there. Food was served, and there was a glass vessel for urine but not yet in use. The master of the house distributed food in it, and some people ate. The vessel said, “Since God blessed me with those masters’ eating from me, I am not thereafter content to be a place for filth.” It then broke in half [...] I asked the group, “You heard what the vessel said?” They replied, “Yes.” I asked, “What did you hear?” They repeated what was mentioned [in my quotation]. I asked, “How are these words to be interpreted?” They bowed their heads in silence, none of them speaking. I said, “It said something different than that [which we heard].” They asked, “What was it?” I replied, “It said, ‘Such is the case of your hearts: [those belonging to] people whom God has blessed with faith are no longer content to be places for the impurity of disobedience and love of the world.’”<sup>221</sup>

Despite Ibn Mughayzil’s ire captured in the long quote above, he recognizes that Ibn ‘Arabī’s ideas are not suitable for everyone. He explains that esoteric scholars (*‘ulamā’ al-bāṭin*) sometimes write lucid books about their science in order to benefit both exoterics and mystics

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بنفسه فهو كما قال الله تعالى (أفمن زين له سوء عمله فرأه حسناً) فقد جعل الله أعماله القبيحة في عينه حسنة لتكون سبباً لهلاكه و كان الأمر كذلك في بعض الناس في زماننا [...] لا يتحققون باطلهم إلا في عالم البرزخ لأن هناك يتحقق التمييز بين السعداء والأشقياء فيا خسران المنكرين و يا فضيحتهم إذا شاهدوا ابن العربي في موكب الأصفياء و الصديقين [...] ماذا يقولون أيضاً فيمن أمره الرسول ﷺ بالتصنيف في علوم الحقائق و كفى بهذا شرفاً و شأن بين من أمره الرسول عليه السلام بالتصنيف و بين من أمره بغسل تصنيفه و ماذا يقولون أيضاً فيمن أكرمه الله تعالى بنشر الزمان بحيث أن مصنفاته زادت على خمسة آلاف في علوم الحقائق و الإشارات و ماذا يقولون فيمن أكرمه الله تعالى بسماع خطاب أنية الطعام *Kawākib*, 189-90. In addition to rigid exoterics, Ibn Mughayzil may be criticizing some fellow Sufis. According to al-Sakhāwī, his friend and a resident at the Sa‘īd al-Su‘adā’ *khānqāh* refused to pray behind an Akbarian imam. See al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw’ al-lāmi’*, 11:5.

دعانا بعض الفقراء إلى دعوة بزقاق القناديل بمصر فاجتمع بها جماعة من المشايخ فقدم الطعام و هناك وعاء زجاج قد اتخذ للبول و لم يستعمل<sup>221</sup> ففرق فيه رب المنزل الطعام و الجماعة يأكلون و إذا الوعاء يقول منذ أكرمني الله بأكل هؤلاء السادة مني لا أرضي لنفسي أن أكون بعد ذلك محلاً للأذي ثم انكسر نصفين [...] فقلت للجماعة سمعتم ما قال الوعاء قالوا نعم قلت ما سمعتم فأعادوا القول الذي تقدم فقلت ما شرح هذه الكلمات فأطرقوا و لم يتكلم منهم أحد فقلت قال قولاً غير ذلك قالوا و ما هو قلت قال كذلك فلوبكم من أكرمها الله بالإيمان فلا ترضوا بعد ذلك أن تكون محلاً لنجاسة المعصية و حب الدنيا

*Kawākib*, 332-33.

(*ahl al-zāhir wa-l-bāṭin*); these include the works of such figures as (Abū Ḥāmid) al-Ghazālī, al-Qushayrī, (Abū Ḥafṣ) al-Suhrawardī (d. 632/1234), and Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh. At other times, they write books that only mystics understand, so exoteric scholars are not permitted to read them; these include the works of Ibn ‘Arabī and the like.<sup>222</sup> In line with this perspective is a story Ibn Mughayzil relates of a certain ‘Abdullāh al-Ḥasanī, who met the Prophet in a dream while in Mecca after his study of the *Futūḥāt* earned the reproach of scholarly and ascetic associates:

One night I circumambulated [the Ka‘ba] until there did not remain in me [enough energy] to do so. I reached the Station of Abraham, [where] I prayed and slept in my place. I saw the Prophet entering the Station of Purity, so I rose for him and greeted him. He said, “Peace be upon us and upon God’s pious servants.” Then I asked, “O Messenger of God, what do you say about the words of Ibn ‘Arabī, true or not?” He replied, “True for one who understands.” Then he asked, “Do you know all his views about the branches of the principles that you simplified for them?” I responded, “I know some of them, but some people reproached me. Thus, I wanted to ask you about it, O Messenger of God.” He said, “The reproacher is pardoned to an extent.”<sup>223</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil follows this story with a remark, which he attributes to a certain al-‘Arīnī, that encapsulates a respectful yet cautious attitude towards Ibn ‘Arabī’s ideas: “That which we understand of his speech is excellent, while we entrust that which is difficult to God; we are not charged with explaining it, accepting it, or acting by everything he says.”<sup>224</sup> Another shaykh, Ibn Mughayzil shows, eventually adopted a stricter policy: “His companions read Ibn ‘Arabī’s words to him, and he commented on them. When he was near death, he forbade them from studying Ibn ‘Arabī’s books, saying, ‘You do not understand his intention and the meanings of his ideas.’”<sup>225</sup>

<sup>222</sup> *Kawāḥib*, 245.

<sup>223</sup> كنت ليلة من الليالي طفت حتى ما بقي لي أن أطوف و جئت إلى مقام إبراهيم عليه الصلاة و السلام ثم صليت و نمت على مكاني فرأيت النبي ﷺ داخلًا في مقام الصفا ففقت له عليه الصلاة و السلام و سلمت عليه فقال ﷺ السلام علينا و على عباد الله الصالحين ثم قلت يا رسول الله ما تقول في كلام ابن العربي حق أم لا فقال ﷺ حق لمن فهم ثم قال أما علمت أن جميع كلامه في تفاريع الأصول التي مهدتها لهم فقلت أعلم بعض ذلك ولكن بعض الناس ينكرون عليه فأردت أن أسألك عنه يا رسول الله فقال ﷺ المنكر معذور من وجه

*Kawāḥib*, 244.

<sup>224</sup> و الذي نفهمه من كلامه حسن و الذي يشكل علينا نكل أمره إلى الله و لا كلفنا بيانه و لا اتباعه لا العمل بكل ما قاله

*Kawāḥib*, 244.

<sup>225</sup> أنه قرأ عليه أصحابه كلام ابن العربي و بشرحه لهم فلما حضرته الوفاة نهاهم عن مطالعةكتب ابن العربي و قال أنتم ما تفهمون مراده و معاني كلامه



According to Ibn Mughayzil, someone informed him that he heard Ibn al-Humām, “the Ḥanafī of his time,” state, “I do not refer to him as the Shaykh of Islam. Rather, he is the Shaykh of the Shaykhs of Islam!”<sup>226</sup> Nonetheless, Ibn Mughayzil seems to recognize that some circumstances call for discretion in displaying one’s approval of Ibn ‘Arabī. He argues that Ibn ‘Abd al-Salām, to whom both laudatory and vilifying assessments of the Shaykh had been attributed,<sup>227</sup> spoke about Ibn ‘Arabī in two different ways. Ibn Mughayzil’s evidence is a story that originates from a text by al-Yāfi‘ī:

I heard that the master, imam, and jurist ‘Izz al-Dīn b. ‘Abd al-Salām was condemning Ibn ‘Arabī, declaring, “He’s a heretic!” One day, one of his Sufī followers told him, “I want you to show me the Pole.” He pointed with his hand to Ibn ‘Arabī and said, “There he is!” It was then said to him, “But you condemned him!” He responded, “[Only] to protect the apparent dimension of the law.”<sup>228</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil adds that once when Ibn ‘Arabī passed by Ibn ‘Abd al-Salām, the latter knew that Ibn ‘Arabī was a genuine teacher (*ustādh*) because his pen fell without his own volition. He also points out that al-Shādhilī adopted a similar approach to pronouncing about the Shaykh:

When he [al-Shādhilī] was asked about him [Ibn ‘Arabī], and the inquirer was a jurist, he responded, “He’s a heretic!” Then, a Sufī asked about him. He replied, “He is truthful!” He responded to each of them in accordance with what he believed.<sup>229</sup>

On the other hand, Walī l-Dīn al-‘Irāqī, according to Ibn Mughayzil, implicitly acknowledged an issue with Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* while refraining from judgment about its author: “It is proper for me to refrain from ruling about Ibn ‘Arabī himself, for I am not certain whether the

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*Kawāḥib*, 244.

<sup>226</sup> See *Kawāḥib*, 255.

<sup>227</sup> Knysh, *Ibn ‘Arabī in the Later Islamic Tradition*, 74.

<sup>228</sup> سمعت أن الشيخ الفقيه الإمام عز الدين بن عبد السلام كان يطعن في ابن العربي و يقول هو زنديق فقال له يوماً بعض أصحابه أريد أن تريني القطب فأشار إلى ابن عربي و قال هناك هو فقيل له فأنت تطعن فيه فقال حتى أصون ظاهر الشرع

Al-Yāfi‘ī notes that in another version Ibn ‘Abd al-Salām asserts only that Ibn ‘Arabī is a saint. See *Kawāḥib*, 245; ‘Abdullāh b. As‘ad al-Yāfi‘ī, *al-Irshād wa-l-taṭrīz fī faḍl dhikr Allāh wa-tilāwat kitābih al-‘azīz*, ed. Muḥammad Adīb al-Jādīr (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2002), 158.

<sup>229</sup> لما سئل عنه و كان السائل فقيهاً فقال له هو زنديق ثم سأله بعض الصوفية عنه أيضاً فقال هو صديق فأجاب كل واحد بما يعتقد *Kawāḥib*, 245.

*Fuṣūṣ* originated with him or about his persistence [in upholding its teachings] until his death.”<sup>230</sup>

The sum of Ibn Mughayzil’s comments, quotes, and stories about Ibn ‘Arabī indicates that he viewed him as an outstanding thinker and saint. However, while he and his ideas are worthy of utmost respect, they may be approached with caution and even denounced for a pragmatic purpose. In accordance with his strong defense of Ibn ‘Arabī, Ibn Mughayzil displays considerable familiarity with his writings. In addition to several books, including the *Kitāb al-Tajalliyyāt* and the *Mawāqī‘ al-nujūm*,<sup>231</sup> he cites many brief treatises by the Shaykh.<sup>232</sup> He does not, however, draw explicitly from his two major works, the *Futūḥāt* and the *Fuṣūṣ*. At least with respect to the *Fuṣūṣ*, this may be interpreted, especially in view of his preoccupation with uniting Law and Reality, as an attempt to avoid association with its controversial teachings and the accompanying censure. Ibn Mughayzil also quotes the Quran commentary of Ibn ‘Arabī’s follower ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī (d. ca. 730-36/1329-35) on several occasions and praises it for “the magnitude of [its] standing.”<sup>233</sup>

#### 2.7.4 Ibn al-Fāriḍ

The debate over Ibn al-Fāriḍ in eighth/fourteenth and ninth/fifteenth-century Cairo was no less intense and polarizing than that over Ibn ‘Arabī. On the one hand, literary scholars such as al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363) and al-Udfuwī (d. 748/1347) lauded the exquisite beauty of his poetry,

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<sup>230</sup> ينبغي عندي أن لا يحكم على ابن العربي نفسه بشيء فإني لست على يقين من صدور كتاب الفصوص عنه و لا من استمراره عليه إلى وفاته *Kawākib*, 249.

<sup>231</sup> *Kawākib*, 78, 167, 291, 298, and 384.

<sup>232</sup> Including *Hilyat al-abdāl wa-mā yaẓhuru ‘anhā mina l-ma‘ārif wa-l-aḥwāl* (p. 81), *Kitāb al-‘Azama* (p. 107), *Maḥātib al-ghayb* (p. 107), *al-Quṭb wa-l-imāmayn* (p. 183), *Risālat al-Anwār fīmā yumnaḥ bihi ṣāhib al-khalwa mina l-ma‘ārif wa-l-asrār* (285), *al-Fanā’ fī l-mushāhada* (p. 323), and *Maqām al-qurba* (p. 352). Some of these treatises have been published in Muḥyī l-Dīn b. ‘Arabī, *Rasā’il Ibn ‘Arabī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2001).

<sup>233</sup> *Kawākib*, 331.

while writers such as al-Yāfi‘ī and Mamlūk historian Ibn Duqmāq (d. 809/1406) recounted his miracles. Ibn al-Zayyāt’s (d. 805/1402) use of his tomb in his detailed study of the Qarāfa cemetery as a reference point for other edifices at the foot of Mount Muqāṭṭam indicates the poet’s fame on a popular level. On the other hand, many scholars, while admiring the complexity and elegance of Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s verses, denounced what they considered his heretical teachings. Al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) described him as “an adherent of unification [*ittiḥād*] with which he filled *al-Tā’iyya*,” while al-Bisātī accused the poet of expressing disbelief in this same poem. Ibn Abī Ḥajala (d. 776/1375), a Sufi himself, wrote poems with the same rhymes and meters but free of “unorthodox” ideas in the (vain) hope that they would replace those of his counterpart, while Ibn Khaldūn (d. 784/1382) ordered the destruction of most of Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s poems as well as Sa‘īd al-Dīn al-Farghānī’s (d. 699/1300) commentary on *al-Tā’iyya al-kubrā*, among other supposedly monistic writings.<sup>234</sup>

As we will see in Chapter 3, Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s teachings in the *Tā’iyya*, especially as interpreted by al-Maghribī, are a crucial source for Ibn Mughayzil’s mystical thought. Well aware of the contention surrounding this figure, Ibn Mughayzil defends him by showing that many scholars and Sufis either spoke positively of him or at least did not express negative views. He quotes several biographies of Ibn al-Fāriḍ or excerpts thereof, such as that of Zakī l-Dīn al-Mundhirī (d. 656/1258), who concludes his entry with the common epithet, “May God be satisfied with him and love him,” and Abū Bakr b. Musdī (d. 663/1264-65), who ascribes to him such qualities as a gentle nature and eloquent expression. Ibn Mughayzil reports that when asked about the poet, Walī l-Dīn al-‘Irāqī responded, “[The doctrine of] unification is obvious in his poetry, but his contemporaries among the hadith scholars narrated from him in their collections

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<sup>234</sup> Th. Emil Homerin, *From Arab Poet to Muslim Saint: Ibn al-Fāriḍ, His Verse, and His Shrine* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2001), 55-59.

and did not at all associate him with it.”<sup>235</sup> Among Sufis, Ibn Mughayzil informs us of a meeting between Abū Ḥafṣ al-Suhrawardī and Ibn al-Fāriḍ during al-Suhrawardī’s final hajj pilgrimage in 628/1230-31 that concludes with the two embracing one another, talking, and walking together for a long period. ‘Alī Wafā, Ibn Mughayzil shows, was twice asked about Ibn al-Fāriḍ. With his usual pomposity, he replied on the first occasion that “he circles around our sanctuary” (*yadūr ḥawla ḥimānā*) and on the second that “he is the lover and I the beloved.” Finally, Ibn Mughayzil cites these lines by Nūr al-Dīn al-Ushmūnī:

رفضوا بجهل قطب دائرة الورى      عمر الولي العالم ابن الفارض  
و مضيت سنياً أرى حبي له      فرضاً على و رافضاً للرافضى

Out of ignorance they reject the Pole of the domain of humankind,  
‘Umar—the saint, the knower—Ibn al-Fāriḍ  
I passed by a [true] Sunnī for whom I consider my love  
an obligation upon me and a rebuttal to the deniers<sup>236</sup>

### 2.7.5 Al-Ḥallāj

Long before Ibn ‘Arabī and Ibn al-Fāriḍ, the relationship between the exoterics and mystics of Islam was tested by al-Ḥallāj, most notably with his declaration, “I am the Truth!” The debate over his legacy persisted for centuries. Massignon delineates three basic assessments of al-Ḥallāj among major Muslim scholars:

- 1) Condemnation, whether by simply rejecting him or also declaring him an infidel; his mystical doctrine is considered heretical, and his “miracles” are deemed trickery or magic.
- 2) Canonization, whether by unconditionally accepting him or justifying him with excuses; his mystical states are considered to conform with orthodox beliefs, and his miracles are thought to be authentic, though it is almost always maintained that the disclosure of mystical realities merits capital punishment.

<sup>235</sup> فالاتحاد في شعره ظاهر لكن معاصروه من أهل الحديث رروا عنه في معاجمهم و لم يترجموه بشيء في ذلك *Kawāḥib*, 245.

<sup>236</sup> *Kawāḥib*, 249-52 (verses on p. 252).

- 3) Abstention, whereby his affair is held to be “a secret, mysterious, and inexplicable case that it was not their business to judge.”<sup>237</sup>

Shādhilīs often adopted a positive stance toward al-Ḥallāj. In a vision in al-Aqṣā Mosque, al-Shādhilī witnessed the convening of an assembly of prophets and messengers for the purpose of interceding on behalf of al-Ḥallāj for a sin he committed against proprieties. Al-Mursī declared that only two pronouncements of the jurists are reprehensible: that al-Ḥallāj is an infidel and that Khiḍr is dead. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dashnāwī said that he loved al-Ḥallāj until he learned that he had predicted that he would suffer death “upon the religion of the cross” (*‘alā dīn al-ṣalīb*); but al-Mursī explained that *dīn* here means simply “time” (*waqt, ḥīn*), as in Q 1:4, “Master of the Day of *dīn*,” and thus al-Ḥallāj was forecasting his eventual crucifixion. When Muḥammad al-Ḥanafī was asked about the martyred mystic, he replied, “May God bless him and allow us to benefit from his protection! If he spoke [in ways that suggested heresy], it was in a state of rapture.”<sup>238</sup>

Like his Shādhilī predecessors, Ibn Mughayzil can be classed among the second group of scholars outlined by Massignon. He says that some “pedants” (*mutafayhiqīn*) in his time contended that al-Junayd declared the disbelief of al-Ḥallāj to be both inner and outer. In fact, Ibn Mughayzil rebuts, al-Junayd delivered a fatwa in favour of his execution (*aftā bi-qatlihi*) due to his violation of the external aspect of the Law, which can be required only in that way, while

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<sup>237</sup> Louis Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallaj, Mystic and Martyr of Islam*, tr. Herbert Mason (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 2:34-35.

<sup>238</sup> Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallaj*, 1:51 and 330-31. Massignon, citing modern scholar Muḥammad Mitwallī al-Sha’rāwī (d. 1419/1998), attributes al-Mursī’s remark to al-Shādhilī. But Ibn Mughayzil’s (*Kawākib*, 255-56) ascription of it to al-Mursī is likely correct since it is derived from *al-Wahīd fī sulūk ahl al-tawḥīd* by al-Mursī’s contemporary ‘Abd al-Ghaffār al-Qūṣī (d. 708/1308). Cf. another version of al-Ḥanafī’s statement: “Al-Ḥallāj spoke in a state of rapture. That is what I think. But others, such as Sirāj al-Dīn al-Bulqīnī, say something different.” See Schimmel, “Sufismus und Heiligenverehrung,” 287. Al-Sakhāwī condemned al-Ḥallāj but did not declare him an infidel. See Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallaj*, 1:40.

he personally believed that al-Ḥallāj was a great saint.<sup>239</sup> According to Ibn Mughayzil, al-Junayd was motivated by the Sufi principle that the blood of someone who discloses a (divine) secret without (God’s) permission may be shed with impunity. He also notes the view of al-Damīrī (d. 808/1405) that one who fears God should not declare any Muslim who has uttered something that can be interpreted in such a way as to render it either true or false to be an infidel, for claiming that someone is not a Muslim is grave, and thus only the ignoramus hastens to do so.<sup>240</sup>

Apart from al-Mursī’s judgment and his response to al-Dashnāwī,<sup>241</sup> Ibn Mughayzil attributes to Ibn Surayj the remark that “the state of this man is unknown to me, so [it would be improper if] I were to declare something about him.”<sup>242</sup> Al-Maghribī interprets this as a rebuttal to the opponent of al-Ḥallāj, as if Ibn Surayj is saying, “Who am I and the likes of me among those who discuss and dispute in comparison to those who experience spiritual states?”<sup>243</sup> Ibn Mughayzil also addresses al-Ḥallāj’s famous utterance, which is quoted as: “I am the Truth, and there is nothing in my jubbah but God!”<sup>244</sup> He relates al-Ghazālī’s explanation that this declaration resulted from excessive love and strong ecstasy; it is like the statement, “I am he whom I love, and he whom I love is me.”<sup>245</sup>

<sup>239</sup> It seems unlikely that al-Junayd pronounced such a fatwa, since he is thought to have died in 298/910, twelve years before al-Ḥallāj’s execution in 309/922. However, some traditions claim that al-Junayd predicted al-Ḥallāj’s martyrdom after hearing his ecstatic utterance. See Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallaj*, 1:127.

<sup>240</sup> *Kawākib*, 258-59. For al-Damīrī’s view, see also Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Damīrī, *Ḥayāt al-hayawān al-kubrā* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2015), 1:349.

<sup>241</sup> *Kawākib*, 255-56.

<sup>242</sup> هذا رجل خفي علي حاله فلا أقول فيه شيئاً

*Kawākib*, 258.

<sup>243</sup> ما لي و أمثالي من أرباب الأقوال و الاعتراض على أرباب الأحوال

*Kawākib*, 258.

<sup>244</sup> أنا الحق و ما في الجبة إلا الله

*Kawākib*, 258.

<sup>245</sup> أنا من أهوى و من أهوى أنا

*Kawākib*, 258. For al-Ghazālī’s interpretation, cf. Abū Hāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *The Niche of Lights: A parallel English-Arabic text*, tr. David Buchman (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1998), 18. The statement quoted by al-Ghazālī is from a poem by al-Ḥallāj. See al-Ghazālī, *The Niche of Lights*, 63n19.

### 2.7.6 The Philosophers

The epistemologies of the Muslim philosophers (*falāsifa*) and Sufis contrasted starkly. Whereas the former embraced reason as the essential means to arrive at truth, Sufis emphasized its limitation and the indispensable role of the heart as a non-rational, intuitive faculty. Although the self-description of philosophy as *falsafa* came to an end in the sixth/twelfth century,<sup>246</sup> its methods and ideas profoundly impacted subsequent Islamic thought, especially rationalist theology (*kalām*) and Sufism. William C. Chittick provides a concise description of this development:

[The] relatively clear distinction among the three perspectives of philosophy, Sufism and theology becomes increasingly clouded with the passage of time. From the sixth century A.H. (twelfth century A.D.) onward, more and more figures appear who speak from the points of view of two or even all three schools, and who gradually begin to combine the perspectives. In later Islamic history, especially from the Safavid period onward in Iran, it is often impossible to classify a particular thinker as only a philosopher, or a theologian, or a Sufi.<sup>247</sup>

Eclectic figures who exhibited this trend include Akbarians such as Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 673/1274) and Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī (d. 751/1350), who strove to mainstream Ibn ‘Arabī’s metaphysics by adapting Avicennan terminology,<sup>248</sup> and the Twelver Shī‘ī Ibn Abī Jumhūr al-Aḥsā’ī (d. after 906/1501), who in his magnum opus brought together Mu‘tazilī and Ash‘arī *kalām*, Peripatetic and Illuminationist philosophy, and philosophical mysticism.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> Frank Griffel, *The Formation of Post-Classical Philosophy in Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021) 77-107.

<sup>247</sup> William C. Chittick, “Mysticism versus Philosophy in Earlier Islamic History: The al-Tūṣī, al-Qūnawī Exchange,” *Religious Studies* 17 (1981): 88.

<sup>248</sup> Caner Dagli, *Ibn al-‘Arabī and Islamic Intellectual Culture* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), esp. 69-140.

<sup>249</sup> Sabine Schmidtke, “Ibn Abī Jumhūr al-Aḥsā’ī (d. after 1491) and His *Kitāb Mujlī mir’āt al-munjī*,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Khaled El-Rouayheb and Sabine Schmidtke (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 398.

Among Ibn Mughayzil's Shādhilī contemporaries, Zarrūq displays an ambiguous attitude towards philosophy in general (as opposed to simply *falsafa*). On the one hand, he acknowledges its role in varieties of Sufism:

For the sage, there is a Sufism introduced by [Ibn al-'Arabī] al-Ḥātīmī in his books. For the logician, there is a Sufism illustrated by Ibn Sab'īn in his writings. For the natural scientist, there is a Sufism set forth by al-Būnī in his *Asrār* [...]. Each [group] should be taken into consideration by examining its principle in its proper place.<sup>250</sup>

On the other hand, Zarrūq recognizes the limitations of philosophy. He explains that since the philosopher unceasingly examines existence in terms of its realities (*ḥaqā'iq*) and thus relies on investigation (*tatabbu'*), only a person of sound disposition, righteous states, and proper thinking can follow his way; while the logician refers to the principles he follows when attempting to study intelligibles and thus is veiled with excessive or exaggerated concepts. Zarrūq concludes that both specialists should be avoided due to the weakness (*bu'd*) of their principles in general, and one should concern oneself with their speech only to verify that it exists in other writings and thus should not be attributed to them.<sup>251</sup>

Al-Suyūfī is less tolerant. He associates the philosophers with the doctrine of “absolute oneness” (*al-waḥda al-muṭlaqa*), which he claims is based on several “non-Islamic” beliefs of theirs, including the eternity of the world and spirits as well as the notion of primal matter (*hayūlā*). He describes Avicenna (d. 428/1037) as “blind of heart and spiritual vision” (*al-a'mā al-qalb wa-l-baṣīra*) and entreaties God to “reward well our imams who forbade the study of logic and philosophy to prevent it from leading to adoption of any of their corrupt teachings.”<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> للحكيم تصوف أدخله الحائمي في كتبه و للمنطقي تصوف نحا إليه ابن سبعين في تأليفه و للطبائعي تصوف جاء به البوني في أسراره [...] فليعتبر كل بأصله من محله

Zarrūq, *Qawā'id al-taṣawwuf*, 51 (no. 60); Istrabadi, “The Principles of Sūfism,” 95-96 (no. 59).

<sup>251</sup> The purpose of which, perhaps, would be to vindicate the authors of practicing those deficient sciences. Zarrūq, *Qawā'id al-taṣawwuf*, 57 (no. 72); Istrabadi, “The Principles of Sufism,” 106 (no. 71).

<sup>252</sup> فجزى الله أئمتنا خيراً الذين حرّموا الاشتغال بعلم المنطق و الفلسفة حذراً من أن يجر إلى شيء من عقائدهم الفاسدة



While noting that books such as al-Qushayrī's *Risāla* and Ibn 'Atā' Allāh's writings or al-Shādhilī's statements might speak of oneness, he stresses that they are referring only to monotheism and God's uniqueness in existence as well as what results from His existence (*infirād Allāh bi-l-wujūd wa-lawāzim al-wujūd*).<sup>253</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil reveals his aversion to philosophy in several passages of the *Kawākib*. He recounts a dream in which someone met the Prophet and asked him about al-Ghazālī, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210), and Avicenna. Whereas the Prophet praised al-Ghazālī profusely, he stated that al-Rāzī is “blamed” and Avicenna “wanted to reach God without my mediation, so he was stopped.” According to Ibn Mughayzil, Avicenna neglected the Sunna by attaining God via the mystical path of the philosophers (*taṣawwufan 'alā ṭarīqat al-falāsifa*) and adherence to the customs of infidels, upon which he established his principles. He notes the ruling of Ibn al-Subkī that one who turns away from the Quran and Sunna and occupies himself with the views of Avicenna and the like while disregarding those of Muslims such as Abū Bakr, al-Shāfi'ī, and al-Ash'arī (d. 324/936) is to be lashed, circled in the markets, and have called over him, “This is the requital for one who has neglected the Book and the Sunna and busied himself with the falsehoods of the heretics!”<sup>254</sup> Ibn Mughayzil also cites an unnamed poet who describes the limitations of philosophy thus:

قل للذي يدعي في العلم فلسفة      فهمت شيئاً و غابت عنك أشياء

Say to he who lays claim to knowledge [obtained] via philosophizing  
 “You understand a thing, while [many] things are concealed from you”<sup>255</sup>

<sup>253</sup> In other words, existent things as products of His own, prior existence. See al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'yīd al-ḥaqīqa*, 64. Al-Suyūṭī wrote a refutation of the lawfulness of studying logic as well as an abridgment of Ibn Taymiyya's parallel text. See Spevack, “Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (1445-1505),” 402.

<sup>254</sup> هذا جزء من ترك الكتاب و السنة و اشتغل بأباطيل المبتدعين  
*Kawākib*, 188-89 (quotation from p. 189).

<sup>255</sup> *Kawākib*, 244.

We will see in the next chapter how Ibn Mughayzil argues passionately that the Sufis' belief in the eternity of the world is not the same as that of the philosophers and cites as evidence al-Ghazālī's famous declaration that this teaching of the philosophers and two others are tantamount to disbelief.

Ash'arism, as indicated above, was highly influenced by philosophical terminology and concepts, so much so that one scholar has concluded that "post-Avicennian *kalām* emerged as a truly Islamic philosophy, a synthesis of Avicenna's metaphysics and Muslim doctrine."<sup>256</sup> Ibn Mughayzil nevertheless cites early and later *mutakallimūn*, such as Ibn Fūrak (d. 406/1015), Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bayḍāwī (d. 719/1319), praising them as those "with verified books (*taṣnīf muḥaqqaq*) and respected opinions about belief among the Sunnīs."<sup>257</sup> In this respect, Ibn Mughayzil differs from the shaykh of al-Sha'arānī, the illiterate 'Alī l-Khawāṣṣ (d. 939/1532–33), who considered the *mutakallimūn* the worst school of thought (*firaq*) due to their speculation about the divine essence with limited insight, and even al-Shādhilī, who judged the "people of disputation" (*ahl al-jidāl*) to be the fiercest enemies of the Sufis and sainthood.<sup>258</sup>

## 2.8 Conclusion

Ibn Mughayzil wrote two works: *al-Kawākib al-zāhira*, a comprehensive treatment of Sufi issues, and *al-Qawl al-'alī*, a short treatise on the saints and their miracles. The significance of the *Kawākib* is evinced by the presence of manuscripts at al-Azhar, study of the text in

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<sup>256</sup> Robert Wisnovsky, "Avicenna and the Avicennian Tradition," in *The Cambridge Companion to Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Peter Adamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 92.

<sup>257</sup> *Kawākib*, 112-13. Ibn Mughayzil's negative attitude towards Shī'ism can be gleaned from his consideration of whether Abū al-Ṣalt al-Harawī (d. 236/851) was a Shī'ī in assessing the authenticity of a hadith he related. See *Kawākib*, 323-24. Although he does cite the Twelver or Ismā'īlī Shī'ī (there is debate over which faction he belonged to) Naṣr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274) several times, he mistakenly believed him to be a Sunnī. See *Kawākib*, 113.

<sup>258</sup> Geoffroy, *Le soufisme en Égypte et en Syrie*, 494 and 496.

contemporary North Africa among the Balqāyadiyya-Shādhiliyya, and the four editions now available. The book embodies several major themes of Sufism in the Mamlūk period, the most prominent being the belief in the superiority of Reality to Law as well as their fundamental compatibility. In addition to devoting the first chapter of the *Kawākib* to demonstrating this, Ibn Mughayzil draws from authorities in the traditional sciences such as Quran and hadith commentators to explicate Sufi topics, while he strives to cast Sufis as orthodox and indeed the supreme authorities. His extensive treatment of the *karāmāt* reflects their importance in the Sufism of his day and among the common people. His key concern is to respond to skepticism of the saints' miracles in view of its potential to undermine their authority and prestige, while attending to numerous theoretical aspects of the phenomenon. His engagement of Sufi epistemology, while also highly theoretical, is likely motivated in part by concerns over the legitimacy of mystical knowledge and accompanying claims to authority. In these ways, the *Kawākib*, while a genuine and important exposition of Sufi doctrine, is strongly characterized and oriented by an apologetic attempt to defend its proponents.

The *Ta'yīd al-ḥaqīqa* of al-Suyūṭī resembles the *Kawākib* in its apologetic tone and topics, while differing from the text in its brevity and, consequently, stronger defensive character. This raises the question of al-Suyūṭī's influence on the work of his former pupil, which is difficult to determine due to the fact that both their works reflect Mamlūk Sufism and the lack of a composition date for the *Ta'yīd*. It is obvious, in any case, that the breadth of Ibn Mughayzil's discussions and his wide use of sources (as we will see in the next two chapters) evinces his own deep familiarity with Sufi and Islamic scholarship. The *Kawākib* contrasts more with Zarrūq's *Qawā'id al-taṣawwuf*, which is distinguished by a dry, aphoristic tone and an absence of biographies, anecdotes, and poetry.

Ibn Mughayzil does not appear to have been initiated into any order apart from the Shādhiliyya and, with strong emphasis on their spiritual supremacy, portrays himself as a devout follower of the Shādhilī way. At the same time, his firm approbation of controversial Sufi groups and figures, including the Malāmatiyya, Ibn ‘Arabī, Ibn al-Fāriḍ, and al-Ḥallāj, demonstrates his interest in mystics outside the Shādhiliyya and, once again, his eagerness to bridge divides between the “esoterics” and the “exoterics.” His commitment to the Law is likewise evinced in his condemnation of the *falāsifa* for what he views as their neglect of the Quran and Sunna. Ibn Mughayzil finally emerges as an exceptionally dedicated Shādhilī as well as passionate advocate of his fellow Sufis, and it is from this position that he explores the key mystical themes and topics of his day, above all the topic of the waking vision, a particularly problematic issue, as we shall see, in light of his ultimate aim of legitimating Sufism by “reconciling Law and Reality.”

## Chapter 3: God and the World

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter begins our exploration of Ibn Mughayzil's mystical thought by closely examining his treatment of four themes or topics: ontology and creation, including the relationship between the existence of God and that of other beings as well as the eternality and creation of the world; the Muḥammadan Spirit (*al-rūḥ al-muḥammadī*); the vision of God, including in this world and the next; and religious diversity, especially the nature and merit of the worship of non-Muslims. I have selected these topics because they have been central to Islamic and Sufi intellectual history, giving rise to major debates. They thus allow us to see most vividly how Ibn Mughayzil navigates the dense and contentious tradition of thought. Furthermore, they are linked by their fundamental concern with God and, in most cases, His relationship to the world, whether the issue concerns God as an existent being, the Creator, an object of vision, or an object of worship.

Below, I begin each section devoted to a theme or topic with a brief outline of the main positions within Islamic thought. I then describe the textual context for Ibn Mughayzil's own discussion before stating his aims and surveying his ideas. I conclude each section with a summary of his discourse and my analysis.

This chapter introduces Ibn Mughayzil as a creative and critical synthesizer, while reaffirming his role as a passionate Sufi apologist. Tackling complex and subtle philosophical and psychological issues, he engages a rich tradition of ideas to develop and demonstrate his own positions while often rebutting accusations of error or disbelief.

### 3.2 Ontology and Creation

In Islamic theology, a firm distinction between God and created beings was upheld by defining “world” (*‘ālam*) as “all existent beings other than God.”<sup>259</sup> While as members of theological schools Sufis such as al-Kalābādhī (a Ḥanafī) or al-Qushayrī (an Ash‘arī) might affirm this tenet, they also recognized the existence of mystical states in which the barrier between God and the world collapses. Al-Kalābādhī cites the view of an “important” though unnamed Sufi (*ba‘d al-kibār*) that in the station of “union” (*ittiṣāl*) the mystic witnesses nothing but his Creator.<sup>260</sup> Al-Qushayrī distinguishes between “union” (*jam‘*) and “total union” (*jam‘ al-jam‘*). In union, one affirms himself and the created world while witnessing everything subsisting in God, whereas in total union, one is utterly prevented from perceiving anything but that which appears and dominates from the power of the divine reality (*min sulṭān al-ḥaqīqa*)—that is, one perceives nothing but God.<sup>261</sup> Al-Hujwārī defines union as concentration on one’s object of desire and draws a comparison with the famous Arab love story of Majnūn and Laylā: Majnūn concentrated on Laylā to such an extent that he saw nothing in the world but her, with all creatures appearing to him in her form. He also mentions a story in which someone approaches the cell of Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī (d. 234/848 or 261/875) and asks if he is there; the mystic responds by asking (rhetorically) whether there is anything in the room but God.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> E.g., ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī, *Mu‘jam al-Ta‘rīfāt*, ed. Muḥammad Ṣiddīq al-Minshāwī (Cairo: Dār al-Faḍīla, n.d.), 122 (no. 1147); Abū Manṣūr ‘Abd al-Qāhīr b. Ṭāhīr al-Tamīmī al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb Uṣūl al-dīn* (Istanbul: Maṭba‘at al-Dawla, 1928), 33. According to al-Juwaynī, this was the definition of earlier theologians (*salaf al-umma*), whereas later theologians (*khalaf al-umma*) described the world as “substance and accidents”, which nonetheless also implies its distinction from God. See ‘Abd al-Malik al-Juwaynī, *Luma‘ al-adilla fī qawā‘id ‘aqā‘id ahl al-sunna wa-l-jamā‘a*, ed. Fawqīyya Ḥusayn Maḥmūd (Beirut: ‘Ālam al-Kutub, 1987), 86.

<sup>260</sup> Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Iṣḥāq al-Kalābādhī, *Kitāb al-Ta‘arruf li-madhhab ahl al-taṣawwuf*, ed. Arthur John Arberry (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānījī, 1994), 79.

<sup>261</sup> Abū l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya*, ed. ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd and Maḥmūd b. al-Sharīf (Cairo: Dār al-Sha‘b, 1989), 146.

<sup>262</sup> Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. ‘Uthmān b. ‘Alī al-Hujwārī, *Kashf al-maḥjūb*, tr. Maḥmūd Aḥmad Mādī Abū l-‘Azā‘im, ed. Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Raḥīm al-Sāyih and Tawfīq ‘Alī Wahba (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfa al-Dīniyya, 2007), 289.

The experience of seeing nothing but God as an interim halting-place on the mystical path was later famously titled “oneness of witnessing” (*waḥdat al-shuhūd*) by Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1034/1625), who stressed that the mystic later comes to recognize that God and the world are totally different.<sup>263</sup> His aim was to reject the doctrine that had become known by his time as the “oneness of being” (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), which claimed that *only* God exists in an objective, ontological sense. The latter idea is found within the Sufi tradition as early as the second/eighth century with Maʿrūf al-Karkhī, who reformulated the first component of the Islamic testimony of faith (*shahāda*), “There is no god but God,” as, “There is nothing in existence but God.” Slightly later, Abū l-ʿAbbās Qaṣṣāb (fl. fourth/tenth century) spoke similarly: “There is nothing in the two worlds but my Lord. [Other] beings (*mawjūdāt*)—all things except His existence—are nonexistent (*maʿdūm*).” In the fifth/eleventh century, it appeared, as we will see below, in the writings of such figures as Khwāja ʿAbdullāh Anṣārī (d. 481/1089) and al-Ghazālī.<sup>264</sup> Ibn ʿArabī furnished this ontological position with its first great emphasis and elaboration, arguing that while God’s essence is inconceivable and unknowable, the cosmos represents the locus of manifestation for His names.<sup>265</sup> His followers, often called the Akbarians, systematized and elaborated his ontology, such as through their treatment of the notion of the “Five Divine Presences.”<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>263</sup> Abdul Haq Ansari, “Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī’s Doctrine of ‘Waḥdat al-Shuhūd’,” *Islamic Studies* 37, no. 3 (1998): 288.

<sup>264</sup> William C. Chittick, “Rūmī and *waḥdat al-wujūd*,” in *Poetry and Mysticism in Islam: The Heritage of Rumi*, ed. Amin Banani, Richard Hovannisian, and Georges Sabagh (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 70-71. For more Sufi expressions of monism, see Richard Gramlich, “Mystical Dimensions of Islamic Monotheism,” in *We Believe in One God: The experience of God in Christianity and Islam*, ed. Annemarie Schimmel and Abdoldjavad Falatūri (New York: The Seabury Press, 1979), 136-48.

<sup>265</sup> For an overview of Ibn ʿArabī’s ontology, see Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 3-105. Whereas Ibn ʿArabī specified multiple ways in which God Himself differs from the world as His locus of self-disclosure, his Andalusian contemporary Ibn Sabʿīn propounded a more radical monism, criticizing other thinkers for failing to sufficiently stress the oneness of all existence. See Abu ʿl-Wafa al-Taftazani and Oliver Leaman, “Ibn Sabʿīn,” in *History of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman (London: Routledge, 1996), 347-49.

<sup>266</sup> See William C. Chittick, “The Five Divine Presences: From al-Qūnawī to al-Qayṣarī,” *The Muslim World* 72, no. 2 (1982): 107-28.

The key source for Ibn Mughayzil’s ontology is his “Chapter on the Affirmation of God’s Oneness by the Sufis” (*bāb fī tawḥīd al-qawm*), which constitutes nearly thirteen pages of the *Kawāḥib*.<sup>267</sup> It is preceded by a series of discussions about mystical knowledge (with several digressions)<sup>268</sup> and followed by an examination of the Prophet’s request for forgiveness from God (some of which intersects with our topic).<sup>269</sup> Although not entirely systematic, the chapter can be divided into two parts. In the first part, which takes up almost the first ten pages, Ibn Mughayzil deals with the affirmation of God’s oneness (*tawḥīd*), including both its theoretical and practical dimensions.<sup>270</sup> In the second part, he shifts to the relationship between God’s being and acts on the one hand and the world on the other, most importantly by treating the notion of His manifestation (*tajallī*).<sup>271</sup> In this section, I focus mainly on the material in this chapter, while drawing occasionally from other parts of the *Kawāḥib* when relevant.

### 3.2.1 Affirming God’s Oneness (*tawḥīd*)

The term *tawḥīd* was discussed at length in Sufi texts and often connected with mystical experience.<sup>272</sup> Al-Junayd, for example, specified four types of monotheism: 1) that of the common man, which is to declare God’s oneness and negate all other gods; 2) that of people well versed in exoteric knowledge, which is to declare God’s oneness and obey His commands and prohibitions outwardly due to fear or hope, desire or greed; 3) that of the elect, which is to negate all gods, obey God’s commands and prohibitions outwardly and inwardly by eliminating all hopes and fears in things other than Him; and 4) that of the elect as well but higher, which

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<sup>267</sup> *Kawāḥib*, 293-305.

<sup>268</sup> *Kawāḥib*, 262-92.

<sup>269</sup> *Kawāḥib*, 305-10.

<sup>270</sup> *Kawāḥib*, 293-302.

<sup>271</sup> *Kawāḥib*, 302-5.

<sup>272</sup> Daniel Gimaret, “Tawḥīd,” in *EP*, 10:389.



consists of “standing in his presence, without any third in-between.” In this fourth type, “the dispositions of his jurisdiction flow over him in a stream of rulings (*aḥkām*) from his power; in the depths of the seas of affirmation of his unity; with the annihilation of self, and the passing away from any call of the real to him and from his response.”<sup>273</sup> Al-Qushayrī’s threefold classification of monotheism is more theological: 1) that of God to God, which consists of His knowledge and declaration of His oneness; 2) that of God to creatures, which consists of His command that the human affirm His oneness and His creation of that affirmation; and 3) that of creatures to God, which consists of the human’s knowledge, judgment, and declaration that God is one.<sup>274</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil’s engagement with *tawḥīd* centers around the third of three types of monotheism delineated by Anṣārī in his famous Sufi manual, *Manāzil al-sā’irīn*. The first type is that of the common people and enacted through the affirmation that “there is no god but God. He has no partner [and is] the One, the Everlasting Refuge. ‘He neither begets nor is born, nor is there any equal to Him.’”<sup>275</sup> The second type is that of the elite (*al-khāṣṣ*) and is realized “through [insights into] realities” (*bi-l-ḥaqā’iq*). It involves “the ceasing [to recognize] apparent causes and rising above (*ṣu’ūd*) rational disputes and reliance on visible indications”;<sup>276</sup> one witnesses God’s precedence in His judgment, knowledge, and placement of things in their proper

<sup>273</sup> فشيح قائم بين يديه ليس بينهما ثالث تجري عليه تصارييف تدبيره في مجاري أحكام قدرته في لبح بحار توحيد بالفاء عن نفسه و عن دعوة الحق له و عن إستجابته له

Abū l-Qāsim al-Junayd, *Rasā’il al-Junayd*, ed. ‘Abd al-Qādir (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1988), 61-62; Michael A. Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism: Sufi, Qur’an, Mi’raj, Poetic and Theological Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1996), 256. On al-Junayd’s teachings about *tawḥīd*, see also Muhammad Abdul Haq Ansari, “The Doctrine of One Actor: Junayd’s View of *Tawḥīd*,” *Islamic Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (1983): 83-102.

<sup>274</sup> al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya*, 494.

<sup>275</sup> لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له الأحد الصمد الذي لم يلد و لم يولد و لم يكن له كفواً أحد

This is based on and a partial excerpt of Chapter 112 of the Quran, the well-known “Chapter of Oneness” (*sūrat al-ikhhlāṣ*). See ‘Abdullāh al-Anṣārī, *Kitāb Manāzil al-sā’irīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1988), 135-36.

<sup>276</sup> إسقاط الأسباب الظاهرة و الصعود عن منازل العقول و عن التعلق بالشواهد

al-Anṣārī, *Kitāb Manāzil al-sā’irīn*, 137.

places. In other words, Anṣārī posits that the elite perceive that only God truly acts. Lastly, the third type belongs to “the elite of the elite” (*khāṣṣat al-khāṣṣ*), which is characterized by “the elimination of temporality and establishment of eternity.”<sup>277</sup> This type is described in the verses cited by Ibn Mughayzil that Anṣārī reports having composed after being asked about the Sufis’ monotheism:

ما وحد الواحد من واحد	إذ كل من وحده جاحد
توحيد من ينطق عن نعته	عارية أبطلها الواحد
توحيد إياه توحيدة	و نعت من ينعته لاحد

No one affirms the oneness of the One,  
for anyone who affirms His oneness denies [it]  
The monotheism of one who speaks of His quality [of oneness] is baseless:  
the One has invalidated it  
His affirmation of His own oneness is the [true] affirmation of His oneness,  
while the description of one who describes Him is erroneous<sup>278</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil was evidently enthralled by these verses, devoting almost four pages to excerpting commentaries on them. Among the many commentators on Anṣārī’s *Manāzil*,<sup>279</sup> he cites Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī, Yūsuf b. ‘Abdillāh al-Kūrānī (d. 768/1367),<sup>280</sup> Shams al-Dīn al-Birmawī (d. 831/1428), and “a diligent scholar” (*ba’d al-muḥaqqiqīn*).<sup>281</sup> These authors all reiterate Anṣārī’s claim that the human’s attempt to affirm God’s oneness at this third stage is necessarily invalid. For example, Ibn Qayyim says that this affirmation requires the annihilation of every trace (*rasm*), which here consists of the affirmer

<sup>277</sup> إسقاط الحدود و إثبات القدم

al-Anṣārī, *Kitāb Manāzil al-sā’irīn*, 138.

<sup>278</sup> *Kawākib*, 270; al-Anṣārī, *Kitāb Manāzil al-sā’irīn*, 135-39.

<sup>279</sup> See *GAL* S1:774; *HAWT* S1:804.

<sup>280</sup> A Kurdish Sufi and member of the Suhrawardiyya who migrated to Egypt. His brief commentary, which is entitled *Badī’ al-intifās fī sharḥ al-qawāfī al-thalāth* and has yet to be published, was written in response to a request for clarification of the meaning of these verses by the Sufis of Bejaya (Algeria), who had been criticized by local jurists for quoting them. On him and his writings, see Ahmed El Shamsy, “Returning to God through His Names: Cosmology and Dhikr in a Fourteenth-Century Sufi Treatise,” in *Essays in Islamic Philology, History and Philosophy*, ed. Alireza Korangy et al., (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), 208-15.

<sup>281</sup> Ibn Mughayzil (*Kawākib*, 301) cites al-Birmawī’s *Sharḥ Khuṭbat al-ḥāwī*, which is not mentioned in *GAL* S2:113; *HAWT* S2:117.

and monotheism subsisting in him. In other words, when a person affirms God’s oneness, he witnesses his own temporal act and being, which consequently negates a monotheism in which all traces and created beings are destroyed.<sup>282</sup> The explanations and arguments of other commentators often differ in the details. We may consider here only those that appear to have influenced Ibn Mughayzil before examining his own ideas.

Al-Qāshānī employs the notion of the “Presence of Oneness” (*al-ḥadra al-aḥadiyya*). In his well-known Sufi terminological handbook, *Muʿjam Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyya* (which Ibn Mughayzil does not reference), al-Qāshānī defines “Oneness” (*aḥadiyya*) as the consideration of God’s essence with the “divestment of everything” (*isqāṭ al-jamīʿ*), or, as he states in his definition of the corresponding divine name, “The One” (*al-aḥad*), with the negation of the plurality of God’s attributes, names, relations, and entifications.<sup>283</sup> In other words, the Presence of Oneness pertains to the singular, inscrutable divine essence. Accordingly, al-Qāshānī explains in his commentary on Anṣārī’s text that there exists neither quality, speech, nor any trace in this Presence. Hence, since speaking and qualification entail a trace, the affirmation of God’s unity in this Presence is intrinsically invalid. True monotheism, therefore, is God’s affirmation of the oneness of His essence, through His essence (*tawḥīd al-ḥaqq taʿālā dhātahu bi-dhātihī*).<sup>284</sup>

Al-Kūrānī, evidently familiar with al-Qāshānī’s commentary, also states that true monotheism occurs only in the Presence of Oneness and consists of God’s affirmation of the oneness of His essence through His essence. As evidence of this divine declaration, he cites Q

<sup>282</sup> *Kawākib*, 299. The language in the modern edition of Ibn Qayyim’s text is considerably different. Cf. Shams al-Dīn Abī ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr Ayyūb b. Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Madārij al-sālikīn bayna manāzil iyyāka naʿbud wa-iyyāka nastaʿīn*, ed. Shuʿayb al-ʿArnaʿūṭ (Beirut: Muʿassasat al-Risāla Nāshirūn, 2010), 1123-24.

<sup>283</sup> Kamāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī, *Muʿjam Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyya*, ed. ʿAbd al-ʿĀl Shāhīn (Cairo: Dār al-Manār, 1992), 51.

<sup>284</sup> *Kawākib*, 299; Kamāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī, *Manāzil al-sāʿirīn li-Abī Ismāʿīl ʿAbdullāh al-Anṣārī: Sharḥ Kamāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī*, ed. Muḥsin Bīdārfar (Beirut: Muʿassasat Tārīkh al-ʿArabī and Dār al-Ḥawrāʾ, 2006), 618-19.

40:16, “To whom belongs the Kingdom on this Day? To God, the One, the Almighty.” Al-Kūrānī adds, however, that genuine monotheism can be realized through a human being by virtue of “the annihilation of his metaphorical, perishing existence,” which is the referent of Q 28:88, “Everything is perishing but His face.” He equates this state with the station of “total union” (*jam‘ al-jam‘*) in which God affirms His oneness on the tongue of His servant. An example that he mentions is the statement uttered by the Prophet, “God hears one who praises Him,”<sup>285</sup> while claiming that the Prophet was seeking this station and what lies beyond with his supplication, “Cleanse me with water, snow, and coldness!”<sup>286</sup>

Anṣārī’s verses and the commentaries are related only midway through the chapter on *tawḥīd*. Ibn Mughayzil begins the chapter with his own exegesis. According to him, Anṣārī is referring to “unifying monotheism” (*al-tawḥīd al-jam‘ī*), which he defines as follows:

Unifying monotheism consists of the absence of everything [created]. If angels and the most knowledgeable [creatures, i.e., prophets] are mentioned, that is [an indication of] a descent from union to separation. Another being is then present with Him, so [true] monotheism does not remain. [In union] He perceives Himself through Himself, and thus someone other than Him does not bear witness that there is no deity but God. One who realizes this through experiential knowledge truly testifies to monotheism.<sup>287</sup>

<sup>285</sup> سمع الله لمن حمده

Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 190 (no. 404).

<sup>286</sup> اللهم طهرني بالثلج و البرد و الماء البارد

*Kawāḥib*, 300-1. For the supplication, cf. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 220 (no. 476) and 270 (no. 598). Al-Burmāwī, who equates God’s affirmation of His oneness with His knowledge of it, delineates three time periods in which God’s oneness may be affirmed: 1) before God created the creatures, as indicated in the hadith, “God was, and no [other] thing was; His Throne was on the water”; 2) after His act of creation, when the human tongue functions as an instrument for this affirmation, as shown by the Prophet’s remark, “So through me He speaks”; and 3) after the annihilation of the created world, as referenced in Q 40:16, where God asks, “To whom belongs the Kingdom on this Day?” and, receiving no answer, responds Himself, “To God, the One, the Almighty.” See *Kawāḥib*, 301-2. For the hadith, see al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 789 (no. 3191).

<sup>287</sup> التوحيد الجمعي و هو أن لا يكون شيء فلو ذكروا الملائكة و أولى العلم لكان نزولاً عن الجمع إلى الفرق فيكون معه غيره فلا يبقى التوحيد فهو الشاهد بنفسه لنفسه فلم يشهد أن لا إله الله غيره فمن تحقق هذا بالذوق فقد شهد التوحيد بالحقيقة

*Kawāḥib*, 293. He appears to be paraphrasing al-Qāshānī, concluding that “this is how al-Qāshānī elucidated (*haqqāqa*) it.”

For Ibn Mughayzil, the human can attain the kind of monotheism described by Anṣārī by reaching the station of union. Once the person has separated from God, thereby becoming aware of himself, such monotheism vanishes.

As evidence of this monotheism in union, Ibn Mughayzil adduces the famous ecstatic utterance of al-Ḥallāj, “I am the Truth!” and that of al-Biṣṭāmī, “Glory to Me, how great is My affair!” He adds that the same experience is undergone in the station of “the annihilation of self-annihilation” (*fanā’ al-fanā’*).<sup>288</sup> The counterpart and prelude to this station is mere self-annihilation (*fanā’*), which Ibn Mughayzil discusses in commenting on a lengthy poem by al-Maghribī. It is sufficient here to cite the first two lines:

وجودك كالزجاجة و السراج      بها حكم الفناء بمن تتاجي

Your existence is like a glass  
The lamp inside it is the state of self-annihilation  
for one whom You address intimately<sup>289</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil explains this analogy to the glass and lamp:

When the seeker among the Folk fulfills his pursuit, he becomes absorbed in witnessing the Real [and] relinquishes witnessing others to the extent that the entire world becomes utterly nonexistent to him due to his preoccupation with witnessing the Sun of Eternity. Then, he endures like a glass consumed by the existence of the lamp. The masters of witnessing stop seeing the glass as a result of their fixation with witnessing its lamp, who is the Real. They see and witness nothing but the Rays of Eternity.<sup>290</sup>

The end of the mystical path results in perception of God alone; the existence that previously seemed to belong to the world vanishes. Ibn Mughayzil believes that ‘Alī (d. 40/661) referred to this state in remarking that “He [God] is a light that rises from the dawn of pre-eternity, radiating

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<sup>288</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 293.

<sup>289</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 297.

<sup>290</sup> السالك من القوم إذا تحقق في سلوكه صار مستغرفاً في شهود الحق تعالى فانياً عن شهود الأعيان بحيث إن العالم كله صار عنده عدماً كلياً لإشتغاله بمشاهدة شمس القدم فيبقى حينئذ كالزجاجة المستهلكة في وجود السراج فأرباب المشاهدات فنوا عن رؤية الزجاج لإشتغالهم بشهود سراجها و هو الحق تعالى فلم ينظروا و لم يشاهدوا إلا شعاع القدم  
*Kawāḳib*, 297.

His effects over the temples of monotheism.”<sup>291</sup> He also identifies it as the subject of a passage from al-Ghazālī’s *Mishkāt al-anwār*. Al-Ghazālī comments on a couplet that is traceable to the Persian scholar al-Ṣāhib b. ‘Abbād (d. 385/995):

رق الزجاج و راقى الخمر      فتشابهها فتشاكل الأمر  
كأنما خمر و لا قدح      كأنما قدح و لا خمر

The glass is clear, the wine is clear  
The two are similar, the affair confused  
As if there is wine but no glass  
As if there is a glass but no wine<sup>292</sup>

According to al-Ghazālī, in the state expressed by these verses, which he calls the annihilation of self-annihilation, the mystic is aware neither of his lack of consciousness of himself nor of the fact that he is not conscious of himself. He notes that in speaking under the influence of ecstasy (*bi-lisān al-ḥāl*), it may also be called “unification” (*ittiḥād*), while from God’s standpoint (*bi-lisān al-ḥaqīqa*) it may be termed (true) monotheism (*tawḥīd*).<sup>293</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil, finally, describes this mystical state with reference to al-Shādhilī:

We contemplate God with the eyes of faith and certainty. For this reason, He removes our need for rational proofs, and we learn from Him about creation. Is there anything in existence but the King, the Truth? You do not see them, even if He is. It is necessary that you see them like dust in the air: if you searched for them, you would not find anything.<sup>294</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil has shown us that the human can recognize God’s uniqueness in existence by attaining a spiritual station, whether union, self-annihilation, or annihilation of self-

<sup>291</sup> هو نور يشرق من صبح الأزل فيلوح على هياكل التوحيد آثاره  
*Kawāḥib*, 297-98.

<sup>292</sup> *Kawāḥib*, 298; al-Ghazālī, *The Niche of Lights*, 18.

<sup>293</sup> *Kawāḥib*, 298; al-Ghazālī, *The Niche of Lights*, 18. According to al-Maghribī, self-annihilation consists of the replacement of human attributes with divine ones. He equates this station with that of love (*maḥabba*) because the attributes of the lover perish, while he endures with the attributes of his beloved. Yet the mystic still witnesses himself and his connection to the divine attributes that he has assumed; it is only in the annihilation of self-annihilation that he loses this awareness. See *Kawāḥib*, 356-57 and 385.

<sup>294</sup> إننا لننظر إلى الله تعالى ببصائر الإيمان و الإتيان فأغنانا بذلك عن الدليل و البرهان و نستدل به على الخلق هل في الوجود شيء الملك الحق فلا تراهم و إن كان و لا بد فتراهم كالهباء في الهواء إن فتشتهم لم تجد شيئاً  
*Kawāḥib*, 298.

annihilation. He also, like Anṣārī’s commentators, attributes this recognition to God. He introduces the term “essential monotheism” (*al-tawḥīd al-dhātī*), which consists of God’s affirmation of the oneness of His essence through His own essence, as in Q 40:16, “To whom belongs the Kingdom on this Day? To God, the One, the Almighty.” According to Ibn Mughayzil, “essential monotheism is synonymous with unifying monotheism because they both occur only in the Presence of Oneness in which God affirms the oneness of His essence, whether through His own essence or [...] on the tongue of His servant.”<sup>295</sup>

Having explored this special and superior type of monotheism, Ibn Mughayzil moves from the theoretical into the practical realm in arguing that monotheism (here he speaks only of *tawḥīd*) is the “root” (*aṣl*) of reliance on God (*tawakkul*). To support this view, he adduces verses of the Quran that indicate that such reliance is a component of faith, including 5:23, “Rely on God, if you are [truly] believers,” and 14:11, “The believers rely on God.” He cites two other verses to demonstrate that reliance on God satisfies one’s needs: “God suffices for anyone who relies on Him” (65:3) and, “Is God not sufficient for His servant?” (39:36). This leads him to conclude that “he who seeks sustenance from someone else has abandoned reliance on God and denied these verses.”<sup>296</sup> After all, “everything apart from God is a slave subordinate [to Him]. Its need is like your need, so how could you rely on it?”<sup>297</sup> Ibn Mughayzil goes so far as to assert that “everything pertaining to monotheism that is mentioned in the Quran is instruction to stop noticing others and rely on the One, the Almighty.”<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>295</sup> أن التوحيد الذاتي مرادف للتوحيد الجمعي لأنهما لا يكونان إلا في الحضرة الأحادية التي يوحد الله فيها ذاته بذاته سواء [...] على لسان عبده *Kawātib*, 293.

<sup>296</sup> فطالب الكفاية من غيره هو التارك للتوكل و هو المكذب لهذه الآية *Kawātib*, 293.

<sup>297</sup> كلما سوى الله تعالى عبد مسخر حاجته مثل حاجتك فكيف تتكل عليه *Kawātib*, 293-94.

<sup>298</sup> كلما ذكر في القرآن من التوحيد فهو تنبيه على قطع الملاحظة عن الأغيار و التوكل على الواحد القهار *Kawātib*, 294.

To substantiate this connection between monotheism and reliance on God, Ibn Mughayzil also adduces, apart from a number of hadiths, a passage from al-Ghazālī's *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* in which he argues for the same intimate link between the two. Whereas Ibn Mughayzil does not specify what kind of monotheism is required for reliance on God (though a simpler kind than unifying monotheism is implied), al-Ghazālī states that it is encapsulated by a common Muslim prayer, "There is no deity but God alone. He has no partner. To Him belongs the kingdom and praise. He has power over all things."<sup>299</sup> Al-Ghazālī proceeds to divide monotheism into four levels and likens them, respectively, to four components of a plant: the outer shell, the inner shell, the kernel, and the oil that discharges from its kernel. The first level, or the outer shell, involves a person's statement, "There is no deity but God," though his heart is unmindful of or even denies this; this is the monotheism of the hypocrite. The second level, or the inner shell, is when a person's heart deems this statement to be true; this is belief (*i'tiqād*), and it is the level of the ordinary Muslim. The third level, or the kernel, is when one witnesses that there is no deity but God "through the path of unveiling via the medium of the light of God," so that he sees many things but recognizes that they originate from God; this is the level of those drawn near to Him (*muqarrabūn*). The fourth level, or the oil that discharges from the kernel, is when the person sees nothing in existence but God. This is the level of the veracious, known in Sufi terminology as "self-annihilation in monotheism" (*al-fanā' fī l-tawḥīd*), for since he sees only God, he does not see himself.<sup>300</sup>

Al-Ghazālī acknowledges a logical dilemma posed by this fourth level of monotheism. How could a person see only the One while seeing many things, such as the heavens, earth, and

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<sup>299</sup> لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له له الملك وله الحمد وهو على كل شيء قدير *Kawāḥib*, 294-95; Abū Hāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, ed. Sayyid 'Imrān (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 1992), 4:307.

<sup>300</sup> *Kawāḥib*, 295; al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, 4:307-8.



all other sensible bodies? Although he notes that this matter is (known through) the utmost degree of the science of unveiling, whose secrets may not be recorded in a book—since, as the gnostics say, “disclosing the secret of divinity is disbelief”—he still offers some remarks. He explains that a single thing can be many through a certain type of witnessing and contemplation. A human being, for instance, is regarded as many when considering his spirit, body, limbs, veins, bones, and intestines, while he is considered one through another type of witnessing and contemplation. Indeed, al-Ghazālī asks, while observing a human, how many people fail to take note of the plurality of his intestines, veins, and limbs, as well as the complexity of his spirit and body and their separation?<sup>301</sup>

### 3.2.2 God’s Essence and Attributes in Manifestation

In view of al-Ghazālī’s mention of sight, witnessing, and contemplation in connection with the fourth level of monotheism, it seems that he is speaking only of a subjective perception of a monistic universe. Indeed, he acknowledges that witnessing all things as the One usually lasts only an instant, and its constant occurrence is rare.<sup>302</sup> Nonetheless, he seems to be referring to this fourth level in a passage of his *Mishkāṭ al-anwār* cited by Ibn Mughayzil immediately after the exegeses of Anṣārī’s verses, a location that signals that our author is shifting from a discourse on *tawḥīd* to a more general discussion of the existential relationship between God and the world. Al-Ghazālī speaks of gnostics who, in “completing their ascensions” (*istakmalū ma’ārijahum*), come to witness through their physical eyes that there is nothing in existence but God and that “everything perishes but His face” (Q 28:88)—that is, not that everything will

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<sup>301</sup> *Kawākib*, 296; al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā’ ulūm al-dīn*, 4:308-9.

<sup>302</sup> *Kawākib*, 297; al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā’ ulūm al-dīn*, 4:309.

perish at some point, but rather that everything has been and will always be perishing and an alternative reality is inconceivable. As Al-Ghazālī explains:

Everything has two faces: a face [turned] towards itself and a face [turned] towards its Lord. In consideration of its own face, it is nonexistent; while in consideration of God’s face, it is existent. Therefore, there is no existent being but God and His face [which is identical with Him]. “Everything perishes but His face” (Q 28:88) for all eternity. These gnostics need not [wait] until the Resurrection begins to hear the Creator’s proclamation, “To whom belongs the Kingdom this Day? To God, the One, the Almighty” (Q 40:16); rather, they always hear this declaration. Furthermore, by his statement, “God is greater,” they do not understand that He is greater than something else—God forbid!—since there is nothing in existence with Him that He could be greater than [...] and it is impossible for it to be said that He is greater than His own face. Instead, it means that He is too great for it to be said that He is greater [than something else] in the sense of relation and comparison, as well as too great for someone—even a prophet or angel—to perceive the true nature of His grandeur. Indeed, no one knows the true nature of God but God [Himself].<sup>303</sup>

Al-Ghazālī’s language, like that of Ibn Mughayzil in his commentary on al-Maghribī’s verses, suggests that the knowledge he describes in this passage is not merely the product of a passing mystical state. Having “completed their ascensions,” the gnostics have become aware of the true nature of the universe or the reality that God alone exists.<sup>304</sup>

This passage from al-Ghazālī’s *Mishkāt al-anwār* is not the only strong expression of monism in the *Kawākib*. Another is found in one of Ibn Mughayzil’s accounts of “essential manifestation” (*al-tajallī al-dhātī*) and, for lack of better term, “attributive manifestation” (*al-tajallī al-ṣifātī*). Although he concludes his chapter on *tawḥīd* with a discussion of these terms,

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لكل شيء وجهان وجه إلى نفسه و وجه إلى ربه فهو باعتبار وجه نفسه عدم و باعتبار وجه الله تعالى موجود فإذا لا موجود إلا الله و وجهه فإذا (كل شيء هالك إلا وجهه) أزلاً و أبداً و لم يفتقر هؤلاء العارفين إلى قيام القيامة ليسمعوا نداء البارئ تعالى (لمن الملك اليوم لله الواحد القهار) بل هذا النداء لا يفارق سمعهم أبداً و لم يفهموا من معنى قوله الله أكبر أنه أكبر من غيره حاشا الله إذ ليس معه في الوجود غيره حتى يكون أكبر [...] و محال أن يقال له أكبر من وجهه بل معناه أنه أكبر من أن يقال له أكبر بمعنى الإضافة و المقايسة و أكبر من أن يدرك غيره كنهه كبريائه نبياً كان أو ملكاً بل لا يعرف الله كنه معرفته إلا الله

*Kawākib*, 302-3; al-Ghazālī, *The Niche of Lights*, 16-17.

<sup>304</sup> Alexander Treiger likewise views the fourth level of monotheism described in *Ihyā’* as representing a genuinely monistic doctrine, which he substantiates with reference to other works by al-Ghazālī as well. However, he observes that monotheism defined as “the view that God is the *one* of the totality of existents which is the source of existence for the rest of existents” (p. 1) is also found in *Mishkāt al-anwār*. See Alexander Treiger, “Monism and Monotheism in al-Ghazālī’s *Mishkāt al-anwār*,” *Journal of Qur’anic Studies* 9, no. 1 (2007): 1-27.

he presents a somewhat different explanation nearly twenty pages later in the *Kawāḳib*. It follows from his discussion of a debate surrounding a phrase from the well-known “Hadith of Gabriel” in which Gabriel approaches the Prophet in the form of a man and asks him to define Islam, faith (*īmān*), righteousness (*iḥsān*), the Hour, and the signs that the Hour is near.<sup>305</sup> The Prophet explains that righteousness is when “you worship God as if you see Him.” The phrase that immediately follows this sentence, *fa-in lam takun tarāhu*, is the object of the dispute that Ibn Mughayzil records in the *Kawāḳib*. Sufis such as al-Maghribī and Ibn ‘Arabī, as Ibn Mughayzil shows by quoting them one after the other, understand this phrase to mean, “If you are not [in existence], you shall see Me.” In other words, they believe that it refers to self-annihilation in which, as we have seen, the mystic perceives that everything is identical with God. On the other hand, Ibn al-Subkī, whose reasoning Ibn Mughayzil also excerpts, maintains the reality of this spiritual station but insists that the Sufis’ reading is incorrect. According to him, the phrase should be understood as, “Though you do not see Him.” He argues, for instance, that Sufis neglect the remainder of the phrase, *fa-innahu yarāka* (“He sees you”), which is an apodosis (*jawāb al-sharṭ*) that responds to the preceding phrase as the condition; that is, even if one does not see God, He sees the person.<sup>306</sup>

After presenting Ibn ‘Arabī’s argument, Ibn Mughayzil explains essential and attributive manifestation through an analogy to the alphabet:

*Alif* is like the Real’s essence, while *bā’*, *tā’*, and all other letters are like the attributes of its manifestations. Sometimes the Real’s sublime, holy essence manifests [alone], like the appearance of *alif* alone in a solid script. Among the Folk, this is called “essential manifestation.” At other times, it appears and manifests with the Attributes in its creative acts, like the appearance of *alif* in the form of [other] letters. For it is the spirit and form of every letter, since there is nothing but *alif* multiplying and proliferating according to its [different] levels. In the same way, the Real manifests to Himself through Himself in the forms of His

<sup>305</sup> al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 23 (no. 50); Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 23 (no. 8).

<sup>306</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 320-23.

creatures and attributes. There never has been nor will there ever be any existent being but Him.<sup>307</sup>

Essential manifestation is God's manifestation alone, while attributive manifestation, though not termed such here, is His manifestation to Himself through His attributes in the form of His creatures. Either way, only God truly exists.

In addition to this conception of essential and attributive manifestation that is found after the chapter on *tawhīd*, Ibn Mughayzil relates the understanding of al-Maghribī nearly fifteen pages prior to the chapter in a discussion of mystical knowledge (*ilm al-bāṭin*). Al-Maghribī first distinguishes between the unseen world (*ghayb*) and “the unseen of the unseen world” (*ghayb al-ghayb*):

The unseen world is that which from the material and heavenly realms is hidden from one's sight. The unseen of the unseen world is God's knowledge of His essence.<sup>308</sup>

Al-Maghribī then describes essential manifestation:

The meaning of essential manifestation is a manifestation through knowledge of the Essence; by way of this knowledge, the Holy Essence is witnessed. In this way, it does not manifest [per se]; that is, the Essence is witnessed only through knowledge of it. The epistemological form is spiritual and attributed neither modality nor location.<sup>309</sup>

Al-Maghribī's use of the unvowelled verb *sh-h-d-t* in this passage raises interpretive questions. First, it may be rendered either “to affirm” or “to perceive.” Either way, he suggests that while God's essence cannot manifest in a physical or imaginal form, it can be an object of knowledge.

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<sup>307</sup> الألف بمثابة ذات الحق تعالى و الباء و التاء إلى آخر الحروف بمثابة صفات تجلياتها فتارة تظهر ذات الحق تعالى العلوية المقدسة كظهور الألف نفسه بالخط القويم و هذا يسمى عند القوم بالتجلي الذاتي و تارة تظهر و تتجلي بالصفات في أفعالها الخلقية كظهور الألف في مرتبة الحرفية لأنه روح كل حرف و صورته إذ ليس هناك إلا الألف يتعدد و يتكرر بحسب مراتبه و هكذا الحق تعالى يظهر بنفسه لنفسه في تطورات خلقه و صفاته فلا موجود هناك غيره أزلأ و أبدا

*Kawātib*, 323.

<sup>308</sup> الغيب هو ما غاب عن بصرك من الملك و الملكوت و غيب الغيب هو علم الله تعالى بذاته

*Kawātib*, 280.

<sup>309</sup> المراد بالتجلي الذاتي التجلي بالعلم بالذات بذلك العلم شهدت الذات المقدسة فحينئذ لا تجلي لها اي لا شهود للذات إلا بالعلم بها و الصورة العلمية معنوية لا توصف بكيف و لا أيئية

*Kawātib*, 280-81.

Second, the verb may also be translated into the second person, “you witness” (*shahidta*), meaning that the human can know the Essence. However, I have translated it into the passive sense to support the interpretation that God witnesses, because that seems to conform with his definition of the unseen of the unseen world and his analogy. Unlike corporeal beings and spiritual beings (such as angels and jinn) in the unseen world, God’s knowledge of His essence is not simply hidden from our sight: rather, it cannot be perceived.

Ibn Mughayzil’s account of essential manifestation in the chapter on *tawhīd* differs from that of al-Maghribī. He explains that:

Essential [manifestation] is majestic, while attributive [manifestation] is beautiful. Every act of creation and origination is an effect of the generation of beauty, while every act of annihilation and destruction is an effect of the radiation of majesty.<sup>310</sup>

God’s essence is majestic and destructive, while His attributes are beautiful and creative. Ibn Mughayzil highlights the danger of the Essence by likening it to the sun:

If it [the sun] manifested in its entirety without the veil of the heavens to restrain it and diminish its radiance, it would turn plants into chaff, [make] animals decay, and cause great destruction. But in its essence it is concealed, and with the subtlety of its beauty and light, it draws near, growing [in strength] and producing its effects.<sup>311</sup>

On the basis of this, Ibn Mughayzil concludes that one should observe the gradual effect of the sun on plants through its radiance and then the effect of God’s mercy in the way in which it enlivens infertile earth. He seems to imply that the Essence, since it cannot manifest without destroying, works through its attributes such as mercy to produce its desired effects in the world. His two conceptions of essential manifestation thus appear identical: the Essence manifests alone

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<sup>310</sup> فالذاتي جلاي و الصفاتي جمالي فكل إيجاد و إنشاء من أثر إيجاد الجمال و كل إعدام و إهلاك من أثر إشراق الجلال  
*Kawātib*, 305.

<sup>311</sup> فلو تجلت بجرمها بلا حجب من السماوات تكفها و تضعف حدة إشراقها لتركت النبات هشيماً و الحيوانات رميماً و أهلكت هلاكاً عظيماً و لكنها بذاتها احتجبت و بلطف جمالها و نورها اقتربت فربت و أنثرت  
*Kawātib*, 305.

(as claimed in the second account), since it necessarily destroys that to which it manifests. There is, accordingly, no “manifestation” of the Essence to another being, but rather only to itself. The Attributes, on the contrary, implement God’s will rather than, as in the second account, manifest His being.

Ibn Mughayzil sees a reference to the distinctive natures and roles of the Essence and Attributes in a statement of al-Ḥallāj: “He veils them with His Name, and thus they live on. If He made manifest to them the mightiness of [His] power, they would go insane. If he unveiled the Essence to them, they would die.”<sup>312</sup> In line with this understanding, he interprets Q 20:5, “The All-Merciful settled on the Throne.” Whereas Muslim theologians debated the anthropomorphic implications of this verse, Ibn Mughayzil adopts a different approach:

If He had said, “God settled on the Throne,” the Throne and everything below it would have immediately collapsed out of awe of the majesty of the Essence that ruptured Mount Sinai, which was instantly leveled as a result of the light of His majesty.<sup>313</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil also deals with the hadith, “God concealed (*yaghān*) my heart. I ask God for forgiveness more than seventy times a day, so [O believers] ask God for forgiveness!”<sup>314</sup> The difficulty raised by this tradition is the Prophet’s supposed “concealment” (*ghayn*). In ordinary language, Ibn Mughayzil explains, *ghayn* means “cover” (*ghishā’* or *taghṭiya*). He points out that Abū ‘Ubayda (d. 209/824-25) stated that it was originally used to signify the covering of the sky with clouds, while another lexicographer defined it as something that partially covers the heart

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<sup>312</sup> حجبتهم بالاسم فعاشوا و لو أبرز لهم علو القدرة لطاشوا و لو كشف لهم عن الحقيقة لماتوا  
*Kawāḳib*, 305.

<sup>313</sup> لو قال الله على العرش استوى لدك العرش فما دونه دكة واحدة من هيبة جلال الذات التي تقطع جبل طور سيناء و صار دكاً في بارقة من نور جلاله  
*Kawāḳib*, 305. The mountain was leveled when God manifested to it in response to Moses’ request to see Him. See Q 7:143. In contrast, al-Maghribī argued that God settled on the Throne with His foot and essence (*istawā ‘alā l-‘arsh bi-qadamihī wa-bi-dhātihī*). See al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 2:212.

<sup>314</sup> إنه ليغان على قلبي و إني لأستغفر الله في اليوم أكثر من سبعين مرة فاستغفروا الله  
*Kawāḳib*, 304. Cf. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 1243 (no. 2702): “God concealed my heart, and I ask God for forgiveness 100 times per day.”

like thin clouds that do not entirely block the sunlight. Accordingly, in Sufi terminology *ghayn* denotes the veil of witnessing what is other than God (*aghyār*) instead of God Himself.<sup>315</sup>

Al-Shādhilī had previously recognized the dilemma posed by this hadith and received the Prophet’s own clarification in a vision: “O blessed one, that is the concealment of the [divine] lights (*anwār*), not of what is other than God (*al-aghyār*).”<sup>316</sup> Ibn Mughayzil cites al-Shādhilī’s vision in support of his own interpretation. He explains that the Prophet is well above (*munazzah*) witnessing what is other than God, for he is always present with Him and beholding His manifestations. Thus, his “concealment” refers to the different divine manifestations appearing to his heart, since every such manifestation is distinct from another. Now, attributive manifestation is the cover and veil of essential manifestation. In the Prophet’s case, essential manifestation, or “the light of the divine essence that destroys all existent beings,” was concealed by the light of the manifestation of God’s merciful attributes (*ṣifāt raḥmāniyya*). In support of this, Ibn Mughayzil adduces verses by Ibn al-Fāriḍ:

و لو لا إحتجابي بالصفات لأحرقت      مظاهر ذاتي من سنا سبيحتي

Were I not veiled by My attributes,  
the loci of My essence would burn up from the splendor of My nature<sup>317</sup>

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<sup>315</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 304. Al-Qāshānī (*Mu‘jam*, 186) defines *ghayn* as insensitivity to and obstruction from witnessing (God) while possessing sound belief.

<sup>316</sup> يا مبارك ذاك غين الأنوار لا غين الأغيار  
*Kawāḳib*, 304.

<sup>317</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 304-5. For Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s verses, see also Reynold Alleyne Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921), 261 (no. 717). Similarly, ‘Abd al-Salām al-Maqdisī explains that the Prophet asked God to conceal his state by asking for forgiveness because the lights of divine manifestations were engrossing him, since constant divine manifestation and unveiling to the spiritually elite destroys them, so God’s concealment is mercy. See *Kawāḳib*, 304; ‘Izz al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Salām b. Aḥmad b. Ghānim al-Maqdisī, *Ḥall al-rumūz wa-mafātīḥ al-kunūz*, ed. Muḥammad Būkhayfī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2011), 103.

### 3.3.3 *The Eternality and Creation of the World*

Muslim theologians were of the belief that God created the world *ex nihilo*.<sup>318</sup>

Consequently, they attacked the Muslim philosophers for asserting its eternity in the sense that it has always existed and always will. In his famous critique of the philosophers' teachings, *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, al-Ghazālī listed this as one of their three ideas tantamount to disbelief that warrants their lawful execution.<sup>319</sup> Some thinkers formulated distinctive positions, such as Ibn 'Arabī, whose idea, since it appears in the *Kawākib*, is outlined below.<sup>320</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil deals with the eternity and creation of the world in a lengthy chapter of over forty pages that is devoted to explaining and justifying controversial or difficult statements and teachings of Sufis.<sup>321</sup> The chapter is preceded by a discussion of Sufi hermeneutics and followed by a return to the topic of visions, including of the dead, angels, and God.<sup>322</sup> The inclusion of the discourse in this chapter, which covers about two and a half pages, signals that Ibn Mughayzil is on the defensive. This is confirmed by his opening sentence: "Among them [the Sufis' controversial ideas] is the belief in the eternity of the world. Know that the doctrine of the Sufis who affirm that is not like that of the philosophers—God forbid!"<sup>323</sup>

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<sup>318</sup> See, e.g., Abū l-Yusr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm al-Bazdawī, *Kitāb Uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. Hans Peter Lins (Cairo: Dār Ihyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyya, 1963), 14. See also Ayman Shihadeh, "The existence of God," in *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology*, ed. Tim Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 205-8.

<sup>319</sup> Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers: A parallel English-Arabic text*, tr. Michael E. Marmura (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2000), 226; reiterated in Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh mina l-dalāl wa-l-muwaṣṣil ilā dhī l-'izza wa-l-jalāl*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Abū Laylā and Nūrshīf 'Abd al-Raḥīm Rif'at (Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2001), 201-2.

<sup>320</sup> Another unique teaching, known as "perpetual creation" (*ḥudūth dahrī*), was advanced by the Twelver Shī'ī Mīr Dāmād (d. 1041/1631). See Sajjad Rizvi, "Mīr Dāmād's *al-Qabasāt*: The Problem of the Eternity of the Cosmos," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Khaled El-Rouayheb and Sabine Schmidtke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 438-64.

<sup>321</sup> *Kawākib*, 335-78.

<sup>322</sup> *Kawākib*, 327-34 and 378-405.

<sup>323</sup> منها القول يقدم العالم اعلم أن القائلين بذلك من الصوفية ليس مذهبهم في ذلك كمدّهب الفلاسفة معاذ الله ثم معاذ الله *Kawākib*, 348-49.



After quoting al-Ghazālī’s condemnation of the philosophers for their belief in the world’s eternity,<sup>324</sup> Ibn Mughayzil surveys some of their arguments before examining and defending those of the Sufis. Among the many basic arguments that the philosophers advanced to prove their belief, including six based on the nature of the world and three based on the nature of God,<sup>325</sup> Ibn Mughayzil mentions only two, both of which concern the nature of the world. The first is simply the observation that a thing always proceeds from another, such as a human being from sperm or a bird from an egg, while it grows by virtue of a balance of heat, cold, moisture, and dryness and decays as a result of an excess of one of these four qualities.<sup>326</sup> The second argument, attributed by Ibn Mughayzil to the “materialists” (*hayūlā’iyya*), posits that the primal matter (*hayūlā*) of the world, which is its foundation—just as cotton is the foundation of clothing—is eternal, as well as its director (*mudabbir*) and internal power (*quwwa ma’ahu*).<sup>327</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil justifies his quick shift to the Sufi position, stating that “while there is an extensive discourse on the philosophers’ teachings, there is no need to plunge into it. I mentioned this little portion so that it may be known that the Sufis who assert the world’s eternity do not intend anything that contradicts the beliefs of the leaders of Islam.”<sup>328</sup> According to him, the Sufis argue that:

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<sup>324</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 349.

<sup>325</sup> See Herbert A. Davidson, *Proofs for Eternity, Creation, and the Existence of God in Medieval Jewish and Islamic Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 12-30 and 49-67.

<sup>326</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 349. For similar arguments, see Davidson, *Proofs for Eternity*, 15-16.

<sup>327</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 349. The reasoning to support this claim in the *Kawāḳib* is abstruse, but it appears to be a version of an argument made by Aristotle and embraced by, among others, Avicenna and Averroes (d. 595/1198). Aristotle argued that everything comes into existence from a substratum; thus, if the underlying matter of the universe came into existence, it would have had to do so from a substratum. Yet, the nature of matter is to be itself the substratum from which other things come to be, and thus the underlying matter of the universe could have arisen only from a previously existing matter just like itself; and the supposition that the underlying matter arose entails that an underlying matter already existed. Since this supposition is self-contradictory, matter must be eternal. See Davidson, *Proofs for Eternity*, 13.

<sup>328</sup> هاهنا كلام طويل يتعلق بمذاهب الحكماء و الفلاسفة لا حاجة إلى الخوض فيه و إنما ذكرت هذا القدر اليسير ليعلم أن من قال من الصوفية بقدوم العالم لم يقصد شيئاً معارضاً لمذاهب أئمة الإسلام  
*Kawāḳib*, 349.

[The world's] eternity is due to eternal knowledge and pre-eternal will. For the world and all the beings that originate in it existed [prior to their earthly appearance]. The explanation for this is that God willed the existence of the world in pre-eternity and knew with His pre-eternal will all the things and beings that will arise in it until the Day of Resurrection. In this way, the world existed in pre-eternity as [an object of] knowledge and will, even though it was nonexistent as [an object of] sense and form. For God was in [pre-]eternity, and there was nothing alongside Him.<sup>329</sup>

Another argument, which Ibn Mughayzil attributes simply to “a diligent scholar” (*ba‘d al-muḥaqqiqīn*), contends that the world is eternal in its particular form (*qadīm al-ta’yīn*), in the sense that God has pre-eternally willed to bring it into being, and created in time (*ḥadīth al-tabyīn*), in the sense that it comes to exist in that same form.<sup>330</sup>

While these arguments seem to express the traditional Sunnī belief in God’s pre-eternal determination of things, Ibn Mughayzil next quotes verses that assert Ibn ‘Arabī’s doctrine known as “the new creation” (*al-khalq al-jadīd*). This teaching is based on Ibn ‘Arabī’s notion of the “immutable entities” (*a’yān thābita*), which represent the loci of manifestation (*mazāhir*) for the divine names. Unlike God as the Necessary Being, or that which cannot *not* be, and impossible things, which cannot come to exist in the cosmos, the immutable entities are possible things: they may either exist or not exist. In their nonexistence, they are present or “existent” to the extent that they are objects of God’s knowledge; when coming to be in the cosmos, their natures remain exactly the same, acquiring only cosmic existence.<sup>331</sup> Now, since the entities manifest the divine

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<sup>329</sup> قدمه من حيث العلم القديم والإرادة الأزلية لأن العالم وجميع ما حدث فيه من الكائنات كان موجوداً وبيان ذلك أن الله سبحانه تعالى أراد وجود العالم في الأزل و علم بإرادته القديمة جميع ما يحدث فيه من الأمور و الكائنات إلى يوم القيامة فالعالم حينئذ كان هناك في الأزل موجوداً و إرادة و إن كان معدوماً حساً و صورة لأن الله تعالى كان في القدم و لا شيء معه  
*Kawāḳib*, 349.

<sup>330</sup> I base this on *Kawāḳib* (2011), 375, since it reads *ḥadīth al-tabyīn* rather than *ḥadīth al-nabiyyīn* in *Kawāḳib* (1999), 349, which in this context is incomprehensible.

<sup>331</sup> Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 81-91. It is this dual nature of the entities that allows Ibn ‘Arabī to appreciate both sides of the cosmogonic debate. On the one hand, as objects of God’s knowledge, the entities, or the world composed of them, are eternal. On the other hand, as concrete things endowed with existence by God, the entities, or the world in time and space, are temporally originated. He analogizes this dual character of the entities to the arrival of a guest: one says that the guest “appeared to us today,” though his appearance does not entail that he did not exist before appearing. In this way, Ibn ‘Arabī reduces the dispute to a matter of perception. See Muḥyī l-Dīn

names in various configurations and are infinite in representing every possible form that God can assume, through their appearance in the world God simply manifests Himself in new forms. Hence, creation, in Ibn ‘Arabī’s view, is a pre-eternal, perpetual movement of divine self-disclosure in the forms of the creatures that never repeats itself (*lā takrār fī l-tajallī*).<sup>332</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil adduces the verses, which he attributes to Ibn ‘Arabī but, according to one commentator on the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, are traceable to the Akbarian Mu’ayyad al-Dīn Jandī (d. ca. 700/1300),<sup>333</sup> as proof of his claim that “this issue [of the world’s eternity] in their [the Sufis’] books, as well as other theoretical matters that the Folk have discussed, is completely lawful.”<sup>334</sup>

لا أقول بتكرار الوجود و لا      عود التجلي فما في الأمر تكرار  
فالبحر بحر على ما كان في قدم      إن الحوادث أمواج و أنهار  
لا يحجبك إشكال مشكلة      عمن تشكل فيها فهي أستار

I do not affirm the recurrence of existence nor  
the repetition of self-disclosure  
Thus it is not a matter of recurrence  
The sea is a sea in the way it was in all eternity,  
while truly, beings originated in time are waves and rivers  
The difficulty of a problem does not veil you  
from One who takes form in it,  
though [surely] it is a veil<sup>335</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil presents the interpretation of these lines of al-Maghribī, who adopts a flexible hermeneutical approach. According to al-Maghribī, every question is subject to a variety of interpretations, only a few of which are to be accepted. With respect to the issue at hand, he

b. ‘Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Arabiyya al-Kubrā, 1911), 2:666-67; Ibn ‘Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, 211; Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 85.

<sup>332</sup> Ibn ‘Arabī’s description of this doctrine as “the new creation” is based on Q 50:15, “They are in confusion over a new creation (*khalq jadīd*).” On this teaching, see Abū l-‘Alā’ ‘Afīfī and Muḥyī l-Dīn b. ‘Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam wa-Ta’līqāt ‘alayhi*, ed. Abū l-‘Alā’ ‘Afīfī ([Iran]: Intishārāt al-Zahrā, 1987), 2:213-14; Henry Corbin, *Alone with the Alone: Creative Imagination in the Sūfism of Ibn ‘Arabī* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 200-7; Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 96-112.

<sup>333</sup> Ya’qūb Khān Afandī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam lil-Shaykh al-Akbar Ibn ‘Arabī al-musammā Tawḍīḥ al-bayān*, ed. ‘Āṣim Ibrāhīm al-Kayyālī (Beirut: Kitāb Nāshirūn, 2015), 206.

<sup>334</sup> هذه المسألة في كتبهم عين الشريعة بلا شك و غيرها من مسائل المعايينة التي صرح بها القوم *Kawātib*, 349.

<sup>335</sup> *Kawātib*, 350.

proposes two views. First, “one who perceives [God’s] attribute [of creation] views the world as the effect of [His] attributes.”<sup>336</sup> Al-Maghribī seems to mean that such a person sees the world as God’s creation through the exercise of His attributes such as knowledge and power; thus, he may conclude that the world is created. He continues:

Otherwise, he perceives only the Essence, manifesting alone, free of existence but [that of] itself in all presences. The state of this gnostic is that of someone whom the witnessing of subsistence in God has engrossed; he is inhibited from witnessing any other existent being.<sup>337</sup>

This recalls the claim of Ibn Mughayzil and other Sufis that attainment of a certain station on the spiritual path results in the perception that God alone exists. Al-Maghribī now offers an analogy:

The existence of Being and His creature as knowledge in pre-eternity is, in the view of the People of Affirmation and Negation, like a raging sea, while the existence of that sea and perception of it here in post-eternity as a [concrete] entity is like the clashing of waves. There is no distinction between the sea of pre-eternity and the wave of post-eternity apart from [that caused by] the union between the free exercise of will and active, effective power.<sup>338</sup>

In other words, al-Maghribī seems to argue, the thing that once existed solely as an object of God’s knowledge is precisely that which exists in the world as a result of the exercise of God’s will and power to bring it into being.<sup>339</sup>

Although al-Maghribī’s suggestion that the gnostic might perceive God alone manifesting may relate to the “new creation” doctrine, he is evidently little concerned with this teaching that the verses express. His concluding remarks reveal his difficulty in deciphering their meaning:

This is the extent to which we understand the literal sense of these verses. How ridiculous to suppose that what is hidden of them can be known by anyone but the

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<sup>336</sup> فمن أثبت الصفة شهد العالم آثار الصفات

*Kawāḳib*, 350.

<sup>337</sup> و إلا شهد مجرد إثبات عين الذات متجلية متوحدة بإنفرادها منزهة عن وجود سواها في جميع الحضرات فحال هذا العارف حال من إستغرقه شهود البقاء بالله تعالى و إستهلك عن شهود سائر الموجودات

*Kawāḳib*, 350.

<sup>338</sup> فوجود الوجود و موجد في الأزل علماً عند أهل النفي و الإثبات كالبحر العجاج و وجود ذلك البحر و شهوده هنا في الأبد عيناً كتلاطم الأمواج و ليس بين بحر ال أزل و موج الأبد غيرية سوى عينية إتحد تصرف الإرادة بالقدرة السارية الجارية أزلاً و أبداً في جميع الأوقات

*Kawāḳib*, 350.

<sup>339</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 350.

Lord of the heavens and someone whom God assists with a spirit who acquaints him with the like of these miracles!<sup>340</sup>

In the context of Ibn Mughayzil's defense, al-Maghribī's key point is that the world has always existed as pre-eternal knowledge, not as a concrete entity, as the philosophers claimed.

Having attempted to vindicate the Sufis by presenting their arguments, Ibn Mughayzil turns to a dispute primarily between Ash'arīs and Māturīdīs regarding the nature of God's attributes of act (*ṣifāt al-fi'l*) such as creation. The two schools agreed that God's attributes of essence (*ṣifāt al-dhāt*) are eternal "entities" or existents subsisting in His essence, being neither identical nor distinct from Him. Whereas the Ash'arīs, however, considered the attributes of act to be temporally originated and applicable to God only when He performs their corresponding acts, the Māturīdīs insisted that they are eternal things just like the attributes of essence.<sup>341</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil attributes the Māturīdī position to both the Ḥanafīs (who were mainly Māturīdīs by Ibn Mughayzil's time)<sup>342</sup> and "many Sufis." According to him, these Sufis argue that if God's attribute of creation were temporally originated, He would be deficient in eternal qualities (*la-kāna nāqiṣan fīmā lam yazal*).<sup>343</sup> This argument evidently derives from al-Kalābādhi's *Kitāb al-Ta'arruf*, whose version differs only with reference to other attributes of act as well.<sup>344</sup> In his commentary on this text, which Ibn Mughayzil excerpts, 'Alā' al-Dīn al-

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<sup>340</sup> هذا القدر هو المفهوم لنا من ظاهر معاني هذه الأبيات و ما بطن منها فهيئات أن يطلع عليه إلا رب السماوات و من أيده الله تعالى بروح من عنده أطلعه على مثل هذه الكرامات  
*Kawākib*, 350.

<sup>341</sup> On this debate, see Fathalla Kholeif, *A Study on Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and His Controversies in Transoxiana* (Beirut: Dar el-Machreq Éditeurs, 1966), 89-104; Wilferd Madelung, "Abū l-Mu'īn al-Nasafī and Ash'arī Theology," in *Studies in Medieval Muslim Thought and History*, ed. Sabine Schmidtke (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Variorum, 2013), 324–30.

<sup>342</sup> Wilferd Madelung, "Māturīdiyya," in *EP*, 6:847.

<sup>343</sup> *Kawākib*, 350.

<sup>344</sup> al-Kalābādhi, *Kitāb al-Ta'arruf*, 16-17. As a Ḥanafī of Bukhara, where Ḥanafism was dominant, it is not surprising that al-Kalābādhi says that most Sufis, including their major representatives, consider the attributes of act eternal. His contemporary Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, though not a *mutakallim*, contrasts humans' temporally originated love (*maḥabba*) with God's eternal love. See Abū Ṭālib Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. 'Aṭīyya al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb fī mu'āmalat al-maḥbūb wa-waṣf tarīq al-murīd ilā maqām al-tawḥīd*, ed. Maḥmūd Ibrāhīm Muḥammad al-Riḍwānī (Cairo: Maktabat Dār al-Turāth, 2001), 1047-48.

Qūnawī implicitly points out a problem with the Sufīs’ stance in observing that the Māturīdī position might be interpreted to imply (as some Ash‘arīs indeed argued)<sup>345</sup> that the object of God’s act of creation—the world—is likewise eternal. Ibn Mughayzil denies this implication by attempting to harmonize the views of the two schools in remarking on a story of a proponent of the Māturīdī view recounted by al-Qūnawī:

Someone related that he climbed up the minbar and asked those present, “What do you think of two men, one of whom believes that God always has been and will be possessing the dominion, creating creatures, providing, wealthy, generous, pouring forth good things, originating, and commanding; while the other believes that God was alone in pre-eternity, without anything at all, including creation and commanding in a true sense, and then such arose for him. Which of the two is more worthy of emulation?” The people promptly responded that the first is more truthful and more worthy of being emulated.<sup>346</sup>

Al-Qūnawī comments that “this is a philosophical intrigue. One must beware of it to be protected from it!”<sup>347</sup> Ibn Mughayzil interprets his warning as criticism of the first doctrine:

We do not accept that the position of the first [proponent] is a philosophical intrigue [...] His statement, “God has always possessed the dominion,” means [that He has done so] pre-eternally with power and will, in actuality [only after it came into] existence and [acquired] form. This is, assuredly, identical to his second account in which he said, “God was alone in pre-eternity,” that is, God was alone in pre-eternity with the power and will to create creatures; [that is, with] the capacity to create, not the existence [of things themselves].<sup>348</sup>

<sup>345</sup> See Abū l-Mu‘īn Maymūn b. Muḥammad al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adilla fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. Muḥammad al-Anwār Ḥāmid ‘Īsā (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya lil-Turāth, 2011), 504.

<sup>346</sup> يحكي بعضهم أنه صعد المنبر و قال للحاضرين ما تقولون في رجلين اعتقاد أحدهما أن الله لم يزل مالكاً للملك خالقاً للخلق رازقاً للرزق غنياً جواداً مفيضاً للخيرات له الخلق و الأمر أزل و أبدأ و الآخر معتقد أن الله كان في الأزل وحده لم يكن معه شيء و لا كان له خلق و لا أمر حقيقة ثم تجدد له ذلك أيهما أحق بالاتباع فبادر الناس إلى أن القائل الأول أحق بالتصديق و الاتباع

*Kawākib*, 350; ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Abī l-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Ismā‘īl al-Qūnawī, *Husn al-taṣarruf li-sharḥ al-ta‘arruf*, ed. Ṭāhā al-Dasūqī Ḥabīsh ([Place and publisher not identified], 2016), 2:139. On al-Qūnawī, who is not to be confused with Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, Ibn ‘Arabī’s most important student, see *GAL* S2:101; *HAWT* S2:105.

<sup>347</sup> هذه دسيسة فلسفية فليتنبه لها ليتحرز عنها

*Kawākib*, 350; al-Qūnawī, *Husn al-taṣarruf*, 2:139.

<sup>348</sup> لا نسلم أن مقالة الأول وسيلة فلسفية [...] قوله إن الله لم يزل مالكاً للملك أي بالقدرة و الإرادة أزل بالفعل وجوداً و صورة و هذا عين قوله الثاني بلا شك حيث قال إن الله كان في الأزل وحده أي كان الله في الأزل وحده مع القدرة و الإرادة لخلق الخلق إيجاداً لا وجوداً

*Kawākib*, 350-51.

Both claims, according to Ibn Mughayzil, assert that God has pre-eternally willed the world and been capable of creating it. He finds support for this harmonization from al-Maghribī, who explains that:

The Sufi masters' claim that God has always been creating means that He has always been, both pre- and post-eternally, characterized by the capacity for that.<sup>349</sup> The existence of a creature in pre-eternity is not entailed by its creation in post-eternity, since He has been pre-eternally characterized by the capacity to act in the sense of [His] will [to do so], not by the existent act. For if He existed pre-eternally with the act, eternity would apply to the temporal being or origination would apply to eternity.<sup>350</sup>

### 3.2.4 Conclusion

Ibn Mughayzil's chapter on *tawhīd* is a rich and nuanced exploration of God's oneness and His relation to the world in being and act. Our author argues that upon reaching a spiritual station such as union or self-annihilation, the mystic perceives, like God Himself, that God alone exists. More precisely, there is no longer any "mystic" per se: it is God who sees Himself in a divine self-vision, the person functioning only as a medium for that vision. This contention is central to the chapter, being advanced from the outset and reiterated by some of Anṣārī's commentators. Another key concern has a practical dimension, being to demonstrate that monotheism is the foundation of reliance on God. Ibn Mughayzil does not specify what such monotheism is, though one would assume that it is a simpler type than the "unifying

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<sup>349</sup> Cf. the similar argument of the Māturīdī Abū l-Mu'īn al-Nasafī (d. 508/1114). He contended that just as one is called a tailor because he is capable of tailoring, God is called a creator and provider because He is capable of creating and providing. See Abū l-Mu'īn Maymūn b. Muḥammad al-Nasafī, *Baḥr al-kalām*, ed. Walī l-Dīn Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ al-Farfūr (Cairo: Maktabat Dār al-Farfūr, 2000), 91-92.

<sup>350</sup> قول السادة الصوفية إن الله تعالى لم يزل خالقاً أي لم يزل موصوفاً بالقدرة على ذلك أزلاً و أبداً و لا يلزم من إيجاد الخلق في الأبد وجوده في الأزل لأنه تعالى كان موصوفاً أزلاً بالقدرة على الفعل إرادة لا بالفعل وجوداً إذ لو كان موجوداً بالفعل أزلاً للزم من ذلك للحادث من القدم أو للقدم من الحدوث ما يلزم  
*Kawātib*, 351.

monotheism” of the mystic, such as the monotheism consisting of a common declaration of faith that al-Ghazālī describes in the passage quoted above from the *Ihyā’*.

Following his treatment of *tawhīd*, Ibn Mughayzil investigates the structure of the universe and God’s relation to it. He excerpts a powerful passage from the *Mishkāt al-anwār* in which al-Ghazālī argues that the mystical path culminates in the knowledge that God alone exists. Ibn Mughayzil corroborates this monistic claim in his later account of essential manifestation and attributive manifestation in which the former represents God’s manifestation alone and the latter His manifestation to Himself through His attributes as the creatures, which means that “there has never been nor will there ever be any existent being but Him.” His explanation of these two terms in the chapter on *tawhīd* does not contradict this later account, but rather emphasizes the power and majesty of the Essence and the mediating role of the Attributes instead of their identity with God. His belief in a hidden divine essence and manifest attributes or names appears to have been conventional among Sufis. Ibn ‘Arabī writes that “essential manifestation is, according to the consensus of the People of Realities, impossible in anything but a locus,” that is, a locus of manifestation for God’s names.<sup>351</sup> ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Munāwī defines essential manifestation in his lexicon as “that whose starting point is the Essence without consideration of an attribute alongside it [...] The Real does not manifest through His essence to existent beings unless behind a veil of names.”<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>351</sup> التجلي الذاتي ممنوع بلا خلاف بين أهل الحقائق في غير مظهر

Ibn ‘Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, 2:606 (chapter 279). Ibn ‘Arabī distinguished between God in His essence (*dhāt*) and God as lord (*rabb*), whereby He relates to His creation through His names. See Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 60-61.

<sup>352</sup> ما يكون مبدؤه الذات من غير اعتبار صفة من الصفات معها [...] لا يتجلى الحق من حيث ذاته على الموجودات إلا من وراء حجاب من الحجب الأسمائية

‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Munāwī, *al-Tawqīf ‘alā muhimāt al-ta’arīf*, ed. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Ṣāliḥ Ḥamdān (Cairo: ‘Ālam al-Kutub, 1990), 91.



Why did Ibn Mughayzil not present his monistic conception of essential and attributive manifestation in the chapter on *tawhīd*? While his later account is occasioned by Ibn ‘Arabī’s response to the debate over the Hadith of Gabriel, he may have had another motivation. A reader who suspects Sufis of harbouring a monistic tendency would turn first to the chapter on *tawhīd* for incriminating evidence. In the *Kawākib*, he would find, rather than an explanation of Ibn Mughayzil himself or a reference to an Akbarian,<sup>353</sup> a passage from a text by al-Ghazālī, who was well respected in Cairo at the time.<sup>354</sup> Ibn Mughayzil’s use of this passage thus appears to be a conscious attempt to package a controversial idea in the language of an orthodox authority.

Ibn Mughayzil’s treatment of the cosmogonic status of the world—its eternity and creation—is strongly apologetic. His central concern is to dissociate the Sufis from the unambiguous and, in his view, errant assertion of its eternity on the part of the Muslim philosophers. The arguments that he presents in favour of the Sufis’ position attribute the world’s eternity strictly to its status as a pre-eternal object of God’s knowledge and will. While his excerpt of the verses about the “new creation” reveals his familiarity with this teaching,<sup>355</sup> al-Maghribī’s comments pertain little to that idea. He simply reiterates that God pre-eternally knew and willed the world, while suggesting that, as al-Maghribī had previously asserted, the gnostic in the station of subsistence perceives the world as identical with God (and thus, like Him,

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<sup>353</sup> While Ibn Mughayzil cites Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Mawāqī‘ al-nujūm* in the chapter on *tawhīd*, the passage, detailing six types of recitation (*tilāwa*), seems out of place. One might think that Ibn Mughayzil included this passage in the chapter (especially so conspicuously midway through it) to catch his skeptical reader off guard: rather than finding a passage about *wujūd* from a text by Ibn ‘Arabī, he would encounter this unprovocative teaching about recitation, thus providing support for the Shaykh’s uprightness. However, this interpretation is contradicted by Ibn ‘Arabī’s description of the fifth type of recitation, that of the “secret” (*sirr*), as unification (*ittiḥād*), which, regardless of what he meant by the term, could be perceived negatively. See *Kawākib*, 298-99; Muḥyī l-Dīn b. ‘Arabī, *Mawāqī‘ al-nujūm wa-maṭāli‘ ahillat al-asrār wa-l-‘ulūm* (Casablanca: Dār al-Rashād al-Ḥadītha, 2004), 79-80.

<sup>354</sup> According to al-Suyūṭī, Burhān al-Dīn al-Biqā‘ī (d. 885/1480) was almost killed by an angry mob after penning his attack on al-Ghazālī, after which he feared to leave his home even for the Friday prayer. See Sartain, *Jalāl al-dīn al-Suyūṭī*, 1:131.

<sup>355</sup> In his statement in relation to the hadith concerning the Prophet’s “concealment” that every divine manifestation is distinct from another, Ibn Mughayzil may have alluded to Ibn ‘Arabī’s notion of the “new creation.”

eternal). Apart from defending Sufis who adhere to Māturīdī theology, Ibn Mughayzil's harmonization of the Ash'arī and Māturīdī teachings may be intended to promote unity between these two major Sunnī schools.

### 3.3 The Muḥammadan Spirit

Our discussion of cosmogony in the *Kawāḳib* continues, to an extent, with an examination of the Muḥammadan Spirit (*al-rūḥ al-muḥammadiyya*), commonly known also as the “Light of Muḥammad” (*nūr muḥammad*) and eventually the “Muḥammadan Reality” (*al-ḥaqīqa al-muḥammadiyya*). This term, in the most basic sense, denotes Muḥammad's pre-existent entity that preceded the creation of Adam.<sup>356</sup> The concept is rooted in early hadiths, where it is presented as the spermatic substance of the Prophet's pure ancestors, passing from one to the next through procreation until reaching Muḥammad.<sup>357</sup> Muslim scholars theorized and elaborated the Muḥammadan Spirit in different ways. One approach, found in al-Tustarī's Quran commentary and some of the earliest Shī'ī hadiths ascribed to Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765), consists of narratives in which the formation of the Spirit is recounted.<sup>358</sup> Another approach, espoused by Ibn 'Arabī and some of his followers, was to conceive the Spirit as the first determination of the divine essence.<sup>359</sup> Furthermore, in the basic sense of a cosmic function apart from Muḥammad's historical role, the idea was propounded even by scholars less inclined to

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<sup>356</sup> Uri Rubin, “Nūr Muḥammadī,” in *EP*, 8:125.

<sup>357</sup> Uri Rubin, “Nūr Muḥammadī,” in *EP*, 8:125.

<sup>358</sup> Khalil Andani, “Metaphysics of Muhammad: The Nur Muhammad from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (d. 148/765) to Nasir al-Din al-Tusi (d. 672/1274),” *Journal of Sufi Studies* 8 (2019): 109-21.

<sup>359</sup> Andani, “Metaphysics of Muhammad,” 143-57; 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad Jāmī, *Naqd al-Nuṣūṣ fī Sharḥ Naqsh al-Fuṣūṣ*, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Anjuman-i Shāhanshāhī-i Falsafah-'i Īrān, 1977), 274; William C. Chittick, “Ibn 'Arabī's Own Summary of the *Fuṣūṣ*: 'The Imprint of the Bezels of Wisdom',” *Sophia Perennis* 1, no. 2 (1975): 100.

philosophy and mystical thought such as Qādī 'Iyād in his *Kitāb al-Shifā' bi-ta'rīf al-Muṣṭafā*,<sup>360</sup> al-Qaṣṭallānī in his *al-Mawāhib al-laduniyya*,<sup>361</sup> and al-Subkī in a relatively long fatwa.<sup>362</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil devotes a chapter of roughly six pages to the Muḥammadan Spirit.<sup>363</sup> His arrangement of this chapter immediately after the discourse of the waking vision of the Prophet suggests that, although he does not explicitly connect the Spirit to this vision, the chapter can be considered an epilogue or appendix to that discussion. Having explored theoretical aspects of the vision and recounted stories, he increases the significance of the experience by establishing a link between the historical Muḥammad whom one encounters and his transcendent, pre-existent entity that, as we shall see, he considers the source of all existence. Afterwards, Ibn Mughayzil returns to the topic of vision, examining how spirits manifest in bodies and visions of angels.

Ibn Mughayzil draws his ideas about the Muḥammadan Spirit mainly from three sources: poetry by Ibn al-Fāriḍ, hadiths, and al-Subkī's fatwa. He begins his exposition rather emphatically:

Know that the sublime Muḥammadan Spirit is the Spirit of Spirits, the root from which things began. It is the verb proceeding from God, while Adam is like the predicate, the verbal noun, and the absolute object of a verbal clause deriving from the verb with respect to formal, corporeal derivation.<sup>364</sup>

Since Muslim philosophers sometimes employed the term *ṣudūr* (from *ṣadara*, the same root as *ṣādir*) to denote “emanation,”<sup>365</sup> this passage suggests that the Muḥammadan Spirit emanated

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<sup>360</sup> Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints*, 66.

<sup>361</sup> al-Qaṣṭallānī, *al-Mawāhib al-laduniyya*, 1:55-75.

<sup>362</sup> Tāj al-Dīn Abī Naṣr 'Abd al-Wahhāb b. 'Alī b. 'Abd al-Kāfī al-Subkī, *Fatāwā al-Subkī* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifa, n.d.), 1:38-42. Some scholars, however, denied the pre-existence of Muḥammad, including al-Ghazālī and Ibn Taymiyya. See Rubin, “Nūr Muḥammadī,” in *EP*, 8:125.

<sup>363</sup> *Kawākib*, 49-54.

<sup>364</sup> فاعلم أن الروح العلية المحمدية هي روح الأرواح و هي الأصل المبتدأ به في أول الأمر و الفعل الصادر عن الحق و آدم كالخير و المصدر و المفعول المطلق المطلق الفرع عن الفعل بالنسبة إلى الاشتقاق الصوري الجثماني *Kawākib*, 48.

<sup>365</sup> Ian Richard Netton, *Allāh Transcendent: Studies in the Structure and Semiotics of Islamic Philosophy, Theology, and Cosmology* (London: Routledge, 2006), 114 and 268, 311n111.

from God as a non-intentional outpouring of His being. This would seem to contradict Ibn Mughayzil’s understanding of creation, described above, as a deliberate act of God’s will and power. He does not address this apparent contradiction, possibly because he is preoccupied with asserting the superiority of Muḥammad by demonstrating the existential priority of the Spirit. The passage addresses this chief concern by indicating that Adam is made up of the very substance of the Muḥammadan Spirit. Ibn Mughayzil continues that thread by citing these verses by Ibn al-Fāriḍ:

شهوداً بدا في صورة معنوية	فذا مظهر للروح هاد لأفقها
شهوداً غدا في صيغة صورية	و ذا مظهر للنفس حاد لرقفها
شيء من الأشكال اشكال ريبية	و من عرف الأمثال مثلي لم يشبهه

This is the spirit’s guise, guiding on to its horizon;  
a witnessing that appears in a conceptual form  
While this is the soul’s display, driving on to its companions;  
a witnessing that begins in a formal mold  
Whoever knows, as I do, [the true nature of those] figures  
does not liken any of the figures to the problem of doubt<sup>366</sup>

The “slanderer” and “blamer” mentioned in earlier verses of Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s poem, here represented by “this,” are the respective subjects of the first and second verses. In Sufi poetry, these characters may denote “the mystic’s volitional, rational, and physical natures, which must be tamed for selfless obedience.” In these verses, the slanderer, functioning as the locus for the spirit, beckons the soul back to its “pre-eternal spiritual home,” while the blamer, representing the locus for the soul, “pulls the individual down to those mired in the created material world”; in this way, the verses reflect the opposition and conflict between spirit and matter that underlies

<sup>366</sup> *Kawākib*, 48. In a 1882 edition of Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s *Dīwān*, “witnessing” in the fourth line is “existing” (*wujūdan*) while the last two lines read (more intelligibly): “Whoever knows, as I do, [the true nature of those] forms/Does not liken polytheism to guidance in solving the problem of ambiguity.”

(و من عرف الأشكال مثلي لم يشبهه      شرك هدى في رفع إشكال شبيهة)  
See Abū Ḥaḥṣ Sharaf al-Dīn ‘Umar b. al-Fāriḍ, *Kitāb Dīwān* (Beirut: al-Maṭba‘a al-Adabiyya, 1882), 40.

much of *al-Tā'iyya al-kubrā*.<sup>367</sup> Ibn Mughayzil, however, does not acknowledge what they teach one about the mystical way. Instead, he reveals his strategic use of poetry in his argumentation by focusing on the final verse, interpreting it as an indication that, despite their opposite roles, the spirit and the soul are both, like all things (as we will see below), manifestations of the Muḥammadan Spirit.<sup>368</sup> He thus reiterates the Spirit's precedence:

The case of Muḥammad at the very beginning [of existence] is like that of Adam [as the first human created]. The first locus is a father in essence to the second locus; a father in form as well as [to] its derivatives.<sup>369</sup>

I have interpreted the unvowelled term *m-z-h-r* as *mazhar*, “locus” in the Akbarian sense, whereby the Muḥammadan Spirit is, as some Akbarians argued, the first locus or determination of the divine essence that, as a complete image of the Essence, manifests all God's names and attributes. The term might also be read as *muzhar*, “being made to appear.” Regardless of the meaning that Ibn Mughayzil intends, his aim is to demonstrate that even Adam, usually honoured as the first human created, as well as his descendants all derive ultimately, in both essence and form, from Muḥammad. This is corroborated by the next set of verses by Ibn al-Fāriḍ that Ibn Mughayzil cites:

وكلهم عن سبق معاني دائر      بدائرتي أو وارد من شريعتي  
وإني و إن كنت ابن آدم صورة      فلي فيه معنى شاهد بأبوتي

Due to the priority of my essential qualities they all revolve  
in my circle or originate from my law  
Even if I am a son of Adam in form,  
I have an essence in him that bears witness to my fatherhood<sup>370</sup>

<sup>367</sup> Th. Emil Homerin, *Passion Before Me, My Fate Behind: Ibn al-Fāriḍ and the Poetry of Recollection* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011), 208.

<sup>368</sup> Cf. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, 233: “In the sphere of union (*jam* °) there can be no duality: lover, beloved, railer [blamer], and slanderer are so many aspects of the One Being.”

<sup>369</sup> إن مثل محمد ﷺ في السبق الأول كمثل آدم عليه السلام فالمظهر الأول أب في المعنى للمظهر الثاني الأب في الصورة مع فرعه *Kawāḍib*, 48. He also states that Sufis refer to the Muḥammadan Spirit, or the “Prophetic Spirit” (*al-rūḥ al-nabawīyya*), as the “Concealed Praise” (*al-madh al-mastūr*) because it is concealed in the inner core (*damīr*) of a speaker. I am not able to find any information about this term.

<sup>370</sup> *Kawāḍib*, 48; Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, 255.

Having thus established the existential precedence of the Muḥammadan Spirit with the help of Ibn al-Fāriḍ, Ibn Mughayzil turns to hadiths for support:

- 1) (As exegesis of Q 33:7, “When we established with the prophets their covenant.”)

كنت أول النبيين في الخلق و آخرهم في البعث

“I was the first of the prophets created and the last of them dispatched.”<sup>371</sup>

- 2) قلت يا رسول الله متى كنت نبياً قال و آدم بين الروح و الجسد

“I asked, ‘O Messenger of God, when were you a Prophet?’ He said, ‘While Adam was between spirit and body.’”<sup>372</sup>

- 3) إني عند الله في أم الكتاب لخاتم النبيين و إن آدم لمنجدل في طينته

“Verily, for God I was the seal of the prophets in the Mother of the Book while Adam was twisted up in his clay.”<sup>373</sup>

- 4) قيل للنبي ﷺ متى لك النبوة قال بين خلق آدم و نفخ الروح فيه

“The Prophet was asked, ‘When was prophethood incumbent upon you?’ He replied, ‘Between the creation of Adam and the blowing of spirit in him.’”

- 5) قال رجل للنبي ﷺ متى استنبئت قال و آدم بين الروح الجسد حين أخذ مني الميثاق

“A man asked the Prophet, ‘When did you become a prophet?’ He responded, ‘When Adam was between spirit and body while the covenant was made with me.’”<sup>374</sup>

The first hadith states simply that Muḥammad was the first prophet created, while others also highlight Muḥammad’s priority to all prophets by specifying that the formation of Adam as a

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<sup>371</sup> al-Ṭabarānī, *Musnad al-Shāmiyyīn*, 4:34-35 (no. 2662). Al-Ghazālī argued that “creation” here means “predestination” (*taqdīr*). See Rubin, “Pre-existence and Light,” 70n21.

<sup>372</sup> Cf. Muḥammad b. ‘Īsā b. Sūra b. Mūsā al-Tirmidhī, *Jāmi‘ al-Tirmidhī* (N.p.: Wizārat al-Shu‘ūn al-Islāmiyya wa-l-Da‘wa wa-l-Irshād al-Su‘ūdiyya, 2000), 823 (no. 3609), where the question is, “When was prophethood incumbent upon you?” Ibn Taymiyya accepted only this version and insisted that one in which Adam is said to have been between water and clay is inauthentic. See Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints*, 60-61.

<sup>373</sup> Cf. Muḥammad b. Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad ‘Umar (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānījī, 2001), 1:124.

<sup>374</sup> Ibn Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, 123; *Kawākib*, 49-50.

human prophet was not yet complete. While only the first and final hadiths connect Muḥammad’s acquisition of prophethood with the covenant mentioned in Q 33:7, Ibn Mughayzil strengthens this link by mentioning the interpretation of a certain Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. ‘Alī in which the Prophet precedes other prophets despite being the last one sent.<sup>375</sup> According to this interpretation, when God extracted the descendants of human beings from their loins and caused them to witness themselves, asking, “Am I not your Lord?” (Q 7:172), Muḥammad was the first to reply in the affirmative.<sup>376</sup>

By presenting these hadiths, Ibn Mughayzil provides solid scriptural grounds for his conception and treatment of the Muḥammadan Spirit. As he returns to elucidating the Spirit with reference to Ibn al-Fāriḍ, he offers the following remarks:

You know that he is the first dawn to rise from the darkness of nonexistence and the first flash of lightning from the secret of the secrets of eternity. You know [also] that he is the great, preeminent imam; he who prays in the mihrab of Reality; [and] is the sole reciter on the tongue of all creatures.<sup>377</sup>

As “the sole reciter on the tongue of all creatures,” Ibn Mughayzil suggests that the Spirit has some sort of active role in the world. He confirms this by showing that key characteristics of prophets and their stories and in fact all existent things and events share the Muḥammadan Spirit as their source:

The water of Noah’s flood, the Friend’s [Abraham’s] fire, Jacob’s sadness, Job’s patience, the prophets’ miracles, the saints’ miracles, and everything else that can be spoken of or alluded to [are nothing] but like one of his particles. For the prophets are drops of moisture that derive from his drops.<sup>378</sup>

<sup>375</sup> Perhaps, this interpreter is the important Shī‘ī scholar Ibn Bābawayh (d. 381/991-92), since they had the same forenames.

<sup>376</sup> *Kawāḍib*, 49.

<sup>377</sup> علمت أنه ﷺ هو أول فجر طلع من ظلمة العدم و أول برق لمع من سر أسرار القدم و علمت أنه الإمام الأعظم المقدم و المصلي في محراب الحقيقة التالي وحده على لسان جميع الخليقة

*Kawāḍib*, 50.

<sup>378</sup> أن ماء طوفان نوح و نار الخليل و حزن يعقوب و صبر أيوب و معجزات الأنبياء و كرامات الأولياء و غير ذلك مما دخل تحت عبارة أو إشارة إلا كذرة من ذراته لأن الأنبياء عليهم السلام قطرات بلل من قطراته

*Kawāḍib*, 50.

It is evident that Ibn Mughayzil derives at least part of this teaching from Ibn al-Fāriḍ, whom he next quotes to substantiate his claims:

و حزني ما يعقوب بث أقله  
و كل بلى أيوب بعض بليتي  
فطوفان نوح عند نوح كإدمعي  
و إيقاد نيران الخليل كلوعتي

The grief that Jacob expressed is the least of my sorrow  
All the trials of Job are but a part of my affliction  
The flood of Noah is like my tears when I weep  
The ignition of the Friend's [Abraham's] fires is like my ardour of love<sup>379</sup>

In sum, the Muḥammadan Spirit is the root of all existence, which, as Ibn Mughayzil says in concluding this segment of his exposition, is but “a glow [emitted] from it, an element of it, and a child born from and belonging to it.”<sup>380</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil concludes his treatment of the Muḥammadan Spirit with an excerpt of al-Subkī's entire fatwa, which takes up half the chapter. Apart from lending Ibn Mughayzil the authority of this notable scholar, the fatwa provides a more systematic justification for the belief in Muḥammad's precedence and an account of its implications. The title of the fatwa, “Glorification and Blessing in [God's word], ‘You must believe in him and help him’,” is derived in part from Q 3:81, which, like Q 33:7, describes a covenant between God and the prophets:

When God made a covenant with the prophets, [declaring], “I have given you the Book and wisdom. So, if there comes to you a messenger fulfilling that which is with you, you must believe in him and help him.” He asked, “Do you then affirm this and accept the responsibility that I have laid upon you in these terms?” They replied, “We affirm it.” God said, “Then bear witness, and I will bear witness with you.”

Commenting on the verse quoted in the title of his fatwa, al-Subkī highlights both its praise for the Prophet and indication of his precedence:

In this verse, praise for the Prophet and glorification of his elevated rank is obvious. At the same time, it implies that had he appeared in their time, he would

<sup>379</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 50; Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, 201.

<sup>380</sup> كل شيء سواها بمنزلة الضوء لها و الجزء منها و الولد الناشئ عنها منسوب إليها  
*Kawāḳib*, 50.



have been [a messenger] dispatched. Thus, his prophethood and mission is for all creatures, from the time of Adam to the Day of Resurrection, and all prophets and their communities are among his community [...] Thus becomes clear the meaning of his (blessings and peace upon him) remark, “I was a prophet while Adam was between spirit and body.”<sup>381</sup>

If he had come in the time of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, or Jesus, they and their communities would have been obliged to believe in and help him. For this reason, God established the covenant with them.<sup>382</sup>

Al-Subkī strengthens his case by responding to two objections. The first is that this hadith refers to God’s knowledge that He will eventually make Muḥammad a prophet.

According to al-Subkī:

There would be nothing special [in that case] about him being a prophet while Adam was between spirit and body, since God knew the prophethood of all prophets at that [moment] and prior. Thus, there must be a special characteristic of the Prophet as a result of which He reported this information, informing his community so that they know his rank for God.<sup>383</sup>

The second objection is that this doctrine is implausible, since one must exist to possess prophethood and mission. Al-Subkī argue that:

It has been said that God created spirits before bodies. In his [blessings and peace upon him] remark, “I was a prophet,” there is an allusion to his noble spirit or to his essence. We are incapable of knowing the essences. Only their Creator and someone He aids with divine light knows them. With each of those essences, God does what he wants, whenever He wants. The Prophet’s essence existed before the creation of Adam. God applied that attribute [of prophethood] to it so that its creation would be prepared for that, pouring forth [that attribute] upon it from that time so that he became a prophet [...] So, his essence existed from that time, even though his noble body appeared later.<sup>384</sup>

في هذه الآية من التنويه بالنبي ﷺ و تعظيم قدره العلي ما لا يخفى و فيه مع ذلك أنه على تقدير مجيئه في زمانهم يكون مرسلأ فتكون نبوته و رسالته <sup>381</sup> عامة لجميع الخلق من زمن آدم إلى يوم القيامة و تكون الأنبياء و أممهم كلهم من أمته [...] و يتبين بذلك معنى قوله ﷺ كنت نبياً و آدم بين الروح و الجسد

*Kawākib*, 50; al-Subkī, *Fatāwā al-Subkī*, 1:38. For the hadith, see Ibn Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, 123.

و لو اتفق مجيئه في زمن آدم و نوح و إبراهيم و موسى و عيسى و جب عليهم و على أممهم الإيمان به و نصرته و بذلك أخذ الله الميثاق عليهم <sup>382</sup> *Kawākib*, 52; al-Subkī, *Fatāwā al-Subkī*, 1:40.

لم يكن خصوصية بأنه نبي و آدم بين الروح و الجسد لأن جميع الأنبياء يعلم الله نبوتهم في ذلك و قبله فلا بد من خصوصية للنبي ﷺ لأجلها أخبر <sup>383</sup> بهذا الخبر إعلاماً لأمته ليعرفوا قدره عند الله

*Kawākib*, 51; al-Subkī, *Fatāwā al-Subkī*, 1:39.

قد جاء أن الله خلق الأرواح قبل الأجساد فقد تكون الإشارة بقوله كنت نبياً إلى روحه الشريفة أو إلى حقيقته و الحقائق تقصر عقولنا عن معرفتها و <sup>384</sup> إنما يعلمها خالقها و من أمده بنور إلهي ثم إن تلك الحقائق يوتي الله كل حقيقة منها ما يشاء في الوقت الذي يشاء فحقيقة النبي ﷺ قد تكون من قبل خلق آدم أتاهم اللهدلك الوصف بأن يكون خلقها متهيئة لذلك و إفاضته عليها من ذلك الوقت فصار نبياً [...] فحقيقته موجودة من ذلك الوقت و إن تأخر جسده الشريف

### 3.3.1 Conclusion

Ibn Mughayzil's key objective in treating the Muḥammadan Spirit is to demonstrate its existential priority and the superiority of Muḥammad to other beings as the complete manifestation of the Spirit. His arrangement of this chapter immediately after his discourse on the waking vision of the Prophet suggests that his account is intended to amplify the prestige of encountering the Spirit's key representative while awake. He is supported in these aims by a balanced use of sources, including the controversial Ibn al-Fāriḍ on the one hand and hadiths as well as the well-respected al-Subkī on the other. This choice of material appears to be a calculated attempt to demonstrate both the mystical significance and orthodoxy of this concept, while al-Subkī's fatwa provides a more systematic account of the Spirit's precedence, linking it to Muḥammad's mission and responding to objections. However, proving the Spirit's precedence seems to have overridden any concern on Ibn Mughayzil's part to present a consistent conception of its origination. A hadith that he cites suggests that it was created, while he may have also described it as the first *mazhar*, a characteristic Akbarian term, and even speaks of the philosophical notion of "procession" or "emanation" (*ṣudūr*).

### 3.4 The Vision of God

The idea that God may be seen is suggested by the Quran itself: "Faces on that Day [of Resurrection] will be radiant, gazing upon their Lord" (75:22-23). A well-known hadith records the Prophet's remark to some of his Companions that they would see God in the same manner as they see the full moon.<sup>385</sup> By adducing such texts, usually accompanied by rational arguments,

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*Kawākib*, 51; al-Subkī, *Fatāwā al-Subkī*, 1:39.

<sup>385</sup> al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 147 (no. 573); Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 283-84 (no. 633).

Sunnīs arrived at the view that God will be seen in the afterlife “with the eyes” (*bi-l-abṣār*).<sup>386</sup>

Some groups, however, most notably the Mu‘tazilīs and Twelver Shī‘īs (in some cases even before Mu‘tazilī influence), rejected this Sunnī belief and cited their own scriptural and rational evidence. Key verses included Q 6:103, which declares that “eyes do not perceive Him” (*lā tudrikuhu l-abṣār*) and Q 7:143, which records God’s response to Moses’ request to see Him: “You will never see Me” (*lan tarāni*).<sup>387</sup> The debate was intense and led, at least on the part of Mu‘tazilīs, to accusations of disbelief.<sup>388</sup>

The vision of God was important for Sufis both as a tenet of the theological schools to which they belonged and as a mystical experience of extraordinary depth. However, they distinguished between “witnessing” (*mushāhada* or *shuhūd*) and vision proper (*ru‘ya*). As we have seen, witnessing God is the product of attaining a spiritual station such as union or self-annihilation. Al-Hujwīrī specifies two types: one resulting from perfect faith, which consists of seeing an act with the physical eye while regarding the (true) agent with the spiritual eye, as shown by the remark of Muḥammad b. Wāsi‘ (d. 123/740-41), “I have never seen anything without seeing God therein”;<sup>389</sup> and another resulting from rapturous love, which consists of seeing *only* the (true) agent, as evinced by Abū Bakr al-Shiblī’s (d. 334/945) declaration, “I have never seen anything except God.”<sup>390</sup> Ocular vision, on the contrary, was commonly reserved for

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<sup>386</sup> Daniel Gimaret, “Ru‘yat Allāh,” *EP*, 8:649.

<sup>387</sup> See Gimaret, “Ru‘yat Allāh,” 8:649; Georges Vajda, “Le problème de la vision de Dieu (*ru‘ya*) d’après quelques auteurs šī‘ites duo-décimains,” in *Etudes de théologie et de philosophie arabo-islamiques à l’époque classique*, ed. Daniel Gimaret, M. Hayoun, and Jean Jolivet (London: Variorum, 1986), 31-54.

<sup>388</sup> Abū Mūsā al-Murdār (d. 226/841), one of the founders of the Baghdad school of Mu‘tazilism, ruled that one who believes that God will be seen “without asking how” (*bi-lā kayfa*) is a disbeliever in addition to one who doubts that person’s disbelief. See Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Abd al-Raḥīm b. Muḥammad b. ‘Uthmān al-Khayyāt, *Kitāb al-Intiṣār wa-l-radd ‘alā Ibn al-Rāwandī al-mulḥid*, ed. H.S. Nyberg (Beirut: al-Dār al-‘Arabiyya lil-Kitāb, 1993), 67-68. Al-Jāhīz (d. 255/868-69) avers that one who acknowledges the fact that God is not seen with the eyes (*‘arafah*) and then rejects it is truly a polytheist and disbeliever. See Abū l-Faṭḥ Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wa-l-niḥal*, ed. Aḥmad Fahmī Muḥammad (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1992), 1:66.

<sup>389</sup> ما رأيت شيئاً قد إلا رأيت الله فيه

<sup>390</sup> لم أر شيئاً قط إلا الله

al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-maḥjūb*, 364-65.

the afterlife. Al-Hujwārī states that witnessing only *resembles* vision in the afterlife,<sup>391</sup> while al-Qushayrī, denying that Moses saw God, explains that he was only bold enough to request the vision because of his intoxication with desire and love for God, indeed to such an extent that “Moses came without Moses.”<sup>392</sup> More definitively, al-Kalābādhī claims that Sufis agree that God is not seen with either the eyes or heart in this world. He justifies this with several arguments. For instance, since seeing God is the noblest blessing, its occurrence here below would erase the distinction between this finite world and eternal paradise.<sup>393</sup> However, some authors, as we will see below, did make an exception for the Prophet during his Ascension and sometimes even for Moses.

Ibn Mughayzil’s treatment of the vision of God consists of two discourses. The first, like his discussion of the eternity and creation of the world, is found in his extensive chapter on controversial or challenging statements and teachings of Sufis. In roughly six pages, he deals with a request by Ibn al-Fāriḍ to see God, which is problematic because, as Ibn Mughayzil argues later, only the Prophet Muḥammad was permitted to see God in this world. His aim is to demonstrate that Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s request is acceptable, which he does by delineating two ways in which God may be seen (though not exactly, as we shall see, in *this* world). The second discourse

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<sup>391</sup> al-Hujwārī, *Kashf al-mahjūb*, 367.

<sup>392</sup> Abū l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, *Laṭā’if al-ishārāt*, ed. Ibrāhīm Basyūnī (Cairo: al-Hay’a al-Miṣriyya al-‘Āmma lil-Kitāb, 2000), 1:564-66.

<sup>393</sup> al-Kalābādhī, *Kitāb al-Ta’arruf*, 21. See also the denials of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728) in Jamāl al-Dīn Abū l-Faraj b. al-Jawzī, *Ādāb al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī: zuḥduh wa-mawā’iẓuh*, ed. Sulaymān al-Ḥarthī (Damascus: Dār al-Nawādir, 2008), 67; and Ja’far al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765), an important figure for Sufis, in Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism*, 80. For the ideas of Ibn ‘Arabī, who also distinguished between witnessing and vision, see Michel Chodkiewicz, “The Vision of God according to Ibn ‘Arabi,” in *Sufism: Love and Wisdom*, ed. Jean-Louis Michon and Roger Gaetani (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2008), 33-48. On Sufi views about seeing God, see also Pieter Coppens, *Seeing God in Sufi Qur’an Commentaries: Crossings between This World and the Otherworld* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 260: “All described modes of this-worldly vision can be categorised as contemplative visions by the eye of the heart: although not denying the theoretical possibility, none of the Sufi commentators claimed an ocular vision of God to have actually taken place in this world.” Coppens (*Seeing God in Sufi Qur’an Commentaries*, 179) notes, however, that some “proto-Sufi” renunciants (*nussāk*) believed that even non-prophets could enjoy an ocular vision of God in this world.

makes up the final chapter of the *Kawākib* and follows discussion of seeing prophets and angels. This arrangement fulfills Ibn Mughayzil’s intention announced in the introduction to the text to “conclude the composition, God willing, with a detailed discussion of the vision of God.”<sup>394</sup> In just over nine pages, he focuses on proving that the Prophet indeed saw God vis-à-vis the alleged disagreement of ‘Āisha, while covering some related aspects of his vision and vision in general. In this section, I focus primarily on the first discourse because of its Sufi character as opposed to the second that, being heavily based on exegetical literature (*tafsīr*), is more scholarly.

Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s controversial verses begin Ibn Mughayzil’s first discourse on the vision of God:

و إذا سألتك أن أراك حقيقة فاسمح و لا تجعل جوابي لن ترى

When I ask You if I may truly see You,  
allow so, and do not make my response, “You shall never be seen”<sup>395</sup>

According to Ibn Mughayzil, a certain ‘Abd al-Kabīr al-Ḥaḍramī denied that these verses were penned by Ibn al-Fāriḍ, arguing that he was a gnostic (*‘ārif*), and a gnostic would not state such.

Ibn Mughayzil is not convinced by al-Ḥaḍramī’s reasoning:

The gnostics among his [Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s] contemporaries and onwards have agreed that they exited from his two lips. It may be that Shaykh ‘Abd al-Kabīr intended to preserve the outward dimension of the Law due to the exoteric scholars’ inability to understand the perception of divine truths, out of respect for his (blessings and peace upon him) remark, “An account that you share with people who cannot understand it is a trial for some of them.”<sup>396</sup>

<sup>394</sup> *Kawākib*, 78.

<sup>395</sup> *Kawākib*, 370 and 375. This poem alludes, of course, to God’s negative response to Moses’ request to see Him in Q 7:143.

<sup>396</sup> أجمع العارفين بالله تعالى من أهل زمانه إلى هلم جرا على أنه خرج من بين شفتيه و أما الشيخ عبد الكبير رحمه الله و رضي عنا به فلعله قصد بذلك صون ظاهر الشريعة لقصور فهم علماء الظاهر عن إدراك الحقائق الربانية لقوله عليه الصلاة و السلام ما أنت محدث قوماً حديثاً لم تبلغه عقولهم إلا كان على بعضهم فتنة

*Kawākib*, 375. For the hadith, see Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 6 (no. 5).

Ibn Mughayzil likens al-Ḥaḍramī to Ibn ‘Abd al-Salām, who, as we have seen, also adopted a pragmatic approach when speaking of Ibn ‘Arabī, insulting him before some and praising him as a *quṭb* before others.<sup>397</sup>

If Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s request was legitimate, how can one see God? In Ibn Mughayzil’s view, there are two ways. The first is through one’s attainment of the station of the annihilation of self-annihilation (*al-fanā’ ‘ana l-fanā’*). This claim brings us back to the chapter on *tawḥīd* in which, as we have seen, Ibn Mughayzil argues that in this station and others the mystic sees *only* God. He notes in the present discussion that one who reaches self-annihilation (*tahaqqaqa fi fanā’ihi*) dies, and one who dies sees God. To substantiate this, he cites the view of al-Mursī that one can enter God’s presence (*yadkhul ‘alā Llāh*) in only one of two ways: through the “greater annihilation” (*al-fanā’ al-akbar*), that is, one’s physical death; or through self-annihilation.<sup>398</sup>

To further elucidate Ibn Mughayzil’s claim here, it is helpful to mention his response in an earlier chapter of the *Kawākib* on self-annihilation to the criticism of certain jurists who, he says, focus entirely on law (*al-fuqahā’ al-quḥḥ*) and have been prevented by God from obtaining experiential knowledge (*al-‘ulūm al-dhawqiyya*), that seeing God after self-annihilation entails incarnation (*ḥulūl*) and unification (*ittiḥād*):

The matter is not as they claim. For incarnation and unification are blameworthy in a legal sense, since they involve the existence of otherness that entails a distinction between two things. The spirit, for example, is united with the body by virtue of its control over it, though it is indisputable that the spirit is not the body. Self-annihilation is not like that, because its condition is the absence of otherness in which the seeker would be [implicated]. Its attribution to him ceases when he perishes in a spiritual death, and one who dies sees the Real. He enters the isthmus of subsistence and is invested with the robe of honour of the qualities of

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<sup>397</sup> *Kawākib*, 375.

<sup>398</sup> *Kawākib*, 370. For al-Mursī’s view, see also Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, *Laṭā’if al-minan*, 164. Abū Madyan also seems to refer to seeing God through self-annihilation. He asks: if a person dies once and sees God, how about someone who dies seventy times each day, since “no soul knows what delight awaits them as the reward for their deeds” (Q 32:17)? See *Kawākib*, 241.

eternity [...] The drink of sight comes to him in the goblets of the spiritual stations, and he encounters eternity as eternity.<sup>399</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil argues, in other words, that it is God who sees God: the human functions merely as an instrument for this divine self-vision. The duality intrinsic to incarnation and unification is thus totally absent.

The second way to see God in this world, according to Ibn Mughayzil, is through the “folding of time” (*tayy al-zamān*). This is the ninth of the twenty-five miracles that al-Subkī enumerates in his *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi‘iyya al-kubrā* and Ibn Mughayzil excerpts in an earlier section of the *Kawākib*.<sup>400</sup> Al-Subkī mentions this miracle alongside the tenth type, the “unfolding of time” (*nashr al-zamān*). He does not define these two types or provide any examples, stating that they are difficult to explain but should be affirmed as a part of one’s faith and that there exist many stories about them.<sup>401</sup> Ibn Mughayzil offers a number of examples of the unfolding of time from a text by Egyptian Sufi ‘Abd al-Ghaffār al-Qūṣī (d. 709/1308).<sup>402</sup> Perhaps, lacking stories of the folding of time, Ibn Mughayzil hopes to elucidate the latter through accounts of its opposite.

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<sup>399</sup> ليس الأمر كما زعموا لأن الحلول و الاتحاد مذمومان شرعاً إذ من شأنهما وجود الغيرية المقتضية للفرق بين الائتينية فإن الروح مثلاً متحدة بالبدن لكونها مديرة له و معلوم قطعاً أن الروح غير الجسم و الفناء لا يكون كذلك لأن شرطه عدم الغيرية التي فيها السالك بحيث قد ماتت نسبتها إليه لما مات عنها بالموت المعنوي و من مات رأى الحق فعند ذلك يدخل برزخ البقاء و يخلع عليه خلع أوصاف القدم [...] يأتي إليه شراب المشاهدة في كؤوس المقامات فيتلقي القدم بالقدم *Kawākib*, 290-91.

<sup>400</sup> *Kawākib*, 154-60; Tāj al-Dīn Abī Naṣr ‘Abd al-Wahhāb b. ‘Alī b. ‘Abd al-Kāfī al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi‘iyya al-kubrā*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad al-Ṭannāḥī and ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ Muḥammad al-Ḥulw (Cairo: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Kutub al-‘Arabiyya, 1964), 2:338-44. Al-Subkī (*Kawākib*, 160; *Ṭabaqāt*, 344) acknowledges that there are in fact more than 100 types of miracles.

<sup>401</sup> *Kawākib*, 157 and 370; al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 340. However, al-Subkī notes that the time-unfolding miracle is responsible for the twenty-fourth type of miracle, the ability to write a substantial amount in a short period of time. For example, the actual length of al-Shāfi‘ī’s lifetime, he explains, was only one-tenth of the amount of (ordinary) time necessary for him to have written the number of works he did, given that he recited the entire Quran twice every day and was occupied with study, delivering fatwas, remembrance of God, and the illnesses—up to one, two, or even thirty—that befell him. See *Kawākib*, 159.

<sup>402</sup> Ibn Mughayzil refers to al-Qūṣī’s *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, though he probably means his *Kitāb al-waḥīd fī sulūk ahl al-tawḥīd*. On al-Qūṣī, see *GAL* 2:117 and 2S:145; *HAWT* 2:121 and 2S:150.

In the time-unfolding miracle, as Ibn Mughayzil's narrations show, one experiences or makes use of a much longer period than has actually passed. One story involves the brother of the Baghdad shaykh Ibn Sukayna (d. 607/1210-11):

His brother took the prayer mats of the ascetics and went out on Friday to spread them out for them. He went down to the shore to wash and suddenly appeared in Egypt, where he came across a dyer. He knew the craft of dying, so he [the dyer] employed him for a while and married him to his daughter. He remained with her for seven years and had children. One Friday, he went down to the Nile River to wash and suddenly appeared in Baghdad, finding the prayer rugs in the place where he had left them. He grabbed them and spread them out for them, and they performed the Friday prayer.<sup>403</sup>

After Ibn Sukayna's brother recounted his experience, the shaykh explained to him that God folds time for some people while unfolding it for others. Al-Qūṣī notes that this miracle may also manifest in a dream, whereby the dreamer spends years visiting distant countries, marrying, bearing offspring, and seeing God, prophets, and angels.<sup>404</sup>

In the time-folding miracle, in contrast, a certain length of time disappears or is transcended. In the case of seeing God, as Ibn Mughayzil explains after dealing with the unfolding of time, He causes the person to bypass the entire duration of earthly life so that he enters the afterlife and asks God if he may see Him.<sup>405</sup>

By proposing these two ways of seeing God, Ibn Mughayzil does not contradict his belief that only the Prophet saw Him here below: others must have either died a spiritual death, in which case it is God who sees, or been miraculously transported to the afterlife. Having argued this, he presents many accounts and stories in which the idea of seeing God in this world is,

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<sup>403</sup> أن أخاه أخذ سجادات الفقراء و خرج يوم الجمعة ليفرشها لهم فنزل ليظهر في الشط فطلع بمصر فوجد رجلاً صباغاً و كان يدري صناعة الصباغة فاستعمله فيها مدة و زوجه بابنته و أقام معها سبع سنين و ولد له منها أولاد ثم نزل في يوم الجمعة ليغتسل في بحر النيل فطلع ببغداد و وجد السجادات في المكان الذي تركها فيه فأخذها و فرشها لهم و صلوا صلاة الجمعة

*Kawāḳib*, 370-71.

<sup>404</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 371.

<sup>405</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 372.



either explicitly or implicitly, denied and witnessing (*mushāhada*) is posited as a powerful alternative. Although he does not preface this transition in his discussion and comments little on the material, it is evident that he intends to buttress his own denial of the this-worldly vision.

One of the tales describes an exchange between the Ḥanbalī shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī and, it seems, a Sufi aspirant:

It was said to Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir, “Someone said that he saw God with the two eyes of his head.” He summoned him and asked about that. He replied, “Yes.” He forbade him to state such and admonished him not to return. The Shaykh was asked, “Is he honest or lying?” He responded, “Honest [but] deceived. He witnessed the light of beauty with his inner vision before crossing from his inner vision to his ocular vision, considering the latter to be the former. The rays of his inner vision connected with the light of the object that he witnessed, so he thought that his ocular vision saw what he witnessed with his inner vision.”<sup>406</sup>

Al-Jīlānī goes on to say that God manifests His majesty (*jalāl*) and His beauty (*jamāl*) in human hearts as he wishes; the human perceives of them what can be perceived in a form, but there is no form outside the “cloak of grandeur that cannot be removed.”<sup>407</sup> According to Ibn Mughayzil, the “cloak of grandeur” is the light that, were God to unveil it, would cause the sublimity of His face to burn up His creation to the extent that His vision reaches (as stated in a hadith).<sup>408</sup> Evidently, he means essential manifestation in the sense that he defined the term, which is confirmed by his comment on variants of this hadith that “the majesty of His essence would burn up all His creatures.”<sup>409</sup>

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قيل للشيخ عبد القادر إن فلاناً يقول إنه يرى الله بعيني رأسه فاستدعى به فسأله عن ذلك فقال نعم فأنتهى و نهاه عن هذا القول و أخذ عليه أن لا يعود  
فقيل للشيخ أمحق هو أم مبطل فقال محق ملبس عليه و ذلك أنه شهد ببصيرته نور الجمال ثم خرق من بصيرته إلى بصره منفذ فرأى بصره بصيرته و  
بصيرته يتصل شعاعها بنور مشهوده فظن أن بصره رأى ما شهدته بصيرته

*Kawākib*, 372.

<sup>407</sup> In a passage that Ibn Mughayzil cites immediately prior to this story, al-Jīlānī explains that God manifests to hearts with His beauty through lights, joys, good tidings of splendid gifts in the form of high ranks, nearness to Him, pleasant speech, and that which the beneficiaries will experience more fully in the afterlife. The reason for this, he says, is to prevent their love and longing for God from becoming excessive and shattering their hearts or destroying them, or so that they do not become too weak to perform their religious duties. See *Kawākib*, 372.

<sup>408</sup> See Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 96 (no. 179).

<sup>409</sup> *Kawākib*, 372-73. In his second discourse on seeing God, Ibn Mughayzil presents an account in which al-Jīlānī clearly defines vision and witnessing. Al-Jīlānī writes that vision consists of seeing God with one’s physical eyes

Al-Jīlānī's explanation troubled and perplexed a group of Sufi masters and scholars who were present, one of whom stood up, tore his clothes, and ran out to the desert, totally out of his senses.<sup>410</sup> It seems that by mentioning this Ibn Mughayzil wants to stress that witnessing can be an intense experience. This is also suggested by the next story he tells involving the wandering ascetic Abū Turāb al-Nakhshabī (d. 245/859) and al-Biṣṭāmī. The story begins a lengthy excerpt from Ibn al-Subkī's *al-Ṭabaqāt* that takes up the remainder of Ibn Mughayzil's chapter.

Abū Turāb al-Nakhshabī had a disciple. The shaykh treated him kindly and saw good in him. Abū Turāb frequently mentioned Abū Yazīd. One day, the disciple said, “[What about] one to whom the Real manifests multiple times each day? What does He do with Abū Yazīd?” Abū Turāb replied, “O young man, woe unto you! If you see Abū Yazīd, you will have seen a mighty thing” [...] So they traveled to Abū Yazīd. They were told that he was in the forest. He had a forest where he lived alongside beasts. They set out for the forest and sat down on a hill at the path of Abū Yazīd. When Abū Yazīd came out and the boy saw him, he fell down dead. Abū Turāb told Abū Yazīd his story. He [Abū Turāb] was astonished at his [Abū Yazīd's] capacity to bear the Real's manifestation and his [the disciple's] inability to handle the sight of Abū Yazīd. Abū Yazīd explained to Abū Turāb, “This young man was honest. The Real manifested to him according to his capacity. When he saw me, the Real manifested to him according to my capacity, so he could not bear [it].”<sup>411</sup>

While this story does not distinguish between vision and witnessing, it prompts Ibn al-Subkī to examine the notion of “manifestation” (*tajallī*) that it involves, which leads to affirmations of that distinction. According to him, a certain Nāṣir al-Dīn argued that *tajallī* does not denote an ocular vision (*ru'yat al-baṣar*) such as that which Moses was denied in Q 7:143 (“You will never see Me”), others were denied in Q 6:103 (“Eyes do not perceive Him”), and will be enjoyed by

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(*abṣār*) and was the exclusive privilege of the Prophet (*ṣāhib al-maqām al-mahmūd*), while witnessing is a vision of all (divine) secrets, which God grants as a favour to whomsoever He wishes. See *Kawākib*, 403.

<sup>410</sup> *Kawākib*, 373.

<sup>411</sup> أن أبا تراب النخشي كان له تلميذ و كان الشيخ يرفق به و يتفرس فيه الخير و كان أبو تراب كثيراً ما يذكر أبا يزيد فقال التلميذ يوماً من يتجلى له الحق تعالى في كل يوم مرات ماذا يصنع بأبي يزيد فقال له أبو تراب ويحك يا فتى لو رأيت أبا يزيد لرأيت أمراً عظيماً [...] فارتحلا إلى أبي يزيد فقيل لهما إنه في الغيضة و كانت له غيضة تأوى إليها مع السباع فقصد الغيضة و جلسا على ربوة على ممر أبي يزيد فلما خرج أبو يزيد فعندما وقع بصر الفتى على أبي يزيد خر ميتاً فحدث أبو تراب أبا يزيد بقصته و تعجب من ثبوته لتجلي الحق سبحانه و تعالى و عدم تماسكه لرؤية أبي يزيد فقال أبو يزيد لأبي تراب لقد كان هذا الفتى صادقاً و كان الحق تعالى يتجلى له على قدر ما عنده فلما رأني تجلى له الحق تعالى على قدرتي فلم يطق *Kawākib*, 373; Ibn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 2:311. For another version of this story, see Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, 4:184.

the elite (*khawāṣṣ*) in the afterlife. Ibn al-Subkī considers this view similar to that of Ibn ‘Abd al-Salām, who defined *tajallī* and witnessing (*mushāhada*) as forms of knowledge (‘*ilm*, ‘*irfān*). According to Ibn al-Subkī, this entails that everything Sufis have written based on knowledge received directly from God (‘*ilm laduniyya*) and inference (*istinbāt*) is the effect of divine manifestations (*āthār al-tajalliyyāt*). He rejects this, arguing that Sufis do not simply reduce God’s manifestations to knowledge. Rather, they specify two types:

A type for ordinary people, which consists of the disclosure of a form, as when Gabriel appeared in the form of Diḥya and as related in the hadith, “I saw my Lord in the form of a young man.” They say that this is the manifestation of attributes and draw an analogy to a mirror, noting that you see your face in the mirror while neither is the mirror a place for your face nor does your face inhere therein; rather, its image is there [...] And a type for the elite, which is the manifestation of the Essence Itself. To facilitate understanding, they mention [as an analogy] the sun and its presence in your vision as a glow. They say that this is also an approximation. Were the Creator’s light to manifest, it would destroy existence in its entirety, except for one whom God sustained. They find support from the hadith of Abū Dharr: “I asked the Prophet, ‘Did you see your Lord?’ He replied, ‘Light! So how could I see him?’”<sup>412</sup>

These notions differ from Ibn Mughayzil’s accounts of similar terms, essential manifestation (*al-tajallī al-dhātī*) and attributive manifestation (*al-tajallī al-ṣifātī*), which we explored in the section on his ontology. He argued that essential manifestation is God’s manifestation alone; if His essence were to appear to others, it would necessarily destroy them and thus cannot be the exclusive privilege of an “elite” as in Ibn al-Subkī’s account. Attributive manifestation, according to Ibn Mughayzil, is the activity of God’s attributes in the world or His manifestation as the world rather than, as Ibn al-Subkī said, a divine manifestation in a specific form. While Ibn Mughayzil does not point out these differences, he relates Ibn al-Subkī’s own criticism of the

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<sup>412</sup> ضرب للعوام و هو أن تكشف صورة كما جاء جبريل عليه السلام في صورة دحية و كما جاء في الحديث رأيت ربي في صورة شاب قالوا و هذا تجلي الصفة و يضربون لذلك بالمرأة مثلاً فيقولون أنت تنظر وجهك في المرأة و ليست المرأة محلاً لوجهك و لا وجهك محلاً فيها و إنما هناك مثالها [...] و ضرب للخواص و هو تجلي الذات نفسها و يذكرون هنا لتقريب الفهم الشمس و حضورها برؤيتك الضوء و قالوا هذا تقريب أيضاً و إلا فنور الباري لو شطع لأحرق الوجود بأسره إلا من يثبته الله و قد يعتضدون بحديث أبي ذر رضي الله عنه سألت النبي ﷺ هل رأيت ربك قال نور أنى أراه *Kawāḥib*, 374; Ibn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 2:312.

two concepts of God’s manifestation that he explained, thus suggesting his intention to disprove them. Ibn al-Subkī cautions that while the mirror analogy serves a didactic purpose, it is not entirely accurate, since God does not have an image. Moreover, he says, the hadith mentioning God’s appearance as a young man is inauthentic (*mawḍūʿ*).<sup>413</sup> Furthermore, he acknowledges that he does not fully understand these ideas and addressed his questions to a certain Muḥammad b. al-Ardabīlī:

I asked him, “Do you hold that what gnostics see in the world is that which God promised [will be seen] in the afterlife?” He responded, “Yes.” So I asked, “Then what distinguishes the vision [on] the Day of Resurrection?” He replied, “[Its occurrence] with physical vision, for vision in the world through these two types [of divine manifestation] is with inner vision, not physical vision.”<sup>414</sup>

Despite this assertion, Ibn al-Ardabīlī also claims that ocular vision of God is not restricted to the afterlife:

I [Ibn al-Subkī] said, “There is disagreement about the possibility of seeing God in the world [with one’s physical eyes].” He responded, “The truth is that it is possible.” I replied, “So, there is in fact no difference [between seeing God in this world and in the afterlife], and the vision in the world with physical eyes is possible!” He replied, “The difference is that it is known that it will happen to all believers in the afterlife, while the occurrence [of the vision] in the world has only been established for the Prophet and some masters of lofty spiritual stations.”<sup>415</sup>

Ibn al-Ardabīlī, nonetheless, retains the term “witnessing” (*mushāhada*), defining it as the constant manifestation of God’s essence, while noting, contradictorily, that sometimes witnessing does not occur simultaneously with His manifestation; that is, he seems to be saying, one is not always aware of divine self-disclosure.<sup>416</sup> In any case, Ibn al-Ardabīlī’s exposition does not

<sup>413</sup> On the debate over the authenticity of this phrase, which occurs in several versions, see al-‘Ajlūnī, *Kashf al-khifāʿ*, 496 (no. 1409).

<sup>414</sup> قلت له أتقولون بان الذي يراه العارفون في الدنيا هو الذي وعده الله في الآخرة قال نعم فقلت فبم يتميز رؤية يوم القيامة قال بالبصر فإن الرؤية في الدنيا في هذين الضربين إنما هي بالبصيرة دون البصر *Kawātib*, 374; Ibn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 2:313.

<sup>415</sup> قلت فقد اختلف في جواز رؤية الله تعالى في الدنيا قال الحق الجواز قلت فلا فارق حينئذ و تجوز الرؤية بالبصر في الدنيا قال الفارق أنه في الآخرة معلوم الوقوع للمؤمنين كلهم و في الدنيا لم يثبت وقوعه إلا للنبي و لبعض ذوي المقامات العلية *Kawātib*, 374; Ibn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 2:313.

<sup>416</sup> *Kawātib*, 375; Ibn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 2:313-14.

necessarily affect Ibn Mughayzil's argument for the distinction between vision and witnessing, since "masters of lofty spiritual stations" might be interpreted as referring to those who have attained self-annihilation or been granted the time-folding miracle.

Ibn Mughayzil's discussion of seeing God has thus far presupposed that the experience itself is possible. In returning to this topic in the final chapter of his text, he takes a step back and lays the rational grounds for that premise from the Sunnī perspective:

Regarding the vision of God in this world while awake, Imam al-Nawawī and others said that the Sunnīs agree that the vision of the Lord in this world is possible, not impossible. They demonstrate that with multiple [arguments]. First, every existent being can be seen, and God is an existent being; therefore, He can be seen. Second, vision is a type of unveiling and knowledge; thus, like knowledge, it is possible. Third, Moses requested the vision; if it were impossible, it would follow that he was ignorant of what is possible and impossible for God. [Fourth], the Companions' disagreement over the Prophet's vision on the night of the Ascension is a proof of its possibility, since there is no disagreement over what is impossible.<sup>417</sup>

Having demonstrated this, Ibn Mughayzil notes that most early and later theologians, exegetes, and others believed that the vision has not occurred in this world for anyone but the Prophet. As he explains, they associate his vision with the Night Journey (*isrā'*) and Ascension (*mi'rāj*):

Among most scholars, the dominant view is that he saw his Lord with the two eyes of his head on the night of the Night Journey by virtue of a special favour that God granted him to the exclusion of [other] prophets and creatures due to the abundance of his longing and love for his Lord. As a gnostic said [...] "God appeared to the spirits and found that which most desired Him to be the spirit of our Prophet Muḥammad. Thus, he graced him with the Ascension to hasten the vision and [divine] address."<sup>418</sup>

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و أما رؤية الله تبارك و تعالى في الدنيا بقظة فقال الإمام النووي و غيره أجمع أهل السنن على أن رؤية الرب سبحانه في الدنيا ممكنة غير مستحيلة<sup>417</sup> و استدلوا عليه بوجه أحدها أن كل موجود يجوز أن يرى و الرب سبحانه موجود فجاز أن يرى الثاني أن الرؤية نوع كشف و علم فجازت كالعلم الثالث أن موسى عليه السلام سأل الرؤية و لو استحالت لزم أن يكون جاهلاً بما يجوز على الله تعالى و ما لا يجوز و اختلاف الصحابة رضي الله عنهم في الرؤية النبي ليلة المعراج دليل على الجواز إذ المحال لا يختلف فيه

*Kawātib*, 396.

فالراجح عند أكثر العلماء أنه رأى ربه ليلة الإسراء بعيني رأسه بخصوصية له خصه الله بها دون الأنبياء و سائر الخلق لمزيد اشتياقه و حبه لربه<sup>418</sup> سبحانه كما قال بعض العارفين [...] اطلع الله على الأرواح فوجد أشدها شوقاً إليه روح نبينا محمد ﷺ فأكرمه بالمعراج تعجيباً للرؤية و المكاملة

*Kawātib*, 397.

Ibn Mughayzil also points out that some scholars, such as Abū Bakr b. al-‘Arabī, held that Moses and the mountain that he was instructed to look at also saw God. Ibn Mughayzil does not explicitly state his position, but his citation of a number of Sufis who rejected Moses’ vision later in the chapter suggests that he agrees with them.<sup>419</sup> He also notes that this view was espoused by al-Ghazālī, al-Suhrawardī, and other early and later Sufis.<sup>420</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil devotes much of the remainder of this chapter to fulfilling his main goal of demonstrating that the Prophet did indeed see God, which some, such as ‘Āisha, are reported to have denied. To this end, he presents the arguments of a number of scholars, such as al-Nawawī, al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ, and Abū l-Ḥasan al-Wāḥidī (d. 468/1076) (though al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ delves also into various other issues and Quranic verses connected with the Prophet’s experience). Ibn Mughayzil contributes to this discourse by commenting on a passage from a text called *al-Taḥrīr fī sharḥ Muslim*.<sup>421</sup> The commentator, whom Ibn Mughayzil does not name, alludes to a hadith containing ‘Āisha’s denial of the vision in an exchange with the Successor Masrūq:

I asked ‘Āisha, “O mother [of the believers], did Muḥammad see his Lord?” She replied, “My hair is standing on end from what you have said [...] Whoever tells you that Muḥammad saw his Lord has lied.” Then she recited, “Eyes do not perceive Him, yet He grasps all visions. He is the Subtle, the Aware” (Q 6:103) [and], “It is not suitable for God to address a man except via revelation or from behind a veil” (Q 42:51).<sup>422</sup>

The commentator points out that ‘Āisha never said that she *heard* the Prophet say that he did not see God, instead basing her view on the two verses of the Quran. He rejects her reference to the first verse, countering that the (possibility of the) vision is not perceptible by reason or known

<sup>419</sup> *Kawāḍib*, 402-4.

<sup>420</sup> *Kawāḍib*, 396.

<sup>421</sup> Presumably, by Abū l-Qāsim Ismā‘īl al-Iṣfahānī (d. 535/1140-41).

<sup>422</sup> قلت لعائشة رضي الله عنها يا أمته هل رأى محمد ﷺ ربه فقالت لقد قف شعري مما قلت [...] من حدثك أن محمداً ﷺ رأى ربه فقد كذب ثم قرأت ﴿لا تدركه الأبصار وهو يدرك الأبصار وهو اللطيف الخبير﴾ (و ما كان ليشر أن يكلمه الله إلا وحياً أو من وراء حجاب al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 1226 (no. 4855).

through speculation; rather, it is learned through tradition. This argument hardly seems effective, since the Quran is, according to Muslims, superior to tradition. In any case, Ibn Mughayzil agrees with the commentator and rebuts ‘Āisha’s reference to the second verse, which implied that, in her view, the vision must have involved speech. Ibn Mughayzil points out that speech did not necessarily occur during the vision, thus rendering the verse irrelevant. Alternatively, he suggests that the verse is true in a general sense but does not apply to the Prophet due to proofs for his vision, implying that he also heard God speak.<sup>423</sup>

Having dealt with the vision of God in this world, whether on the part of the Prophet or others (in some sense), Ibn Mughayzil concludes his chapter and book on the vision of Him in the afterlife. The aim of his brief treatment (less than a page) is simply to show that only humans will be privileged with this experience, not angels or jinn. Ibn Mughayzil points out that a number of scholars, such as Ibn ‘Abd al-Salām and Abū ‘Abdillāh al-Zarkashī (d. 794/1392), have denied that angels will see God. He also relates the argument of al-Ahdal that angels are not capable of the vision due to their pleasure in proximity and obedience to God and their awe of Him, while jinn lack the knowledge that is required for the experience.<sup>424</sup>

### 3.4.1 Conclusion

Ibn Mughayzil’s treatment of the vision of God is oriented by multiple aims. In his first discussion, he attempts to defend Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s daring request for the vision of God in this world that is reserved for the Prophet Muḥammad alone. His solution consists of conceptualizing the

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<sup>423</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 396-98. The author of *al-Tahrīr* also relates the argument of the traditionist Mu‘ammar b. Rāshid (d. 150/767-68) that “‘Āisha is, in our view, not more knowledgeable than Ibn ‘Abbās.” See *Kawāḳib*, 384. On this dispute among the Companions, see Josef van Ess, “Vision and Ascension: Sūrat al-Najm and its Relationship with Muḥammad’s *mi‘rāj*,” *Journal of Qur’anic Studies* 1, no. 1 (1999): 53-54.

<sup>424</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 404-5.

vision for others as a “post-mortem” phenomenon: while still endowed with earthly existence, they see God (or God sees Himself through them) after a spiritual death or, momentarily, in the afterlife. He adduces various accounts and stories of Sufis to confirm the impossibility of vision here below (under ordinary circumstances) and presents witnessing as a viable and powerful alternative. Whereas the character of this first discourse is apologetic, that of the second is more theological. Rather than treating vision or witnessing as mystical experience, Ibn Mughayzil, with extensive help from scholarly authorities, demonstrates that God can be seen in this world, the Prophet alone saw Him, and only humans will see Him in the afterlife.

### 3.5 Religious Diversity

Muslims have grappled with the status of other religions since the emergence of Islam. The standard Muslim view is that Islam is the final installment in a series of divine revelations successively transmitted to prophets, from Adam to Muḥammad, that differed in particulars and specific laws but comprised the same monotheistic message. Because Judaism, Christianity, and other revealed religions were at some point corrupted, Islam abrogates them. Moreover, Islam is intended for *all* humanity. Therefore, it is the supreme religion, and to follow any other is erroneous.<sup>425</sup>

One might think that Sufis, with their stress on the internal (*bāṭin*) dimension of religion, might have been inclined to recognize truth in other traditions. This assumption seems to hold to

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<sup>425</sup> Yohanan Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam: Interfaith Relations in the Muslim Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 13-14. See also Tim Winter, “The Last Trump Card: Islam and the Supersession of Other Faiths,” *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* 9, no. 2 (1999): 147-48. Accordingly, all four major Sunnī schools of law defined apostasy as the acknowledgment of the validity of a religion other than Islam and stipulated execution as the punishment for a male perpetrator. See Yasir Qadhi, “The Path of Allah or the Paths of Allah?” in *Between Heaven and Hell: Islam, Salvation, and the Fate of Others*, ed. Mohammad Hassan Khalil (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 111; Wilhelm Heffening, “Murtadd,” in *EP*, 12:635.



an extent. Some stories feature Muslim ascetics and mystics interacting with and learning from non-Muslim devotees. For instance, after losing his way during a stroll in the desert, Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, a companion of al-Muḥāsibī, learns from two Christian monks about reliance on God (*tawakkul*) and emulates their wondrous harvest of water and food from the earth (although the two end up converting to Islam).<sup>426</sup> Dhū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī (d. 245/859 or 248/862) recounted the spiritual remarks of a recluse he encountered near Damascus, who, from his chant, “Holy! Holy! Holy!” (*Quddūs Quddūs Quddūs*), appears to have been Christian;<sup>427</sup> he wished peace for the hermit and asked him to pray to God on his behalf.<sup>428</sup> Ibn Mubārak al-Marwazī (d. 181/797-98), the “imam of his time” according to al-Hujwīrī, benefited from the advice of a Christian monk he met on his way to Mecca:

I saw a Christian monk weakened by spiritual struggle and bent double by fear of God. I asked him, “O monk, what is the way to God?” He answered, “If you knew God, you would know the way to Him.” Then he said, “I worship One I do not know, whereas you disobey One you know.”<sup>429</sup> What he meant is that knowledge entails fear, yet I see that you are confident—and infidelity entails ignorance—yet I am fearful.” I bore this remark in mind, and it prevented me from approaching many misdeeds.<sup>430</sup>

On a theoretical level, al-Qushayrī in his Quran commentary interprets Q 2:62 to mean that different religious paths and names do not prevent the attainment of divine contentment provided that one affirms God through His signs and believes in what He tells us about Himself and His

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<sup>426</sup> Abū Nu‘aym Aḥmad b. ‘Abdillāh al-Iṣfahānī, *Hilyat al-awliyā’ wa-ṭabaqāt al-aṣfiyā’* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānījī, 1996), 10:288-89.

<sup>427</sup> The phrase was uttered by Warāqa b. Nawfal, a Christian ascetic and Khadīja’s cousin, upon learning of Muḥammad’s reception of revelation. See Muḥammad b. Ishāq, *al-Sira al-nabawiyya*, ed. Aḥmad Farīd al-Mazīdī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2004), 1:169.

<sup>428</sup> al-Iṣfahānī, *Hilyat al-awliyā’*, 9:356.

<sup>429</sup> Cf. John 4:22, “You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.”

<sup>430</sup> رأيت راهباً مسيحياً هدته المجاهدة و أحناه الخوف من الله فسألته يا راهب كيف الطريق إلى الله فقال لو عرفت الله لعرفت الطريق إليه ثم قال أعبد من لا أعرفه و تعصي من تعرفه و يعني بهذا أن المعرفة تقتضي الخوف و لكني أراك واثقاً و الكفر يقتضي الجهل و لكني أشعر بشيء من الخوف فوعيت هذا القول و حماني من اقتراب كثير من الخطايا  
al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-mahjūb*, 126; al-Hujwīrī, *The Kashf al-mahjūb*, 96-97.

attributes.<sup>431</sup> Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 672/1273), while emphasizing the primacy of the Quran and prophets, described Love as the root of all being and wrote:

Love's folk live beyond religious borders  
The community and creed of lovers: God<sup>432</sup>

Despite such signs of pluralism, Sufis also subscribed to the exclusivist, supersessionist theology of their fellow Muslims. Al-Qushayrī testifies in the preface to the *Risāla* that “our master Muḥammad is His chosen servant, selected trustee, and God’s messenger *to all humankind*,”<sup>433</sup> while al-Kalābādhī writes rather emphatically:

With Muḥammad God has sealed them [the prophets], ordering faith in him and submission. His religion is the best of religions, and his community the best of communities; his law can never be abrogated, and there shall be no community after his community.<sup>434</sup>

To investigate Ibn Mughayzil’s perspective on religious diversity, we return once again to his long chapter on controversial or difficult statements and views of Sufis. The topic arises amidst his treatment of poetry that is written from God’s perspective (*‘alā lisān al-ḥaqīqa*). He has just addressed the distinction between self-annihilation (*fanā’*) and the annihilation of self-annihilation (*fanā’ al-fanā’*) before turning to verses by Ibn al-Fāriḍ regarding Zoroastrians and their worship of fire. Ibn Mughayzil’s discussion, which occupies a little over four pages,

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<sup>431</sup> al-Qushayrī, *Laṭā’if al-ishārāt*, 1:96.

<sup>432</sup> Franklin D. Lewis, *Rumi: Past and Present, East and West; The Life, Teaching, and Poetry of Jalāl al-Dīn Rumi* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2000), 406-8. See also his highly pluralistic discourse in Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, *The Discourses of Rumi (or Fihi Ma Fihi)*, tr. A.J. Arberry (Ames, IA: Omphaloskepsis, n.d.), 174-79.

<sup>433</sup> سيدنا محمداً عبده المصطفى و أمينه المجتبي و رسوله المبعوث إلى كافة الورى

al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya*, 18.

<sup>434</sup> ختمهم بمحمد عليه و عليهم الصلاة و السلام و أمر بالايامن به و الاسلام فدينه خير الاديان و أمته خير الامم لا نسخ لشريعته و لا أمة بعد أمته  
al-Kalābādhī, *Kitāb al-Ta’arruf*, 3; Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Ishāq al-Kalābādhī, *The Doctrine of the Sūfīs (Kitāb al-Ta’arruf li-maḍḥhab ahl al-taṣawwuf)*, tr. Arthur John Arberry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935), 1-2. Chittick seems to suggest that such exclusivism was a conscious choice on the part of Sufis: “One would expect to find among Sufis a clear exposition of the universality of revealed truth without the reservations expressed by most other Muslims. But the Sufis had to take into account the beliefs of their contemporaries.” See William C. Chittick, *Ibn al-‘Arabī and the Problem of Religious Diversity* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), 125. For an overview of Sufi approaches to other religions, see Carl-A. Keller, “Perceptions of Other Religions in Sufism,” in *Muslim Perceptions of Other Religions: A Historical Survey*, ed. Jacques Waardenburg (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 181-94.

consists of his and al-Maghribī's commentary on these verses. His aim is to explain the sense in which non-Muslims worship God despite their apparent idolatry and disobedience, thus justifying Ibn al-Fāriḍ's claims about their monotheism.

Ibn Mughayzil begins his discourse with verses by Ibn al-Fāriḍ that suggest that despite worshipping fire on one level, Zoroastrians worship and intend God on another:

و إن عيد النار المجوس و ما انطفت  
كما جاء في الأخبار في ألف حجة  
فما عبدوا غيري و لا كان قصدهم  
سواي و إن لم يضمروا عقد نيّتي

If Zoroastrians worship fire  
that, as traditions relate, burned bright for a thousand years,  
they do not worship anything but Me.  
And their goal is only Me,  
though they do not hold the jewel of My intention<sup>435</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil expands the scope of this assertion, applying it to other types of worshippers:

Unbelievers' worship of and prostration to fire, idols, and images is in fact directed at God, since they are too insignificant to be [themselves] objects of worship and prostration. God is worshipped against the will of the worshipper, who is an unbeliever by virtue of [his] intention to worship something besides God.<sup>436</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil finds support for this view in Q 3:83, "Everything in the heavens and earth submits to Him, willingly or unwillingly." According to him, Qatāda (d. 117/735) interpreted this verse to mean that the believer worships God willingly while the disbeliever worships Him unwillingly. Ibn Mughayzil also refers to Ibn 'Abbās' identical exegesis of Q 13:15, "Everything in the heavens and earth worships God, willingly or unwillingly," while arguing that this verse is proof of an "immediate, inner monotheism" (*al-tawḥīd al-ḥālī al-bāṭin*), which he thinks that Ibn al-Fāriḍ alluded to in this hemistich:

شهودي بعين الجمع كل مخالف

<sup>435</sup> *Kawāḍib*, 357; Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, 264; Homerin, *Passion Before Me*, 237.

<sup>436</sup> أن عبادة الكفار و سجودهم للنار و الصنم و الوثن واقع في الحقيقة لله لأن المذكورات أقل من أن تعبد و يسجد لها فتقع السجدة لله على رغم أنف الساجد و هو كافر بنية السجود لغير الله *Kawāḍib*, 357.

My witnessing every opponent through the eye of union<sup>437</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil explains that Ibn al-Fāriḍ is pointing to the fact that “every opponent [to God] in an apparent sense complies [with Him] in an inward sense.”<sup>438</sup> He suggests that this truth is perceptible in “the state of union in the world of the homeland, [where God said], ‘Am I not your pre-eternal Lord?’ as well as the state of union in the Lord’s presence with the heart’s eternal locus of witnessing.”<sup>439</sup> According to him, these two “presences” (he seems to mean one’s knowledge in them) are attested by what he calls the “hadith of the two seizures” (*ḥadīth al-qubḍatayn*): “These [folk] are for heaven, and I do not care. These [folk] are for hell, and I do not care.”<sup>440</sup> Ibn Mughayzil argues, in other words, that someone in the state of union, whether before, during, or after his earthly existence, perceives that even the ostensibly disobedient person obeys God, since He has predetermined hell as his final abode and thus also the idolatry that leads him there. Ibn Mughayzil implies as much about the opponent’s obedience while signaling that he is responding to or preempting criticism:

The group that outwardly disobeyed the Real and opposed the caller to His commands obeyed [Him] inwardly and did not oppose the force of His decree nor His compulsion. The speech of the experts of inner truth does not go beyond [reference to] this inward state of things [...] One who understands something else from the Sufis’ speech has mistaken the right [for the wrong].<sup>441</sup>

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<sup>437</sup> *Kawāḍib*, 358-59. Cf. the quite different exegesis of Q 13:15 in the Quran commentary attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās, *Tanwīr al-miqbās min tafsīr Ibn ‘Abbās* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Arabiyya, 1992), 263.

<sup>438</sup> كل مخالف في الظاهر هو عين الموافق باعتبار الباطن

*Kawāḍib*, 358.

<sup>439</sup> حالة الجمع بعالم موطن أنت بربكم الأزلي و حالة الجمع أيضاً بحضرة الرب بمشهد القلب الأبدى

*Kawāḍib*, 358.

<sup>440</sup> هؤلاء الجنة و لا أبالي و هؤلاء النار و لا أبالي

*Kawāḍib*, 358. See also Abū ‘Abdullāh Muḥammad b. ‘Abdillāh al-Ḥākim al-Nīsābūrī, *al-Mustadrak ‘alā l-ṣaḥīḥayn*, ed. Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Aṭā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2002), 85 (no. 84).

<sup>441</sup> أن الفرقة التي عصت الحق تعالى في الظاهر و خالفت داعي أمره قد أطاعت في الباطن و ما خالفت سلطان حكمه و قهره و كلام أهل الحقيقة

الباطنة لا يعدو هذا الحكم الباطن [...] و من يفهم غير ذلك من كلام القوم فقد أخطأ الصواب

*Kawāḍib*, 358.

If the idolatrous and disobedient obey and worship God, are they blessed with happiness? Ibn al-Fāriḍ seems to suggest so in his famous “Wine Ode” (*al-khamriyya*). Ibn Mughayzil comments on the following verses that refer to consumption of wine, with this beverage being a symbol of divine love and the subject of the ode:

هنيئاً لأهل الدير كم سكرُوا بها      و ما شربوا منها و لكنهم هموا

Joy for the people of the monastery!  
How many became intoxicated through it  
They never drank from it, but still they intended<sup>442</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil, however, rules out a literal understanding of these verses.

[The idea of] true joy for such [people], without understanding it metaphorically, is to be strongly rejected. What joy shall they have while their path leads to the Fire? The metaphorical interpretation of their joy is based on the sincerity of their aim and intention to worship the God who is worthy of worship, even if they err in designating Him, for example, an idol, a rock, the sun, or the moon. For worship is directed only at God in spite of what the worshipper wills.<sup>443</sup>

Despite having attributed the unbelievers’ worship and obedience to their conformity with God’s predetermination, Ibn Mughayzil proceeds to introduce al-Qāshānī’s different, metaphysical explanation in his commentary on Q 2:255, “God: there is no deity but Him.” Al-Qāshānī argues that since there is no existent being but God, there is no object of worship but Him: all worship is thus directed at Him, whether one is aware of that or not.<sup>444</sup> Ibn Mughayzil compares this view to a Ḥanafī opinion about the Ramadan fast:

Similar to that in law is the view of a group of Ḥanafī imams that if one fasts during Ramadan without an intention, his fast is valid because the time [spent fasting] is its essence. According to this school, if one intends the Ramadan fast as

<sup>442</sup> *Kawākib* (2013), 338; Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, 187. In *Kawākib* (1999), 358, *dayr* is *dīn*. On the Wine Ode, see Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, 183-84.

<sup>443</sup> فحقيقة التهنة لمثل هؤلاء دون مجازها عليها شديد الإنكار و أي تهنة تحصل لهم و مصيرهم إلى النار و أما مجاز التهنة لهم فمبنى على صدق قصدهم و نيتهم بالعبادة للإله المعبود بحق و إن أخطأوا في تسميته مثلاً بالصنم و الحجر و الشمس و القمر لأن العبادة لا تقع إلا لله على رغم أنف العابد *Kawākib*, 358.

<sup>444</sup> *Kawākib*, 359; Muḥyī l-Dīn b. ‘Arabī [‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī], *Tafsīr Ibn ‘Arabī* (Beirut: Dār Sādir, 2002), 1:70. This edition of the commentary, like the first one published at the end of the nineteenth century, is wrongly attributed to Ibn ‘Arabī. On this attribution and al-Qāshānī’s authorship of the text, see Pierre Lory, *Les Commentaires ésotériques du coran d’après ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī* (Paris: Les Deux Océans, 1980), 23-24.

something else, such as a supererogatory act, it is done only for His sake [and thus is valid].<sup>445</sup>

In other words, Ibn Mughayzil reasons that just as one worships God despite intending to worship something else, one performs the Ramadan fast despite intending to perform another fast. Perhaps, he wanted to authenticate al-Qāshānī's view (and his own) by connecting it to a legal ruling. In any case, his comparison seems limited, since the faster is presumably rewarded while the unbeliever is punished.

Having presented his ideas about religious diversity, Ibn Mughayzil turns to al-Maghribī. The resemblance between their views suggests that Ibn Mughayzil is indebted to his master and presents his thoughts to both elaborate his account and authenticate it with the authority of this great shaykh. Al-Maghribī begins, like Ibn Mughayzil, with Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poetry:

و السنة الأكوان إن كنت واعياً  
شهود بتوحيدي بحال فصيحة

The tongues of all beings, [you shall see] if you are attentive,  
witness My unity with eloquence<sup>446</sup>

Al-Maghribī explains that Ibn al-Fāriḍ is referring to “the monotheism of all beings; that is, the compulsory, immediate monotheism that encompasses the obedient, sinful, and unbeliever alike by virtue of worship through [their] immediate state.”<sup>447</sup> He is not, al-Maghribī clarifies, speaking of monotheism that involves a verbal declaration of God's oneness (*al-tawhīd bi-l-qāl*), which belongs exclusively to believers. Such monotheism, he says, is also not the main subject of the Quranic verse on which Ibn al-Fāriḍ's verse is based, namely, 17:44, “There is no thing that does not celebrate His praise.” He points out that “thing” (*shay*) is an indefinite noun, and

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<sup>445</sup> و نظير ذلك من الشرع ما ذهب إليه زفر من أئمة الحنفية لو صام رمضان من غير نية صح صومه لأن الزمان عينه فعلى هذا المذهب لو نوى صوم رمضان غيره كالنفل مثلاً لا ينصرف إلا إليه  
*Kawāḳib*, 359.

<sup>446</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 360; Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, 262; Homerin, *Passion Before Me*, 235.

<sup>447</sup> توحيد كل العالم أي التوحيد القهري الحالي المدخل للطائع و الفاجر و الكافر في حكم العبادة بالحال  
*Kawāḳib*, 361.

thus in the phrase, “there is no thing,” it refers to every monotheist, disbeliever, animal, and inanimate being so that “it is as if the Real is saying, ‘Everything affirms My oneness and worships Me through its inner being, even if its outward form differs’.”<sup>448</sup> To further justify this assertion, al-Maghribī cites Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s verses about Zoroastrians and their worship of fire.<sup>449</sup>

Commenting on Q 17:44, al-Maghribī acknowledges that this special kind of monotheism is difficult to understand and that one requires divine aid:

An indication of this immediate, universal monotheism is found in a verse about understanding [...] “But you do not understand their praise,” that is, inner monotheism, so be aware of it if you are [among] those who understand. It must be grasped [on a deeper level]; it is a matter of inner, divine knowledge. May you be guided, because it is a favour from God. If He had not removed difficulty and shown mercy towards the community, punishment and wrath would inflict them due to their failure to comprehend this monotheism. “Truly, He is kind and forgiving” (Q 17:44).<sup>450</sup>

Al-Maghribī also adduces Q 16:48, “Do they [the disbelievers] not observe the things that God has created, casting their shadows right and left, submitting themselves to God while they are lowly?” Al-Maghribī comments that “every existent being finds a proof for its Creator. None of them are without a proof, even the opponent through the signs of his existence and opposition worships, bows down before, [and] prostrates [to Him].”<sup>451</sup> Nonetheless, such worship, according to him, does not increase one’s chances for salvation: “If this monotheism benefitted the unbelievers, none of them would enter the Fire.”<sup>452</sup> Citing the “hadith of the two seizures,”

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<sup>448</sup> فكأن الحق تعالى يقول كل شيء يوحدني و يعبدني بباطنه و إن اختلف أمر ظاهره

*Kawākib*, 361.

<sup>449</sup> *Kawākib*, 361.

<sup>450</sup> و إلى هذا التوحيد الحالي العام الإشارة في الآية بالفقه [...] (و لكن لا تفقهون تسبيحهم) أي هذا التوحيد الباطن فتنبهوا له إن كنتم فقهاء فإنه يحتاج إلى الفهم و هو موضع العلم الباطن الرباني لعلكم تهتدون لأن فهمه فضل من الله نعمة و لو لا أنه دفع الحرج و رحم الأمة لوجه عليها لعدم فهمها لذلك التوحيد العذاب و النعمة إنه كان حلماً غفورا

*Kawākib*, 361.

<sup>451</sup> لأن كل الوجود وجد دليلاً على موجدته فلا يكون بعضه غير دليل بل حتى المخالف بدلالة وجوده و مخالفته عابد راعع ساجد

*Kawākib*, 361.

<sup>452</sup> لو كان هذا التوحيد ينفع الكفار لما دخل أحد منهم النار

*Kawākib*, 361.

al-Maghribī attributes their fate to God’s predetermination, which he does not consider problematic: “Every injustice in an apparent sense is wise and just in an inner sense.”<sup>453</sup>

### 3.5.1 Conclusion

Ibn Mughayzil’s engagement with the topic of religious diversity is prompted by his desire to defend Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s suggestion that Zoroastrians, despite their adoration of fire, worship God. He advances the notion of an immediate, inner monotheism, as an intrinsic, inescapable feature of created beings by virtue of which unbelievers such as Zoroastrians worship God despite not intending to. Their indirect worship is, according to Ibn Mughayzil, disobedient only in an apparent sense, since it results from God’s pre-eternal decree, which one can perceive in the state of union. Nonetheless, he insists that they will be punished because they do not intend God, such chastisement being likewise predetermined by God.

Al-Maghribī, though likely the source for Ibn Mughayzil’s explanation, is brought in only for confirmation and elaboration. Apart from additional Quranic proofs, al-Maghribī adds that inner monotheism is so difficult to understand that it requires divine assistance for comprehension, and that God’s predetermination of disbelief, disobedience, and the consequent chastisement is wise and just.

Given the sharp distinction between monotheism and polytheism or idolatry usually upheld in Islam, it was important for Ibn Mughayzil to buttress his teaching. He does this with proofs from the Quran and hadith, references to the early revered authorities Qatāda and Ibn ‘Abbās, and even al-Qāshānī’s idea on the subject and a Ḥanafī legal ruling. His discussion suggests that, unlike some of his Sufī predecessors, he did not value the spiritual achievements of

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<sup>453</sup> فكل ظلم وجود في الحكم الظاهر حكمة و عدل في الوجه الباطن  
*Kawāḳib*, 361.



non-Muslims. This is confirmed by his remark elsewhere in the *Kawāḳib* that monks possess intuition (*firāsa*) but speak only with what Satan presents to them and not with the light of God, due to their immersion in the darkness of infidelity and hypocrisy. He also considers that supernatural acts performed by monks are “deceit” (*makr*) and “temptation” (*istidrāj*) rather than miracles.<sup>454</sup>

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<sup>454</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 110 and 185.

## Chapter 4: The Waking Vision of the Prophet Muḥammad

### 4.1 Introduction

Our investigation of Ibn Mughayzil's mystical thought continues with his treatment of the key topic of the *Kawāḳib*: the waking vision of the Prophet Muḥammad. To denote this experience, Ibn Mughayzil and other Muslim authors use the term *ru'ya* or a verbal form of its root *ra'ā*, "to see," in either case usually with the adverb *yaqzatan* or *fī l-yaqza*, "while awake" or "in a waking state." In most stories, a visual perception of the Prophet indeed occurs. Although it is occasionally unclear whether an individual in fact saw the Prophet or simply heard him or encountered him in some way, the experience is usually related along with visions proper. For this reason, and due to the predominance of face-to-face meetings with the Prophet, I refer here simply to "waking visions" while noting when the exchange may not involve actually seeing the Prophet.

Ibn Mughayzil's discussion of waking visions of the Prophet is an excellent introduction to the subject. His relatively systematic and comprehensive presentation illuminates the many dimensions of the experience, such as its connection to dream visions of the Prophet and the problem of the form in which the Prophet appears. Furthermore, his reference to a large number of Sufis and scholars, whether for their positions on theoretical issues regarding waking visions or stories of them, provides the reader with a wealth of material about this phenomenon. This is especially noteworthy with respect to sources that have yet to be published or even discovered.

My aim in this chapter is to discuss the waking vision of the Prophet as it appears in the *Kawāḳib* and highlight Ibn Mughayzil's stances on the various issues connected with the experience. I thus confine myself to the themes that he covers and generally cite only the authors

and texts that he references. However, to better contextualize the *Kawāḳib* material, I sometimes draw from other sources. This is especially so regarding objections to the waking vision, since these likely motivated Ibn Mughayzil’s project, although he does not mention them all; and regarding the Prophet’s form in the vision, since al-Suyūṭī defended a position that Ibn Mughayzil strongly rejects but does not detail. I also present brief histories of the waking vision, both prior to the composition of the *Kawāḳib*, which helps us understand what inspired Ibn Mughayzil to tackle the issue in depth, and afterwards up until the fourteenth/twentieth century, which allows us to appreciate the ways in which his discussion prefigures the increasing significance that the waking vision acquired in ritual and as a source of spiritual authority. In the conclusion, I summarize my discussion, identify Ibn Mughayzil’s key contributions to the discourse on the waking vision, and offer some thoughts on the phenomenon of seeing the Prophet itself.

#### 4.2 The Waking Vision prior to Ibn Mughayzil

The idea that one can see the Prophet after his death in a waking state is suggested by a hadith recorded in the canonical Bukhārī collection: “Whoever saw me in a dream will see me while awake. Satan does not appear as me.”<sup>455</sup> The earliest report of such a vision that I have found involves the hadith scholar Ibn Manda, who lived in the fourth/tenth century. It is later attributed not only to prominent Sufis such as Aḥmad al-Ghazālī (d. 520/1126) and ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 561/1166), but also to lesser-known or unknown individuals, suggesting that it had become important and well accepted to such an extent that it had become practically routine.

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<sup>455</sup> من رأني في المنام فسيراني في اليقظة ولا يتمثل الشيطان بي  
al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 1733 (no. 6993).

For more sources, see Leah Kinberg, “Literal Dreams and Prophetic *Ḥadīths* in classical Islam—a comparison of two ways of legitimation,” *Der Islam* 70, no. 2 (1993): 285n16.

Waking visions have figured prominently among the Shādhiliyya, beginning with the founder himself and becoming especially frequent for the later representatives Abū l-Mawāhib and al-Suyūfī.

Ibn Manda's experience was reported by an attendant at the Prophet's tomb in Medina to the leader of the Khurasan pilgrims:

One day, I saw a man dressed in white enter the sanctuary at noon. The wall of the tomb split open, and he entered with an inkwell, paper, and pen in hand. He remained for God knows how long. Then, [the wall] split open [again], and he exited. I approached him immediately and asked, "By Him whom you worship! Who are you?" He replied, "I am Abū 'Abdillāh b. Manda. A hadith was giving me trouble, so I came and asked the Messenger of God, and he responded to me."<sup>456</sup>

In the following century, the Ḥanafī-Māturīdī Abū l-Yusr al-Bazdawī (d. 493/1100) attributed a waking vision to a member of a deviant Sufi group called the Ilhāmiyya.<sup>457</sup> In 478/1085-86, al-Bazdawī heard about the presence of the mystic in the region of Bukhara, where he had gathered around himself Sufis along with a number of Shāfi'īs. After learning that he raised his hands before and after bowing in ritual prayer, a practice rejected by Abū Ḥanīfa,<sup>458</sup> al-Bazdawī dispatched two of his companions to inquire why he had abandoned the Ḥanafī school. The Sufi denied having done so and explained that "there has appeared to me that which, if it had appeared to you, would cause you to raise your hands [in prayer as well]."<sup>459</sup> Although the Sufi

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<sup>456</sup> رأيت يوماً رجلاً عليه ثياب بيض دخل الحرم وقت الظهر فانشق حائط التربة فدخل فيها ويده محبرة وكاغد وقلم فمكث ما شاء الله ثم انشق فخرج فأخذت بذيله فقلت بحق معبودك من أنت قال أنا أبو عبد الله بن مندة أشكل علي حديث فجئت فسألت رسول الله ﷺ فأجابني Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Aḥmad b. Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, ed. Shu'ayb al-Arna'ūt and Muḥammad Na'im al-'Irsūsī (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1983), 17:37-38. See also Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū' Fatāwā*, 10:407.

<sup>457</sup> Al-Bazdawī characterizes the Ilhāmiyya with the claim that their hearts speak to them about God; expression of the Qarmatians' wicked allusions in dreadful language, whereby they deceive the masses and earn a living; and total rejection of religious law. See al-Bazdawī, *Kitāb Uṣūl al-dīn*, 255-56.

<sup>458</sup> 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī, *al-Mīzān al-kubrā al-sha'rāniyya: al-madkhala bi-jamī' aqwāl al-'imma al-mujtahidīn wa-muqallidihim fī l-sharī'a al-muḥammadiyya*, ed. 'Abd al-Wārith Muḥammad 'Alī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2009), 1:177.

<sup>459</sup> ظهر لي ما لو ظهر لكم ترفعون أيديكم al-Bazdawī, *Kitāb Uṣūl al-dīn*, 256.

apparently did not tell the envoys what had appeared to him, he informed a Ḥanafī colleague that he saw, while awake, the Prophet, Companions, and others praying in this manner.<sup>460</sup>

Around the same time as al-Bazdawī, al-Ghazālī wrote in his quasi-autobiography, *al-Munqidh mina l-ḍalāl*, that as soon as they start to apply themselves to the Sufī path, aspirants experience visions (*mushāhadāt*) and unveilings (*mukāshafāt*) to such an extent that they see, hear, and benefit from angels and the spirits of prophets.<sup>461</sup> According to Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200), al-Ghazālī's brother Aḥmad not only claimed to have seen the Prophet while awake, but even mentioned in a sermon that every time he was facing a difficulty, he met the Prophet and asked him about it.<sup>462</sup>

Apart from al-Ghazālī's remark in the *Munqidh*, Ibn Mughayzil does not mention any of the preceding stories about waking visions. The earliest figure to whom he attributes the experience is al-Jīlānī, whose two rather dramatic visions were recorded by al-Yāfi'ī. The first vision, recounted by al-Jīlānī himself, seems to confirm Ibn al-Jawzī's assertion that the master began public preaching in 521/1127,<sup>463</sup> while attributing his extraordinary capacity to sermonize to a miracle wrought during the vision:

I saw the Prophet before the midday prayer on Thulāthā', Shawwāl 16, 521 [Tuesday, October 25, 1127]. He asked me, "O my son, why do you not speak?" I replied, "O my father, I am a Persian man, so how could I address the Baghdad jurists?" He ordered me, "Open your mouth!" I opened it, and he spit in it seven times and then commanded me, "Say to the people, 'Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good counsel' (Q 16:125)." I then performed the midday prayer and sat down. A large group gathered around me, and I was trembling. I then saw 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib standing opposite me in the gathering. He asked, "O my son, why do you not speak?" I responded, "O my father, I am trembling!" He ordered me, "Open your mouth!" I opened [it], and he spit in it six times. I asked, "Why

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<sup>460</sup> al-Bazdawī, *Kitāb Uṣūl al-dīn*, 256.

<sup>461</sup> That is, presumably, they benefit from advice or insights received from the angels and spirits. See *Kawākib*, 41; al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh mina l-ḍalāl*, 260.

<sup>462</sup> Ibn al-Jawzī comments that "there is no end to such ignorance and stupidity on his part!" See Jamāl al-Dīn Abū l-Faraj b. al-Jawzī, *Kitāb al-Qaṣṣāṣ wa-l-mudhakkirīn*, ed. Muḥammad b. Luṭfi al-Ṣabbāgh (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1983), 316.

<sup>463</sup> Jacqueline Chabbi, "'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī,'" *EP*.

not make it seven?” He replied, “For the sake of politeness with the Prophet.” Then he disappeared from my sight, and I declared [from the minbar], “The obscurities of thought sinking into the ocean of the heart over the pearls of gnosis, which are brought out to the shore of the breast by the middleman, the translator of the tongue who calls out over them: “You purchase precious items [with] the cost of proper obedience ‘in houses that God has permitted to be raised’ (Q 24:36).”<sup>464</sup>

In the other vision, related by al-Yāfi‘ī from a certain Sheikh Bakā, the Prophet plays a supporting role in a case of divine manifestation:

One day, I attended the gathering of ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī. While he was discoursing on the first rung of the ladder of the footstool, he [abruptly] stopped speaking and became inattentive for a moment before coming down to the floor. Then, he climbed up the footstool and sat on the second rung. [Suddenly,] I saw the first rung expand until it filled [my] field of vision and was covered with a green silk brocade on which sat the Prophet, Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, and ‘Alī. God then manifested in ‘Abd al-Qādir’s heart, and he leaned to the point that he almost fell, so the Prophet grabbed hold of him in order that he did not. Then, he shrank until he became like a sparrow before growing until he assumed a terrifying form. Finally, it all disappeared.<sup>465</sup>

Al-Jīlānī explains that the first manifestation was with an attribute whose disclosure a human being can withstand only with the support of the Prophet; the second manifestation was with the attribute of Majesty (*jalāl*) and thus caused him to shrink; and the third manifestation was with the attribute of Beauty (*jamāl*) and thus caused him to recover and grow.

رأيت رسول الله ﷺ قبل الظهر يوم الثلاثاء السادس عشر من شهر شوال سنة إحدى و عشرين و خمسمائة فقال لي يا بني ألا تتكلم فقلت يا أباة أنا 464 رجل أعجمي كيف أتكلم على فقهاء بغداد فقال لي أفتح فاك قال ففتحه فتقل فيه سبعا ثم قال لي تكلم على الناس (أدع إلى سبيل ربك بالحكمة و الموعدة الحسنة) فصليت الظهر و جلست و حضرني جمع كثير فارتج علي فرأيت علي بن أبي طالب رضي الله عنه قائما بزاء في المجلس فقال يا بني لم لا تتكلم فقلت يا أباة فارتج علي فقال لي أفتح فاك ففتحت فتقل فيه ستا فقلت لم لا تكملها سبعا فقال أديبا مع رسول الله ﷺ ثم توارى عني فقلت غوامض الفكر تغوص في بحر القلب على درر المعارف فتستخرجها إلى ساحل الصدر فينادي عليهما سمسار ترجمان اللسان فتشتري نفاس أثمان حسن الطاعة (في بيوت أذن الله أن ترفع)

*Kawākib*, 389. Cf. ‘Abdullāh b. As‘ad al-Yāfi‘ī, *Khilāṣat al-mafākhir fī manāqib al-shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir*, ed. Aḥmad Farīd al-Mazīdī (Cairo: Dār al-Āthār al-Islāmiyya, 2006), 230-31 (slightly less coherent than the version in the *Kawākib*).

حضرت مجلس الشيخ عبد القادر رضي الله عنه مرة فبينما هو يتكلم على المرقاة الأولى من الكرسي إذ قطع كلامه وسها ساعة ونزل إلى الأرض 465 ثم صعد الكرسي و جلس على المرقاة الثانية فأشهدت المرقاة الأولى قد اتسعت حتى صارت مد البصر و فرشت من السندس الأخضر و جلس عليها رسول الله ﷺ و أبو بكر و عمر و عثمان و علي رضي الله عنهم و تجلى الحق سبحانه على قلب الشيخ عبد القادر فمال حتى كاد يسقط فأمسكه رسول الله ﷺ لئلا يقع ثم تضاعل حتى صار كالعصفور ثم نما حتى صار على صورة هائلة ثم توارى عني هذا كله

*Kawākib*, 39; al-Yāfi‘ī, *Khilāṣat al-mafākhir*, 210-11. Perhaps inspired by the Prophet’s attendance in his own gathering, al-Jīlānī believed that all prophets and saints attend the religious gatherings (*majālis*) of the living with their bodies as well as those of the dead with their spirits. See *Kawākib*, 39.

Ibn Mughayzil informs us that al-Jilānī's Iraqi counterpart Aḥmad al-Rifā'ī also enjoyed the privilege of meeting the Prophet. While on the hajj, he recited poetry to himself near the Prophet's chamber in which he asked the Prophet to extend his right hand so that he could kiss it; his request was immediately granted.<sup>466</sup> With this story, Ibn Mughayzil introduces another dimension of contact with the Prophet: one without sight of the face and hearing but no less intimate. He also recounts al-Rifā'ī's visit to a fellow shaykh on his roof, where a green robe, black burnoose, and sword descend upon him before the Prophet, having been physically present from the beginning, announces that al-Rifā'ī is the *quṭb* of his time.<sup>467</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil also relates stories in which the waking vision is attributed to lesser-known and virtually unknown figures. Sharaf al-Dīn al-Bārīzī's (d. 738/1338) encounter with Muḥammad on the shore of the Euphrates inspired him to write his *Tawthīq 'ury al-īmān fī tafḍīl ḥabīb al-raḥmān*, a book about the Prophet's nature, significance, and deeds.<sup>468</sup> A certain master by the name of Khalīfa, who frequently saw the Prophet both in dreams and while awake, met him one night nineteen times. In one of these meetings, the Prophet said to him, "O Khalīfa, do not be troubled by me. Many saints die from the affliction of beholding me."<sup>469</sup> A certain Muḥammad al-Sharī'ī claimed to have received a *dhikr* formula directly from the Prophet while awake,<sup>470</sup> while a Sufi novice was accused of theft and beaten while on his way to the butcher only to have his innocence recognized after the Prophet appeared to him smiling.<sup>471</sup>

<sup>466</sup> *Kawākib*, 42. In this case, it appears that only the Prophet's hand was seen.

<sup>467</sup> *Kawākib*, 390. I deduce the Prophet's physical presence from the fact that, after extending his hand several times, he is said to have "turned around" (*iltafata*).

<sup>468</sup> *Kawākib*, 39. For al-Bārīzī's writings, see *GAL*, 2S:101; *HAL*, 2S:105.

<sup>469</sup> يا خليفة لا تضجر مني كثير من الأولياء مات بحسرة رؤيتي

*Kawākib*, 43; Nūr al-Dīn Abī l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Yūsuf b. Jarīr al-Lakhmī al-Shaṭṭanūfī, *Bahjat al-asrār wa-ma'dan al-anwār*, ed. Aḥmad Farīd Mazīdī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2002), 378.

<sup>470</sup> *Kawākib*, 393. It is not clear whether al-Sharī'ī saw or only heard the Prophet.

<sup>471</sup> *Kawākib*, 392-93.

In defending the authenticity of the waking vision of the Prophet, Ibn Mughayzil thus builds on a very substantial tradition of reports. This tradition continued and eventually accelerated in his own brotherhood. Given the prestige that attaches to the beholder of this vision and Ibn Mughayzil's belief in Shādhilī supremacy, it is no surprise that he narrates some of the visions of his brethren. He cites one that al-Mursī attributes to the order's founder:

I was with Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan in Qayrawān. It was a Friday night during the month of Ramadan and, specifically, the 27th of the month. The shaykh went to the mosque and I went with him. When he entered the mosque and began his ritual prayer, I saw saints descending upon him as flies descend upon honey. When we left the mosque the following morning, the shaykh said, "Last night was magnificent. It was the Night of Power. I saw the Apostle and he said to me, 'Alī, cleanse your garments of all impurity, and you will enjoy God's sustenance during your every breath.' 'O Messenger of God,' I said, 'and what are my garments?' He said, 'Know that God has clothed you in five garments: the garment of love, the garment of knowledge, the garment of affirmation of the divine unity, the garment of faith, and the garment of submission. When someone loves God, he attaches no importance to anything else. When someone knows God, everything of his own appears insignificant to him. When someone affirms God's unity, he no longer associates any partner with Him. When someone has faith in God, he becomes safe from everything. When someone submits himself to God, rarely will he disobey Him, and if he does, he apologizes to Him, and when he apologizes to Him, his apology is accepted.' It was then that I understood the meaning of the command, 'Thy garments purify!' (Q 74:4).<sup>472</sup>

Although Ibn Mughayzil does not mention that al-Mursī himself claimed to have shaken the Prophet's hand, as Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh records,<sup>473</sup> he quotes al-Mursī's reference to some

472 كنت مع الشيخ أبي الحسن بالقيرواني و كان شهر رمضان و كانت ليلة جمعة و كانت ليلة سبع و عشرين فذهب الشيخ إلى الجامع و ذهب معه فلما دخل الجامع و أحرم رأيت الأولياء يتساقطون عليه كما يتساقط الذباب على العسل فلما أصبحنا و خرجنا من الجامع قال الشيخ ما كانت البارحة إلا ليلة عظيمة و كانت ليلة القدر و رأيت الرسول ﷺ و هو يقول يا علي طهر ثيابك من الدنس تحظ بمدد الله في كل نفس قلت يا رسول الله و ما ثيابي قال اعلم أن الله قد خلع عليك خمس خلع المحبة خلع المعرفة و خلع التوحيد و خلع الإيمان و خلع الإسلام فمن أحب الله هان عليه كل شيء و من عرف الله صغر لديه كل شيء و من وحد الله لم يشرك به شيئاً و من آمن بالله أمن من كل شيء و من أسلم الله ما يعصيه و إن اعتذر إليه قبل عذره ففهمته حينئذ معنى قوله عز و جل ( و ثيابك فطهر )

Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh, *Laṭā'if al-minan*, 78-79; Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh, *The Subtle Blessings*, 95. Al-Mursī tells us that on another occasion, when reaching Tripoli on their way to Egypt, al-Shādhilī and fellow mystic Abū 'Alī b. al-Sammāṭ (who does not seem to have been his disciple) decided to take different roads: al-Shādhilī that of the interior and al-Sammāṭ that of the coast. While en route, al-Sammāṭ encountered the Prophet, who assured him that both he and al-Shādhilī were saints, and that their decision to journey separately was approved. See Ibn al-Ṣabbāgh, *Durrat al-asrār wa-tuhfat al-abrār fī aqwāl wa-af'āl wa-aḥwāl wa-maqāmāt wa-nasab wa-karāmāt wa-adhkār wa-da'wāt* (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya lil-Turāth, 2001), 32.

473 Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh, *Laṭā'if al-minan*, 92.



remarkable type of vision or awareness: “By God, if the Prophet was veiled from me for an instant, I would not count myself a Muslim.”<sup>474</sup>

While in al-Mursī’s case perception of the Prophet ensured adherence to Islam, Ibn Mughayzil shows how a certain Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qurashī’s meeting with Muḥammad while awake led to his conversion to the Shādhilī way under the hand of the fifth Ḥabashī *khalīfa*, Ibn bt. al-Maylaq:

I saw the Prophet while I was in al-Aqṣā Mosque. He ordered me, “Follow the way of your father, Abū l-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī.” It occurred to me that the Shādhilī masters were more prevalent in Syria, Egypt, and the Maghreb. Then, I saw him a second time, and he commanded [me], “Take from your master, the shaykh Nāsir al-Dīn Ibn [bt.] al-Maylaq.” So, I came to see him in compliance with the Prophet’s order and obtained the Muḥammadan, Shādhilī heritage.<sup>475</sup>

In direct contrast to al-Qurashī, visions of the Prophet while awake contributed to the severance of ‘Alī Wafā from the Shādhiliyya proper. As McGregor states, “‘Alī Wafā’s spiritual authority is based, in the hagiography, upon his encounters with the Prophet Muḥammad.” The first of his visions occurred when he was just five years old after a difficult session of study of Quran recitation: “I saw the Prophet. He was wearing a white cotton shirt, which suddenly appeared on me. He then said to me, “Read!” so I read for him Sūrat al-Ḍuḥā (Q. 93).”<sup>476</sup> The second vision took place many years later near the grave of his father in the Qarāfa cemetery of Cairo: “I was praying the morning prayers at al-Qarāfa, when I saw the Prophet before me. He

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<sup>474</sup> والله لو حجب عني رسول الله طرفة عين ما عدت نفسي من المسلمين

*Kawākib*, 39; Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, *Laṭā’if al-minan*, 92. This statement is attributed to al-Shādhilī by ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Munāwī, *Fayḍ al-qadīr sharḥ al-Jāmi’ al-ṣaghīr min aḥādīth al-bashīr al-nadhīr*, ed. nukhba mina l-‘ulamā al-ajillā’ [a number of important scholars] (Beirut: Dār al-Ma’rifa, 1972), 6:133. Al-Mursī claims the same about the garden of paradise, while stating that he has never been veiled from God. See Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, *Laṭā’if al-minan*, 92-93.

<sup>475</sup> رأيت النبي ﷺ وأنا ببيت المقدس فقال لي اقتد بأبيك أبي الحسن الشاذلي فخطر لي أن مشايخ الشاذلية بالشام ومصر و بالغرب أكثر فرأيته ﷺ ثانياً فقال خذ عن سيدك الشيخ ناصر الدين بن الميلىق قال فتوجهت إليه بأمر النبي ﷺ و أخذت الميراث المحمدي الأحمدي القاسمي الشاذلي *Kawākib*, 230.

<sup>476</sup> Abū l-Laṭā’if, *al-Minaḥ al-ilāhiyya fī manāqib al-sādāt al-Wafā’iyya* (Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, Tārīkh 1151), 1b, quoted in McGregor, *Sanctity and Mysticism*, 54.

embraced me, saying, ‘Truly, your Lord blesses you.’<sup>477</sup> ‘Alī comments that from this time he “took [the function of] his tongue.” According to McGregor, this means that ‘Alī was chosen to receive mystical inspiration directly from the Prophet and disseminate it,<sup>478</sup> and thus, one assumes, it was after and due to this experience that he broke with the Shādhiliyya.

Ibn Mughayzil does not include ‘Alī’s visions in the *Kawākib*, perhaps having acknowledged their influence on his independence from the Shādhiliyya proper. However, he recounts, on the basis of a report from a companion at Sa‘īd al-Su‘adā’, that another Sufi, Abū Bakr (al-‘Aydārūs?)<sup>479</sup> al-Shādhilī, also saw the Prophet during ritual prayer. While reciting the portion of the *tashahhud*, “Peace and the mercy and blessings of God be upon you, O Prophet,” the Prophet’s chamber was revealed to him, and he saw the Prophet, who said, “And peace and the mercy and blessings of God be upon you, O Abū Bakr.”<sup>480</sup>

Finally, we come to the Shādhilī masters with whom Ibn Mughayzil trained or at least was personally acquainted. Al-Sha‘rānī details more than thirty meetings between Abū l-Mawāhib al-Tūnisī and the Prophet.<sup>481</sup> It seems that, unlike al-Sha‘rānī, Ibn Mughayzil had not combed through Abū l-Mawāhib’s writings to collect his accounts of these meetings. Only one of his visions appears in the *Kawākib*, having been transmitted to Ibn Mughayzil by fellow Shādhilī Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Minūfī (d. 939/1530), who heard it from Abū l-Mawāhib himself. The Prophet informed Abū l-Mawāhib that he was the “illuminator” (*mushriq*) within al-Jīlānī and several

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<sup>477</sup> Abū l-Laṭā‘if, *al-Minaḥ al-ilāhiyya*, 1b, quoted in McGregor, *Sanctity and Mysticism*, 54.

<sup>478</sup> Abū l-Laṭā‘if, *al-Minaḥ al-ilāhiyya*, 1b, quoted in McGregor, *Sanctity and Mysticism*, 54 and 182n36. On these visions, see also Geoffroy, “L’éléction divine,” 54.

<sup>479</sup> If so, he was the second member of an ‘Aydārūs lineage well known for its Sufism up until the twelfth/eighteenth century and also affiliated with the Qādiriyya, Suhrawardiyya, and Rifā‘iyya. He died in 914/1509. See Esther Peskes, “al-‘Aydārūs,” *EP*.

<sup>480</sup> وعليك السلام ورحمة الله وبركاته يا أبا بكر  
*Kawākib*, 42.

<sup>481</sup> al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, 2:146-52.

Shādhilī shaykhs,<sup>482</sup> including al-Mursī, Muḥammad Wafā, and Abū l-Mawāhib himself (both through ‘Alī Wafā and directly), and that his care for Abū l-Mawāhib is everlasting.<sup>483</sup> Given the high number of Abū l-Mawāhib’s encounters with the Prophet and his personal connection to Ibn Mughayzil, it is worth quoting some samples of his visions related in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*. In one story, the Prophet notifies Abū l-Mawāhib of the grave consequence of rejecting the waking vision:

I said to the Messenger of God, “People are denying the authenticity of my vision of you.” The Messenger of God replied, “By the glory and might of God, one who does not believe it or in [the vision as a possible experience] shall die a Jew, Christian, or Zoroastrian.”<sup>484</sup>

Another story depicts the Prophet establishing a special relationship with Abū l-Mawāhib:

I saw the Messenger of God, and he commanded me, “Extend your hand! I will make a pact with you.” I replied, “O Messenger of God, I am powerless. I fear that I will disobey after pledging allegiance.” He commanded [again], “Extend your hand!” He made a pact with me [and declared], “Errors and slips will not harm you if they occur and you repent.”<sup>485</sup>

Yet, the Prophet still encourages Abū l-Mawāhib’s devotion to his earthly master:

I had been seeking [the permission] of my shaykh Abī Sa‘īd al-Ṣafrawī to kiss his feet. He promised me that, telling me, “[Wait] until the [right] time comes.” When he died in 851 [1447-48], I saw the Messenger of God, and he instructed me, “Seek from your shaykh his promise.” So, I grabbed his feet after his death and kissed them, saying to him, “O my master, this is the fulfillment of your promise. Your sanctity while deceased is like your sanctity while alive.”<sup>486</sup>

<sup>482</sup> Perhaps, this is a reference to the Prophet’s cosmic function as the Light of Muḥammad, which Ibn Mughayzil, as we have seen, conceived as the source of all things.

<sup>483</sup> *Kawākib*, 393. On al-Minūfī, who was also al-Suyūfī’s student, see *GAL* 2:434-35; *HAWT* S2:359.

<sup>484</sup> قلت لرسول الله ﷺ إن الناس يكذبون في صحة رؤيتي لك فقال رسول الله ﷺ وعزة الله وعظمته من لم يؤمن بها أو كذلك فيها لا يموت إلا يهودياً أو نصرانياً أو مجوسياً

al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, 2:146.

<sup>485</sup> رأيت رسول الله فقال لي هات يدك أبايعك فقلت يا رسول الله لا قدرة لي أخاف أن يقع مني معصية بعد المبايعة فقال هات يدك فبايعني ولا تضرك الفلانة والزلة إن وقعت وتبت منها

al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, 2:147.

<sup>486</sup> كنت أطلب من شيعي أبي سعيد الصفروي أن أقبل قدميه فكان يوعدني بذلك ويقول لي حتى يجيء الوقت فلما مات سنة إحدى وخمسين وثمانمائة رأيت رسول الله ﷺ فقال لي أطلب من شيخك وعدته فأخذت قدميه بعد وفاته وقبلتهما وقلت له يا سيدي هذا إنجاز وعدك و حرمتك ميتاً كحرمك حياً

al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, 2:149.

If we accept al-Suyūṭī’s claim to have seen the Prophet in a waking state approximately seventy times, he is the most accomplished of the Shādhilīs (and perhaps of all mystics). None of these visions are included in the *Kawākib*, since Ibn Mughayzil never even mentions his former teacher. Al-Sha‘rānī reports one of them in which the Prophet provides intercession: “I asked him, ‘O Messenger of God, am I among the people of heaven?’ He said, ‘Yes.’ Then I asked, ‘Without a preceding punishment?’ And he responded, ‘To you that [is granted].’”<sup>487</sup> Al-Suyūṭī naturally considered his time with the Prophet too precious to sacrifice for others. When a shaykh called ‘Aṭīyya asked him to meet the Mamlūk sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī about an urgent matter pertaining to ‘Aṭīyya, al-Suyūṭī replied that he was currently meeting with the Prophet and feared that, if he were to see al-Ghawrī, the Prophet would be concealed from him, since a Companion was once deprived of his ability to see angels as a punishment for prioritizing urgent cauterizing over that sight.<sup>488</sup>

Lastly, Ibn Mughayzil assures us that the waking vision was not withheld from his primary master, al-Maghribī: he told his disciple that he twice saw the Prophet while awake.<sup>489</sup> Ibn Mughayzil does not inform us what happened during these visions, perhaps because al-Maghribī, in accordance with the reticence that his biographers attributed to him, had not told Ibn Mughayzil.

Ibn Mughayzil does not claim to have himself met the Prophet while awake. It seems that, nevertheless, the contemporary debate about this experience and the prevalence of the

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<sup>487</sup> قلت له في مرة منها هل أنا من أهل الجنة يا رسول الله فقال نعم فقلت من غير عذاب يسبق فقال لك ذلك

al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Yawāqīt wa-l-jawāhir*, 1:238.

<sup>488</sup> al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Yawāqīt*, 1:238-39.

<sup>489</sup> *Kawākib*, 384. Al-Maghribī also claims to have met Khidr “more than once” (*Kawākib*, 315 and 366) and to have seen his master al-Sarsī standing in a mosque in Damietta a year after he died. He recounts that he cried out to al-Sarsī, approached him, and kissed his hand, being certain of his identity. See *Kawākib*, 388. Other prophets, such as Abraham and Jesus, occasionally appear in stories of waking visions related in the *Kawākib* (see pp. 382-83 and 391-93).

waking vision among his Shādhilī predecessors, including two of his elder acquaintances, aroused his interest in the topic. Another factor was perhaps the little extant theoretical treatment. Visions of the Prophet while awake are not contemplated in the early Sufi handbooks, such as the *Qūt al-qulūb* of Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 386/996) or the *Kashf al-Mahjūb* of al-Hujwīrī.<sup>490</sup> In fact, in his famous *Risāla*, al-Qushayrī even relates the view of a Sufi that the Prophet, in addition to the Companions, pious forebears, and God, may be seen in a dream and not while awake,<sup>491</sup> while al-Kalābādhī in his handbook mentions only dream visions of the Prophet experienced by Sufis.<sup>492</sup> This absence may be due to the apparent lack of reports of waking visions (except that involving Ibn Manda) prior to the fifth/eleventh century. It seems that the first attempts by Sufis to tackle theoretical issues raised by the waking vision belong to— unsurprisingly— two literary geniuses of the tradition, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī and Ibn ‘Arabī, with many others contributing their ideas afterwards. Hadith commentators represent another voice. Their treatments are found in the systematic commentary on hadith collections that began in the fourth/tenth century, mainly among Mālikī hadith scholars in Andalusia and North Africa.<sup>493</sup> These commentators are a major source for Ibn Mughayzil’s discussion. He tells us that while he has cited many Shāfi‘īs and Mālikīs, and al-Jīlānī in particular (a Ḥanbalī, though Ibn Mughayzil seems to consider him a Shāfi‘ī), his search lasting “days and months” for Ḥanafī traditions about the waking vision resulted in his discovery of only one scholar who addressed it, namely, Akmal al-Dīn al-Babartī (d. 786/1384-5).<sup>494</sup> The views of many of the mystics and scholars cited by Ibn Mughayzil are presented below.

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<sup>490</sup> Muthalīb, “The Mystical Teachings,” 110-11.

<sup>491</sup> al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya*, 607.

<sup>492</sup> al-Kalābādhī, *Kitāb al-Ta’arruf*, 119-20.

<sup>493</sup> Joel Blecher, *Said the Prophet of God: Hadith Commentary across a Millenium* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018), 7.

<sup>494</sup> *Kawākib*, 395.

### 4.3 Visions of the Prophet in Ibn Mughayzil

Ibn Mughayzil's treatment of the waking vision of Muḥammad occupies roughly twenty-five of the nearly 400 pages that make up the modern edition of the *Kawāḳib* referenced here. The bulk of his discussion is located at the beginning of the book, mainly after his introduction to the text that follows his devotional preface and his exposition of the link between Law and Reality.<sup>495</sup> Near the end of the book, he relates more vision stories.<sup>496</sup> Rather than following precisely the structure of Ibn Mughayzil's discourse, I have arranged my presentation in a logical manner according to what I view as the chief issues. While I cover all the themes explicitly treated in the *Kawāḳib*, I have also created one category, eligibility for attaining the waking vision, based on material located in different parts of the book.

#### 4.3.1 The Dream Vision as Preparation

Ibn Mughayzil's treatment of the waking vision of the Prophet begins with discussion of the vision in dreams. This is because, he explains, the dream vision is—for the pious individual who will see him in a waking state—a preparation for that experience. He bases this view on an analogy with the Prophet's Ascension (*mi'rāj*). Scholars debated whether the Prophet ascended with his body and spirit while awake or only with his spirit while dreaming.<sup>497</sup> Ibn Mughayzil, following several scholars, synthesizes the two views into a distinctive conception involving two ascensions: the first in a dream as a preparation for the second, the actual, waking Ascension in which the Prophet witnessed the heavens (*malakūt*).<sup>498</sup> In this way, he adapts the claim, which we

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<sup>495</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 26-27 and 30-46.

<sup>496</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 389-95.

<sup>497</sup> Bertram Schrieke and Josef Horovitz, "Mi'rāj," in *EP*, 7:99.

<sup>498</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 30. Ibn Mughayzil attributes this view to Abū Naṣr al-Qushayrī (d. 514/1120), Ibn al-'Arabī, and ('Abd al-Raḥmān) al-Suhaylī (d. 581/1185). Abū Naṣr was the fourth son of the famous Sufī Abū l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī and a scholar himself. See Francesco Chiabotti, "The Spiritual and Physical Progeny of 'Abd al-Karīm al-Qushayrī: A Preliminary Study in Abū Naṣr al-Qushayrī's (d. 514/1120) *Kitāb al-Shawāhid wa-l-amthāl*," *Journal of Sufi Studies*

will encounter later, that the Prophet can be seen only in a dream by conceiving that vision as a step on the way to the waking vision. Furthermore, he provides solid grounds for his belief in the waking vision by modeling its beholder upon the Prophet in his Ascension.

#### 4.3.1.1 Veracity of Dream Visions

One of Ibn Mughayzil’s chief concerns is the authenticity of visions of the Prophet in dreams. Although this was a common concern among scholars, it seems that Ibn Mughayzil, having conceptualized the dream vision as preparation for the waking vision, aims especially to demonstrate that just as the former is veracious, so is the latter. He begins his exposition by citing different versions of a favourable hadith about the experience:

1. “Whoever saw me in a dream truly saw me, for Satan does not appear as me.”<sup>499</sup>  
من رأني في المنام فقد رأني فإن الشيطان لا يتمثل بي
2. “Whoever saw me [in a dream] indeed saw the truth.”<sup>500</sup>  
من رأني فقد رأى الحق
3. “Whoever saw me [in a dream] indeed saw the truth, for Satan does not assume my form.”<sup>501</sup>  
من رأني فقد رأى الحق فإن الشيطان لا يتكونني
4. “Whoever saw me in a dream truly saw me, [for] it is not proper for Satan to appear in my form.”<sup>502</sup>  
من رأني في النوم فقد رأني إنه لا ينبغي للشيطان أن يتمثل في صورتي
5. “Whoever saw me in a dream truly saw me, for it is not proper for Satan to imitate me.”<sup>503</sup>

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2 (2013): 55-57. Perhaps his position was inspired by that of his father. According to Abū l-Qāsim, while the People of Truth (*ahl al-ḥaqq*) hold that the Prophet ascended with his body on the night of the Ascension, it is not implausible that on other occasions he undertook ascensions in dreams, since some hadiths contain words such as “awakening” that indicate dreaming. See Abū l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, *Kitāb al-Mi‘rāj*, ed. ‘Alī Ḥasan ‘Abd al-Qādir (Paris: Dār Bībliyyūn, n.d.), 26. Ibn Mughayzil is likely referring to the Mālikī jurist Ibn al-‘Arabī (d. 543/1148) and not the Sufī, since al-Suhaylī studied with the former. See Wim Raven, “al-Suhaylī,” in *EP*, 12:756.

<sup>499</sup> al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 1733 (no. 6994); Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 1076-77 (no. 2266.10).

<sup>500</sup> Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 1077 (no. 2267).

<sup>501</sup> al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 1733 (no. 6997).

<sup>502</sup> Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 1077 (no. 2268.12).

<sup>503</sup> Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 1077 (no. 2268.13). For these hadiths, see also *Kawākib*, 33.

من رأني في النوم فقد رأني فإنه لا ينبغي للشيطان أن يتشبه بي

Having noted these variants, Ibn Mughayzil cites hadith commentators who, despite the Prophet's denial of Satan's interference, specify criteria for determining when one's nocturnal meeting with the Prophet is genuine. He begins with Abū 'Abdillāh al-Māzarī (d. 536/1141), who appears to be the first author of a commentary on the *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.<sup>504</sup> Al-Māzarī adopts a lenient position in affirming that a dream vision of the Prophet is authentic even when he is seen with attributes that he is not reported to have had, such as a white beard or different skin colour, or when he is seen in two different places at the same time, such as the West and the East. In such cases, al-Māzarī explains, the Prophet's attributes are imagined to be what they are not. This is because what we imagine (*khayālāt*) is sometimes mistaken for what we see (*mar'ayāt*), since there is a correspondence between objects of imagination and objects normally perceived through vision. In other words, while the Prophet's essence or self (*dhāt*) is seen, his attributes may be merely imagined.<sup>505</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil notes the similar stances of al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277) and Ibn Abī Jamra (d. 675/1276-77). They both agree with al-Māzarī that one truly sees the Prophet regardless of whether he appears with the attributes he is known to have had or not. However, Ibn Abī Jamra says that the dreamer sees the Prophet in a beautiful form (*ṣūra ḥasana*) as a result of excellence in his practice of religion, while he sees a disfigurement or deficiency in one of the Prophet's limbs as a result of a fault in his practice. Similarly, if the Prophet's speech accords with his Sunna, it is true; if it opposes his Sunna, there is a deficiency in the hearing or sight of the dreamer. To further illustrate this, Ibn Abī Jamra describes the Prophet as luminous (*nūrānī*) like

<sup>504</sup> Charles Pellat, "al-Māzarī," in *EP*, 6:943.

<sup>505</sup> *Kawākib*, 34; Abū 'Abdillāh Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. 'Umar al-Māzarī, *al-Mu'lim bi-fawā'id Muslim*, ed. Muḥammad al-Shādhilī al-Nayfar (Tunis: Bayt al-Ḥikma, 1991), 3:206.



a polished mirror: the good or bad present in someone who looks at the mirror manifests in it, while the mirror itself remains in the most superb condition without any deficiency or disfigurement. In his view, this aspect of the dream vision offers a major benefit to the dreamer by informing him whether he is flawed or not. Thus, whereas al-Māzarī offered a general psychological explanation for such “misperceptions,” Ibn Abī Jamra posits moral and physical causes. Ibn Abī Jamra also insists that the Prophet need not be seen in the form that he possessed at the time of his death. Rather, he may be seen in any form he had at some point in his life, whether during his youth, early or late adulthood, or the end of his life.<sup>506</sup>

Some scholars, however, were reluctant to concede that all dream visions of the Prophet are true. Perhaps, they were mindful of the claims to authority that could accompany such visions or the devaluation of them resulting from widespread reports. Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qarāfī (d. 684/1285) is one such scholar cited by Ibn Mughayzil. Al-Qarāfī argues that the dreams of only two types of people are definitely authentic. The first is a Companion, whose perception of the Prophet and knowledge of his attributes caused his appearance (*mithāl*) to be imprinted in his mind or soul (*nafs*); thus, when he saw the Prophet in a dream, he was absolutely certain that he saw his imaginal form (*mithāl*) protected from Satan. The second is a man for whom the Prophet’s attributes as transmitted in the sources become established to such an extent that his appearance is imprinted in his mind, just as it was for someone who saw him in person; thus, when this man sees the Prophet in a dream, he is also certain that he sees his true imaginal form. Someone who does not belong to one of these two classes, according to al-Qarāfī, cannot be

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<sup>506</sup> *Kawākib*, 35-36; Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Aḥmad b. Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī bi-sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-imām Abī ‘Abdillāh Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. ‘Abdillāh b. Bāz, Muḥammad Fu‘ād ‘Abd al-Bāqī, and Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Salafiyya, n.d.), 12:387. For al-Nawawī’s remarks, which simply affirm the correctness of al-Māzarī’s position, see also Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyā b. Sharaf b. Murrī al-Nawawī, *al-Minhāj fī sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj* (Riyadh: Bayt al-Afkār al-Dawliyya, n.d.), 1408.

certain that it was the Prophet whom he saw in his dream. While this could have been so, he may have also seen Satan, and the declaration of the Prophet (or the figure representing him) that he is the Messenger of God, or a statement to that effect of someone else in the dream, does not support the dreamer's claim to have seen the Prophet.<sup>507</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil relates a similar position taken by al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ (d. 544/1149), who thereby opposes the flexible position of his teacher al-Māzarī. He contends that one truly sees the Prophet in his dream only when he appears with the attributes he had during his earthly life; if he is seen with other attributes, one's dream vision is not literal and thus requires interpretation (*kānat ru'yā ta'wīl lā ru'yā ḥaqīqa*).<sup>508</sup> Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 852/1449) interprets this to mean that a dream vision of the Prophet without his ordinary attributes is simply false, which he points out is in line with the approach of the legendary dream interpreter Ibn Sīrīn (d. 110/728). When someone told him that he saw the Prophet, Ibn Sīrīn would ask him to describe his appearance; when he described him with attributes Ibn Sīrīn was not familiar with, he concluded that he had not seen the Prophet. Ibn Mughayzil informs us that Ibn Ḥajar himself, however, did not completely accept al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's view as he understood it. Instead, he attempted to harmonize it with that of al-Māzarī by positing that a dream vision of the Prophet is true whether he appears in his real form or not. In the former case, what one sees is to be accepted literally and does not require interpretation. In the latter case, a deficiency of the dreamer causes him to

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<sup>507</sup> *Kawākib*, 37. According to Ibn Mughayzil, al-Qarāfi presents this view in *al-Qawā'id*. I am unable to identify a work by al-Qarāfi under this title, though an abbreviation and completion of his *Kitāb Anwār al-burūq fī anwā' al-furūq* by Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Baqqūrī (d. 707/1307) is called *Mukhtaṣar al-Qawā'id*. This text has yet to be published. See *GAL* S1:665; *HAWT* S1:687.

<sup>508</sup> *Kawākib*, 34-35; Abū l-Faḍl 'Iyāḍ b. Mūsā, *Ikmal al-Mu'lim bi-fawā'id Muslim*, ed. Yaḥyā Ismā'il (Mansoura: Dār al-Wafā', 1998), 9:219.

imagine the Prophet with attributes different from his real ones, so what he sees requires interpretation.<sup>509</sup>

Perhaps inspired by Ibn Ḥajar, Ibn Mughayzil contributes to this discourse by bringing the position of al-Qarāfī into line with the views of Ibn Ḥajar and al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ. He explains that the dream visions of the two types of people specified by al-Qarāfī are certain and thus do not require interpretation, whereas the visions of others are ambiguous (*ẓanniyya*) and thus, he implies, must be interpreted. He bases this perspective on al-Qarāfī’s remark that a person who does not belong to these two classes of people simply cannot be *certain* that his vision is true, thus implying the need for him to reflect.<sup>510</sup> It seems that Ibn Mughayzil wants to maximize faith in the Prophet’s dream apparitions by steering attention away from al-Qarāfī’s suggestion that one may have even seen Satan. At the same time, he synthesizes: admitting neither that all dreams of the Prophet are literally true nor that they can be false, he recognizes instead that many require interpretation, a common and acceptable reasoning process.

#### 4.3.1.2 Legal Implications

Faithful to the hadith in its many variants concerning the dream vision of the Prophet, the scholars whose views are mentioned above were unanimous that seeing the Prophet in a dream with his real attributes constitutes a true vision, while some even held the sight of him without such attributes to be authentic. This implies that any message communicated by the Prophet to the dreamer is also genuine. That Muslim dreamers often believed so is attested by an abundance

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<sup>509</sup> *Kawāḍib*, 35; al-‘Asqalānī, *Fath al-bārī*, 12:383-84 and 387. For Ibn Sīrīn’s method, see also Muḥammad b. Sīrīn and ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *Mu‘jam Tafsīr al-aḥlām*, ed. Bāsīl al-Barīdī (Beirut: al-Yamāma, 2008), 1019-20. However, the precise role of Ibn Sīrīn as a dream interpreter is difficult to ascertain, and modern scholars have established that no dream book currently known was written by him. See Elizabeth Sirriyeh, *Dreams & Visions in the World of Islam: A History of Muslim Dreaming and Foreknowing* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 68-70.

<sup>510</sup> *Kawāḍib*, 37.

of oneiric appearances of the Prophet in which he addresses important worldly matters. Examples include announcement of his preferred legal school, examination of the reliability of hadith transmitters, legitimization of specific Quran readings, legal judgments, and resolution of theological questions.<sup>511</sup> Sufi stories depict the Prophet punishing theologians who lack faith in a certain mystic or celebrating a Sufi master such as Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī or al-Ghazālī.<sup>512</sup> In a dream that was crucial for the formation of the Shādhiliyya, the Prophet instructs al-Shādhilī to travel to Egypt, assuring him that he will be safe despite an ongoing conflict in the region and intense heat.<sup>513</sup> Ibn Mughayzil’s Sufi predecessors in Cairo even managed to get praise for the Prophet inserted into the traditional call to prayer (*adhān*) after he communicated his approval in a dream.<sup>514</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil seems to take for granted that the Prophet might impart crucial mystical knowledge or instruction in a dream, since his discussion of the Prophet’s messages centers around their legal dimension. He details the attempts of a number of Shāfi‘ī scholars to render a judgment about prophetic commands communicated in dreams in accordance with legal concepts and customs. Abū ‘Abdillāh al-Zarkashī (d. 794/1392) relates the story of a man whom the Prophet instructs in a dream to go to a certain place and take five items from the buried treasures of the earth (*rikāz*). Upon waking, he visits that place and finds what the Prophet had told him was there. Although the Damascene jurists recognized that his dream was truthful, and that Satan cannot disguise himself as the Prophet, nearly all of them ruled that the dreamer was not obliged to take the items. The only exception was ‘Izz al-Dīn b. ‘Abd al-Salām, who judged it obligatory

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<sup>511</sup> Leah Kinberg, “Dreams,” *EP*.

<sup>512</sup> Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad is His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 79.

<sup>513</sup> Ibn al-Ṣabbāgh, *Durrat al-asrār*, 31.

<sup>514</sup> Ignaz Goldziher, “The Appearance of the Prophet in Dreams,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland* 44, no. 2 (1912): 505.

to take them because legal rules are nullified through abrogation, while there is no abrogation after the end of revelation with the Prophet's death.<sup>515</sup> In other words, Ibn 'Abd al-Salām seems to suggest, the Prophet's dream command is tantamount to a legal rule, and it cannot be abrogated now that revelation has finished.

In the fatwa collection of Ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥannāṭī (fl. fifth/eleventh century), a little-known Shāfi'ī jurist,<sup>516</sup> a story is told of a man who saw the Prophet in a dream with the attributes he is reported to have had. He asked him about a legal issue, and the Prophet ruled contrary to what a legal school (the Shāfi'īyya?) had established but not contrary to the Quran (*naṣṣ*) or consensus. According to al-Ḥannāṭī, two opinions were formed: 1) the ruling should be accepted because it is preferable to analogy (*qiyās*), and 2) it should be rejected because analogy is a proof, whereas dreams are not reliable.<sup>517</sup>

A certain al-Qāḍī Ḥusayn comments on the case of a man whom the Prophet informs on the night of 30 Sha'bān that the Ramadan fast will begin the following day. He rules that the man is not obliged to obey the Prophet's message, since the Prophet ordered (previously) that the fast becomes obligatory only with the appearance of the crescent moon or the completion of the thirty days of the month.<sup>518</sup>

Although the oneiric context is not known, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (d. 643/1245) pronounced in a fatwa that one should not act in accordance with what the Prophet rules in a dream even though what is seen is reliable, because the dreamer's ability to retain the meaning (*ḍabt*) is unreliable. The reason for this is that sleep is a state of concealment (*ghayba*) that negates one's capacity to recall in detail what occurred in a dream. Al-Nawawī cites the same reason to reject that the

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<sup>515</sup> *Kawākib*, 32.

<sup>516</sup> *GAL* S1:670-71; *HAWT* S1:693.

<sup>517</sup> *Kawākib*, 31.

<sup>518</sup> *Kawākib*, 31.

Prophet's dream rulings should be followed, while noting that one should not doubt the veracity of the hadith (about truly seeing the Prophet). For a report (*khābar*) can be accepted only from an attentive, legally responsible individual (*dābiṭ mukallaḥ*), whereas the dreamer is not such.<sup>519</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil does not explicitly pronounce any opinion about this matter. Considering its legal character, and the fact that he cited only expert jurists, perhaps he was aware that, being engaged primarily with Sufism, he was not qualified to offer a judgment. By covering the debate, he may have been hoping to prepare his readers to react to an oneiric command from the Prophet, having already acquainted them with the possible and lawful responses. Yet, since only one ruling accepts the dream message as a legal proof, while three rulings reject it as such and two do not consider it obligatory to follow, it seems that Ibn Mughayzil doubted the capacity of dreams to override existing legal standards. In this way, he ensures balance in his goal of “combining Law and Reality” by deterring a justification for potentially antinomian behaviour.

#### 4.3.1.3 A Sign for the Waking Vision

The Prophet's Ascension first in a dream and then while awake—however significant it may be—is only indirect evidence for Ibn Mughayzil's claim that one will enjoy visions of Muḥammad in the same order. An explicit proof is the hadith I quoted above, which I cite again below followed by two variations that are consequential for its exegesis:

1) “Whoever saw me in a dream will see me while awake. Satan does not appear as me.”<sup>520</sup>

من رأني في المنام فسيراني في اليقظة ولا يتمثل الشيطان بي

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<sup>519</sup> *Kawāḥib*, 30-31; Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyā b. Sharaf b. Murrī al-Nawawī, *Rawḍat al-ṭālibīn*, ed. ‘Ādil Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Mawjūd and ‘Alī Muḥammad Ma’riḍ (Riyadh: Dār ‘Ālam al-Kutub, 2003), 361. Abū Muḥammad al-Kirmānī (d. 280/893-94) (or al-Māzarī [the text is not clear]) relates an argument that the Prophet's command to a dreamer to kill someone whom it is forbidden to kill originates from the attributes one imagines him to have and not the Prophet himself (*hādhā mina l-ṣifāt al-mutakhayyala lā al-mar’aya*). See al-Māzarī, *al-Mu’lim*, 3:207.

<sup>520</sup> al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 1733 (no. 6993).

2) “Whoever saw me in a dream will see me while awake, or it was as if he saw me while awake. Satan does not appear as me.”<sup>521</sup>

من رأني في المنام فسيراني في اليقظة أو لكانما رأني في اليقظة لا يتمثل الشيطان بي

3) “Whoever saw me in a dream truly saw me while awake, for Satan does not appear in my form.”<sup>522</sup>

من رأني في المنام فقد رأني في اليقظة فإن الشيطان لا يتمثل على صورتي

In his hadith commentary, the *Fath al-Bārī*, Ibn Ḥajar details seven interpretations of the phrase in the first version, “[He] will see me while awake.”<sup>523</sup> Ibn Mughayzil relates only some of these in his own discussion, while choosing, as we shall see, one as his own stance.<sup>524</sup>

Nonetheless, I present them all here because they illustrate the hesitations of the hadith commentators about the waking vision that Ibn Mughayzil strives to overcome with his work.

The first interpretation is that the phrase is a metaphor (‘*alā l-tashbīh wa-l-tamthīl*). The proponent of this view adduces the phrasing of the second version, “*It was as if* he saw me while awake. Satan does not appear as me.”<sup>525</sup>

The second interpretation is that the meaning of the dream will be known in a waking state, whether immediately or through interpretation.<sup>526</sup>

The third interpretation is that the phrase refers solely to the Prophet’s contemporaries who believed in him but had not yet seen him. This is the position of Ibn al-Tīn al-Ṣafāqīsī (d. 611/1214), who describes it as a message of good tidings. Al-Māzarī restricts its application even further to only those who had not emigrated to Medina to be together with the Prophet.<sup>527</sup>

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<sup>521</sup> Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 1077 (no. 2266.11)

<sup>522</sup> Abū ‘Abdillāh Muḥammad b. Yazīd al-Qazwīnī b. Mājāh, *Sunan Ibn Mājāh*, ed. Muḥammad Fu‘ād ‘Abd al-Bāqī ([Cairo]: Dār Ihyā’ al-Kutub al-‘Arabiyya, n.d.), 2:1284 (no. 3900).

<sup>523</sup> al-‘Asqalānī, *Fath al-bārī*, 12:385-86.

<sup>524</sup> *Kawākib*, 37-38.

<sup>525</sup> al-‘Asqalānī, *Fath al-bārī*, 12:385.

<sup>526</sup> *anna ma ‘nāhā sayurā fī l-yaqza ta ‘wīluhā bi-ṭarīq al-ḥaqīqa aw al-ta ‘bīr*. See al-‘Asqalānī, *Fath al-bārī*, 12:385.

<sup>527</sup> *Kawākib*, 37-38; al-‘Asqalānī, *Fath al-bārī*, 12:385.

The fourth interpretation is that the dreamer will see the Prophet in a mirror if such is possible for him. This may strike the reader as a bizarre suggestion; Ibn Ḥajar himself considers it very unlikely. Nevertheless, he claims that it was espoused by Ibn Abī Jamra, who based it on a story involving the Companion Ibn ‘Abbās (d. 68/687-88). When once Ibn ‘Abbās awoke from a dream in which he saw the Prophet, he remained in his room reflecting on the hadīth that suggests the dreamer will see the Prophet subsequently in a waking state. One of the Prophet’s wives—possibly Maymūna (d. 51/671)—entered and held up a mirror that belonged to the Prophet. When Ibn ‘Abbās looked into it, he saw the Prophet’s form rather than his own.<sup>528</sup>

The fifth interpretation is that the dreamer will see the Prophet on the Day of Resurrection in a special manner (*bi-mazīd khuṣūṣiyya*). Along these lines is the view of al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ, who builds on the argument of Ibn Baṭṭāl that the hadīth should simply be read literally, since on the Day of Resurrection all Muslims will see him while awake, both those who already saw him in a dream vision and those who did not.<sup>529</sup> According to al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ, one’s dream vision of the Prophet with the attributes he is known to have had and has been described with is a reason for honouring the dreamer in the afterlife and allowing him to enjoy a special vision of the Prophet in proximity to him, with his intercession, or some other privilege. He adds that it is not unlikely that God will punish some sinners during the resurrection by temporarily preventing them from seeing the Prophet and receiving his intercession.<sup>530</sup>

The sixth interpretation is the most literal, proposing that the dreamer will truly see and speak with the Prophet in this world. Ibn Abī Jamra, although Ibn Ḥajar attributed the fourth

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<sup>528</sup> *Kawākib*, 38; al-‘Asqalānī, *Faṭḥ al-bārī*, 12:385..

<sup>529</sup> Ibn Baṭṭāl, *Sharḥ*, 9:527. However, the version of this passage in the *Kawākib* (p. 37) has Ibn Baṭṭāl *reject* this view.

<sup>530</sup> *Kawākib*, 38; Ibn Mūsā, *Ikmāl al-mu‘lim*, vol. 7, 220-21. Abū Bakr b. al-‘Arabī, on the contrary, was unconvinced by Ibn Baṭṭāl’s view, commenting that it is meaningless and worthless. See Abū Bakr b. al-‘Arabī, *‘Āriḍa al-aḥwadhī bi-sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī*, ed. Jamāl Mar‘ashlī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1997), 1:94-95.



interpretation to him, also suggests this as a possibility. He contends that it could be experienced by those who greatly long for the Prophet and adduces as proof the fact that many accomplished mystics (*al-khawāṣṣ*) saw him in a dream and then in a waking state, during which they asked him about various issues and received his responses.<sup>531</sup> According to Ibn Ḥajar, Ibn Abī Jamra also described the waking vision as a saintly miracle common for the “People of Success” (*ahl al-tawfīq*), while granting that it could also occur to others, since the customary order of things (*al-‘āda*) may be interrupted even for a heretic as a form of temptation and misguidance (*bi-ṭarīq al-implā’ wa-l-ighwā’*).<sup>532</sup> Ibn Abī Jamra may have been inspired by his personal experience. Al-Sha‘rānī says that he claimed to have seen and conversed with the Prophet while awake, which caused some people to turn against him to such an extent that he withdrew to his home until his death.<sup>533</sup>

The seventh interpretation, proposed by Abū ‘Abdillāh al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1273), is that one will see the essence or meaning of the Prophet’s form (*ma‘nā ṣūratih*), which is his religion and his law.<sup>534</sup>

Finally, another interpretation, which Ibn Ḥajar says would be the eighth if it were comprehensible to him, is that the dreamer who extols the Prophet’s sanctity and longs to see him will obtain the vision of his beloved and fulfill every one of his aims. This is also suggested by al-Qurṭubī.<sup>535</sup> But since he rejects the notion of a waking encounter with the Prophet, as I will discuss below, it seems that al-Qurṭubī is referring here to a vision of Muḥammad in a dream or the afterlife.

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<sup>531</sup> Abū Muḥammad ‘Abdallāh b. Sa‘d b. Sa‘īd b. Abī Jamra, *Mukhtaṣar Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ed. Abū l-Mundhir Sāmī b. Anwār Khalīl Jāhīn (Jeddah: Dār al-Minhāj, 2001), 250.

<sup>532</sup> al-‘Asqalānī, *Faḥ al-bārī*, 12:385.

<sup>533</sup> al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 1:294 (no. 362).

<sup>534</sup> al-‘Asqalānī, *Faḥ al-bārī*, 12:386.

<sup>535</sup> al-‘Asqalānī, *Faḥ al-bārī*, 12:385-86.

Ibn Mughayzil adopts, of course, the sixth interpretation that the hadith is authentic and verified by a group of pious individuals who saw the Prophet in a dream and then in a waking state.<sup>536</sup> In this way, he secures a foundation for the waking vision in the prophetic tradition that, being textual and scriptural, is more explicit and stronger than the analogy with the Ascension.

### 4.3.2 *The Waking Vision*

#### 4.3.2.1 Objections

Ibn Ḥajar's list of interpretations reveals that commentators were uncomfortable with the idea of seeing the Prophet while awake after his death: only the sixth interpretation (and in some sense the fourth) admits that possibility. Hence, while Ibn Mughayzil claims to have penned the *Kawākib* in response to a contemporary debate about the waking vision among Cairene scholars, he was likely also motivated by the commentators' skepticism. However, rather than responding to their contrary interpretations, he deals with two specific objections to the notion of a waking encounter with the Prophet. One is al-Qurṭubī's observation that some people saw the Prophet in a dream but not while awake afterwards, while an (authentic) hadith cannot be contradicted (*lā yutakhallaf*); thus, he implies, the hadith cannot be understood literally. Ibn Mughayzil's response to this is his justification for accepting the sixth interpretation of the hadith listed by Ibn Ḥajar: some pious people saw the Prophet in a dream and then while awake, which confirms the authenticity of the hadith.<sup>537</sup>

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<sup>536</sup> *Kawākib*, 43.

<sup>537</sup> *Kawākib*, 43. Ibn Abī Jamra rebuts that their failure to mention a waking vision does not negate its occurrence. In his analysis, one who rejects the waking vision of the Prophet either affirms the saints' miracles or denies them; if he denies them, there is no use in entering into discussion with him since he rejects what Sunnīs demonstrate with legitimate proofs. See *Kawākib*, 391; Ibn Abī Jamra, *Mukhtaṣar*, 251.

The other objection, attributed to “an exoteric scholar” (*ba‘d ‘ulamā’ al-zāhir*) by Ibn al-Ḥājj al-‘Abdarī (d. 737/1336), contends that the waking vision is impossible because the perishable cannot see the imperishable, while the Prophet is in the imperishable realm and the beholder of the vision is in the perishable realm.<sup>538</sup> Ibn Mughayzil notes the rebuttal to this argument of Ibn al-Ḥājj’s master called Muḥammad. While acknowledging the soundness of the scholar’s reasoning, Muḥammad explains that those who see the Prophet while awake have already died. His proof is a story about the Day of Resurrection in which God instructs his saints to come to the people gathered for judgment and let anyone who greets them for the sake of God enter heaven. When these people ask about the saints, God informs them that while they died only once in the world, each saint died seventy times every day.<sup>539</sup>

To further our understanding of the contentious context in which the *Kawākib* emerged, it is worth considering criticism of the waking vision by two other authors that, while not found in Ibn Mughayzil’s text, may have motivated his project. One of these authors is Ibn Taymiyya, who levelled a broad critique of any type of waking vision, whether of prophets, such as Abraham, Jesus, and Muḥammad; of Khidr; of pious individuals, such as Abū Bakr and the Apostles; or of Sufi shaykhs, such as ‘Abd al-Qādir (al-Jīlānī), Aḥmad al-Rifā‘ī and Abū Madyan. In all these cases, Ibn Taymiyya argues, one witnesses merely the manifestation of Satan.<sup>540</sup> He elaborates his view in his response to the claims of some people to have seen he himself somewhere that he was not. Some requested his aid from distant countries and saw him come to them, one person saw him in his clothes and his form riding an animal (*rākib*), and

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<sup>538</sup> *Kawākib*, 394; Muḥammad b. al-Ḥājj al-‘Abdarī, *al-Madkhal ilā tanmiyyat al-a‘māl bi-taḥsīn al-niyyāt wa-l-tanbīh ‘alā ba‘d al-bida‘ wa-l-‘awā‘id allatī intaḥalat wa-bayān shanā‘atihā*, ed. Tawfiq Ḥamdān (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1995), 3:152-53.

<sup>539</sup> *Kawākib*, 240-41 and 394; Ibn al-Ḥājj, *al-Madkhal*, 3:152-53.

<sup>540</sup> On a few occasions, he mentions “jinn” instead of Satan.

another person saw him on a mountain. Ibn Taymiyya explained that he had not assisted them. Rather, Satan appeared in his form to lead them astray because they associated a partner with God (*ashrakū*) and called on what is other than Him. He observes that such visions have occurred to many Christians and polytheists, especially in polytheistic nations such as India, and allows that some of its beholders are religious, ascetic, and devout.<sup>541</sup>

Ibn Taymiyya also cites the refutation of waking visions of the Prophet of Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr (d. 463/1071), who heard someone claim to have performed a miracle in undergoing the same experience as Ibn Manda noted above, namely, consultation with the Prophet about a hadith. Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr pointed to the absence of such question-and-answer meetings after the Prophet’s death among the early Muslims. Indeed, the Companions were disputing over certain matters, and Fāṭima was disputing over her father’s inheritance—so why had they not simply asked the Prophet for his opinion?<sup>542</sup>

The other critic of the waking vision absent from the *Kawākib* is Ibn Mughayzil’s own teacher al-Sakhāwī. Although his treatise on the phenomenon is not extant, his ideas are found in a collection of his responses to questions about hadiths. He begins by pointing out that there exist no reports of waking visions of the Prophet among the Companions, those who came after them in subsequent centuries, or the leaders of the four chief legal schools, despite these people being most worthy of being honoured with every noble thing. But rather than blaming Satan alone, al-Sakhāwī offers a more nuanced analysis. His main objection is to the belief that one sees the Prophet’s actual physical body (*al-dhāt al-sharīfa*). He compares this to the mistaken assumption

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<sup>541</sup> Taqī l-Dīn Ahmad b. Taymiyya, *al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ li-man baddala dīn al-Masīḥ*, ed. ‘Alī b. Hasan b. Nāṣir, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Ibrāhīm al-‘Askar and Ḥamdān b. Muḥammad al-Ḥamdān (Riyadh: Dār al-‘Āṣima, 1999), 2:317-27.

<sup>542</sup> Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū‘ Fatāwā*, 10:407. Of course, due to the hadith in which the Prophet states that the dream vision of him is true because Satan cannot appear in his form, in addition to a variant that mentions the forms of prophets in general, Ibn Taymiyya accepts that one can truly see prophets in a dream. See Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ*, 2:326.

of some Helpers (*anṣār*) during the emigration to Medina that the Prophet was Abū Bakr, since they had not yet seen him.<sup>543</sup> He contends that if someone sees the Prophet while in an unstable and confused state (*tazalzala wa-ḍṭaraba*), Satan is involved (*kāna lahu mina l-shayṭān*), although he also stresses that this does not diminish the exaltedness of his rank, since the mystic, unlike the prophet, is fallible.

Al-Sakhāwī concedes that it is acceptable to assert that the object of one's waking vision is an imaginal form (*mithāl*). Regarding al-Mursī's declaration that he would not consider himself a Muslim were he veiled from the Prophet for an instant, he approves the suggestion of an unnamed commentator on the *Maṣābīḥ*<sup>544</sup> that one may see the Prophet during mystical experience (*dhawq*) and detachment from bodily obstacles. He compares this to the case of Majnūn: "‘‘Shall we call Laylā for you?’ He replied, ‘Has Laylā been absent from me so that you should call her?’ It was said, ‘Do you love her?’ He responded, ‘Love is a means for [lovers] to unite, while union has already occurred. I am Laylā and Laylā is me.’’’<sup>545</sup> Al-Sakhāwī's implication is that the waking vision is no ordinary meeting with Muḥammad as an individual, since, like Laylā for Majnūn, his presence pervades the mystic.

Nonetheless, al-Sakhāwī's interpretations of some stories of waking visions show that he was also uncomfortable with the experience and skeptical even when a *mithāl* was seen. While proposing that al-Shādhilī heard a greeting from the Prophet and met the Prophet near the end of Ramadan in a dream,<sup>546</sup> he suggests that the shaykh may have, alternatively, heard the greeting from the Prophet's tomb, pointing out that such is not uncommon.<sup>547</sup> He interprets the claim of

<sup>543</sup> See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya* (Beirut: Dār al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1990), 2:133-34.

<sup>544</sup> That is, the *Maṣābīḥ al-sunna* of al-Baghawī (d. 516/1122). Presumably, the commentator is Muḥammad al-Tabrīzī (wrote in 737/1336), given the popularity of his *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*. See *GAL* S2:262; *HAWT* S2:270.

<sup>545</sup> ندعو لك ليلي فقال وهل غابت عني ليلي فتدعي قيل أفتحبها فقال المحبة ذريعة الوصل وقد وقعت الوصلة فأنا ليلي وليلى أنا  
al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ajwiba al-marḍiyya*, 3:1107.

<sup>546</sup> For these stories (the second was excerpted above), see Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, *Laṭā’if al-minan*, 77-79.

<sup>547</sup> It is indeed not clear in the story whether al-Shādhilī met or saw the Prophet, or simply heard the greeting.

al-Jīlānī that the Prophet commanded him to marry as a reference to a hadith containing the advice, “Whoever can afford to should marry.”<sup>548</sup> Furthermore, al-Sakhāwī identifies five of the seven interpretations of the hadith about the waking vision listed by his teacher Ibn Ḥajar as effective means for refuting a literal reading and presents his own metaphorical, and seemingly original, exegesis. He argues that the phrase, “He will see me while awake,” means that “he will visualize seeing me and make himself present with me in the sense that he follows my manners and customs, pursues my way, and adheres to my law and path.”<sup>549</sup>

Why did Ibn Mughayzil omit these objections? Perhaps because, considering Ibn Taymiyya’s scholarly authority, simply learning of his negative assessment might have caused some of Ibn Mughayzil’s readers to dismiss the experience altogether. Or he may have intended to dismiss or insult Ibn Taymiyya, who was a trenchant critic and even enemy of certain aspects of Sufism and Sufis, including his own revered Shādhilī forbear Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh and his followers.<sup>550</sup> Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr’s argument is powerful and difficult to rebut, for surely Ibn Mughayzil would not deny that such early Muslims as the Companions and Fāṭima were spiritually advanced enough to meet the Prophet in miraculous visions. As for al-Sakhāwī, supposing he penned his thoughts before the *Kawākib* was composed, perhaps Ibn Mughayzil did not consider it necessary to respond to his ambivalence, since he at least reluctantly acknowledged the possibility of the waking vision.

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<sup>548</sup> من استطاع الباءة فليتزوج

al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 459 (no. 1905).

<sup>549</sup> يكون معنى فسيراني في اليقظة أي بتصور مشاهدتي وينزل نفسه حاضراً معي بحيث لا يخرج عن آدابه وسننه ﷺ بل يسلك منهاجه ويمشي على شريعته وطريقته

al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ajwiba al-marḍiyya*, 3:1111, and 1100-11 for his entire discussion.

<sup>550</sup> This would accord with Ibn Mughayzil’s mere two references to Ibn Taymiyya in his writings, both of which are negative. He first blames him for rejecting a miraculous report that al-Shāfi‘ī met Shaybān al-Rā‘ī because they were not contemporaries, while later noting that Ibn Taymiyya was censured for opposing consensus with his views on other issues such as the visitation of tombs and divorce. See *Kawākib*, 89 and 134; Ibn Mughayzil, *al-Qawl al-‘alī*, 44.

#### 4.3.2.2 The Prophet's Form

The issue most central to Ibn Mughayzil's discussion and to which he contributes most is that of the Prophet's form. Is the object of one's vision the Prophet's real, physical body or only his imaginal form (*mithāl*)? Ibn Mughayzil insists that it is his imaginal form, although some of his contemporaries held the other position.<sup>551</sup> The most prominent figure to assert the possibility of seeing the Prophet's body was surely al-Suyūṭī, who vigorously defended this view in his treatise on the waking vision. I begin this section with an exposition of al-Suyūṭī's view because, while not included in the *Kawākib*, his detailed argumentation and wide use of sources such as hadiths and stories help acquaint us with the depth and nuance of this aspect of the debate that was so important to Ibn Mughayzil. Furthermore, if al-Suyūṭī composed his treatise or developed his ideas and expressed them to Ibn Mughayzil before the *Kawākib* was written, his former student may be responding to his demonstration.

##### 4.3.2.2.1 Al-Suyūṭī: Seeing the Physical Body

The basis for al-Suyūṭī's stance is his contention that the Prophet Muḥammad and all other prophets are currently alive. After they died, he explains, their spirits returned to them, and they are permitted to leave their tombs and move freely in the upper and lower heavens (*al-malakūt al-'alawī wa-l-sufī*). Al-Suyūṭī cites many scholars and hadiths to substantiate this belief. For instance, Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066) likens the case of prophets to that of martyrs, evidently alluding to Q 3:169, which states that martyrs are "alive with their Lord" (cf.

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<sup>551</sup> Al-Māzarī is an earlier scholar who appears to have espoused this view. He argues that perception does not require the gaze of the eyes, spatial proximity, or the object of vision to be manifest on the earth or buried. Rather, it requires only the existence of the object of vision, while there is no proof that the Prophet's body has perished; in fact, a sound hadith indicates its survival. See *Kawākib*, 34; al-Māzarī, *al-Mu'lim*, 7:218-19. Al-Māzarī is perhaps referring to a hadith that includes the assertion, "God forbade the earth to consume the bodies of prophets" (إن الله قد حرم على الأرض أن تاكل أجساد الأنبياء). See Ibn Mājah, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, 345 (no. 1085).

Q 2:154).<sup>552</sup> Abū Maṣṣūr al-Baḡhdādī (d. 429/1037) asserts that the accomplished Ash‘arī theologians (*al-mutakallimūn al-muḥaqqiqūn min aṣḥābinā*) maintain that the Prophet is alive after his death; he rejoices in Muslims’ obedience and is saddened by their disobedience, while the blessings sent by Muslims reach him. Moreover, prophets’ bodies do not decay, and the earth does not consume them to any degree. Indeed, Moses died in his time, yet the Prophet reported that (during his Ascension) he saw him in his tomb praying as well as in the fourth heaven, in addition to seeing Adam and Abraham. Al-Qurṭubī echoes some of these remarks, while also comparing prophets to angels, who are likewise living yet hidden from human perception, unless God grants the miracle of seeing them.<sup>553</sup>

Some of the sources for these views were likely hadiths al-Suyūṭī adduces. The first states simply that “prophets are alive in their tombs, praying.”<sup>554</sup> The second indicates their eventual departure from their graves: “Prophets are not left in their tombs after forty nights; rather, they pray before God until the trumpet is sounded.”<sup>555</sup> The third asserts that prophets spend no more than forty days in their tombs,<sup>556</sup> while another version asserts that they rest no more than half a day there. Finally, two hadiths declare that the Prophet Muḥammad is “too noble” for God to have let him remain in his tomb more than two or three days.<sup>557</sup>

<sup>552</sup> Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī, *Dalā’il al-nubuwwa wa-ma’rifat aḥwāl Ṣāḥib al-Sharī’a*, ed. ‘Abd al-Mu’īṭ Qal‘ajī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1988), 2:388.

<sup>553</sup> al-Suyūṭī, *al-Ḥāwī lil-fatāwī*, 2:250. For al-Qurṭubī’s view, see also Abū l-‘Abbās Aḥmad b. ‘Umar b. Ibrāhīm al-Qurṭubī, *al-Muḥim limā ashkala min talkhīṣ Muslim*, ed. Muḥyī l-Dīn Mastū et al., (Damascus: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1996), 6:234.

<sup>554</sup> الأنبياء أحياء في قبورهم يصلون

Ibn Ya‘lā, *Musnad Abī Ya‘lā*, 6:147 (no. 3425); Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī, *Ḥayāt al-anbiyā’ ṣalawāt Allāh ‘alayhim ba’da wafātihim*, ed. Aḥmad b. ‘Atīyya al-Ghāmīdī (Medina: Maktabat al-‘Ulūm wa-l-Ḥikam, 1993), 69-74.

<sup>555</sup> إن الأنبياء لا يتركون في قبورهم بعد أربعين ليلة ولكنهم يصلون بين يدي الله حتى ينفخ الصور  
al-Bayhaqī, *Ḥayāt al-anbiyā’*, 75.

<sup>556</sup> al-Bayhaqī, *Ḥayāt al-anbiyā’*, 76.

<sup>557</sup> al-Suyūṭī, *al-Ḥāwī lil-fatāwī*, 2:250-51.



These claims are corroborated by two visions of prophets after they died on the part of Prophet Muḥammad. The first, referenced above, occurred during his Ascension, when he saw Moses “near a red dune, standing and praying in his tomb.”<sup>558</sup> Al-Suyūṭī points out that this hadith clearly establishes that Moses is alive, since the Prophet said that he was standing and performing ritual prayer (*ṣalāt*). Moreover, it proves that his body is still living for two reasons. First, standing and ritual prayer apply to the body, not to the spirit. Second, Muḥammad was located in the grave, which would not have been specified if the Prophet was describing the spirit, since it is not claimed that prophets’ spirits are confined to their tombs while the spirits and bodies of martyrs and believers are in paradise.<sup>559</sup>

The other vision occurred during one of the Prophet’s voyages:

We travelled with the Messenger of God between Mecca and Medina. [When] we passed by a valley, he asked, “What valley is this?” They responded, “Al-Azraq Valley.” He said, “[It is] as if I see Moses blocking his ears with his fingers, supplicating to God with the *talbiyya*, and passing this valley.” Then we travelled until we came to a narrow pass. He said, “[It is] as if I see Jonah on a red she-camel, wearing a wool jubbah, and passing by this valley doing the *talbiyya*.<sup>560</sup>

In this case, al-Suyūṭī, offering no comments, feels no need to emphasize that the Prophet witnessed the real, physical bodies of Moses and Jonah.

However convincing one may find al-Suyūṭī’s evidence, the second vision raises another, more legalistic problem. How can prophets perform the hajj after having died and resided in the afterlife, where acts of religious merit can no longer be carried out? To address this dilemma, al-Suyūṭī builds on al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s comments on martyrs. Alluding to Q 3:169,<sup>561</sup> al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ

<sup>558</sup> أتيت على موسى ليلة أسري بي عند الكئيب الأحمر وهو قائم يصلي في قبره

Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 1115 (no. 2375).

<sup>559</sup> al-Suyūṭī, *al-Hāwī lil-fatāwī*, 2:251.

<sup>560</sup> كنا مع رسول الله ﷺ بين مكة والمدينة فمررنا بواد فقال أي واد هذا قالوا وادي الأزرق قال كأي أنظر إلى موسى ﷺ واضعاً إصبعيه في أذنيه له جوار إلى الله بالتلبية ماراً بهذا الوادي قال ثم سرنا حتى أتينا على ثنية قال كأي أنظر إلى يونس على ناقة حمراء عليه جبة صوف ماراً بهذا الوادي ملبياً

al-Suyūṭī, *al-Hāwī lil-fatāwī*, 2:251. Cf. Ibn Mājah, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, 965 (no. 2891).

<sup>561</sup> “Do not think of those who have been killed in the way of God as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision.”

points out that martyrs are alive with their Lord and sustained; thus, it is likely that they perform the hajj, pray, and draw near to God by whatever means they can. Indeed, they will occupy the afterlife as well as this world until it reaches its term and the period of recompense replaces that of action. Al-Suyūṭī remarks that if al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ asserts that martyrs perform the hajj with their bodies and separate from their tombs, then a prophet’s separation from his tomb cannot be denied.<sup>562</sup> When a prophet performs the hajj and prays, his body is in heaven and not buried in the grave.<sup>563</sup> (Al-Suyūṭī seems to refer here to his view, discussed below, that one usually sees the Prophet in the heavens [*malakūt*] by virtue of an ecstatic state.)

If the object of a waking vision is truly the Prophet’s body and spirit, it seems that he could be seen in only one place at a time. Yet, al-Suyūṭī does not find it problematic for numerous people to see him simultaneously in distant parts of the earth. He demonstrates this possibility with three citations indicating that the Prophet may pervade or be diffused throughout a large space. The first reference is to poetry the author of which is unknown:

كالشمس في كبد السماء وضوؤها      يغشى البلاد مشارقاً ومغرباً

Like the sun in the center of the sky and its glow,  
he covers the nations, East and West<sup>564</sup>

The second reference is a story told by a student of Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh:

I performed the hajj. While I was circumambulating [the Ka‘ba], I saw Shaykh Tāj al-Dīn doing the same. I intended to greet him when he finished, but when I came to him, I did not see him. Later, I saw him on Mount ‘Arafat and in other places in the same manner. When I returned to Cairo, I asked about the Shaykh. I was told that he was doing well. I asked, “Did he not travel?”, and they replied, “No.” So I visited the Shaykh and greeted him. He asked me [apparently anticipating my question with his mystical intuition], “Who did you see [on your

<sup>562</sup> That is, he implies, a prophet cannot be deprived of a capacity enjoyed by a martyr, who necessarily ranks lower than him. This conclusion is in fact already explicit in al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s text containing the passage discussed by al-Suyūṭī. See Ibn Mūsā, *Ikmāl al-mu‘lim*, 1:517.

<sup>563</sup> al-Suyūṭī, *al-Hāwī lil-fatāwī*, 2:251.

<sup>564</sup> al-Suyūṭī, *al-Hāwī lil-fatāwī*, 2:252.

journey]?” I said, “O my master, I saw you.” He responded, “O man, a large man fills up the universe. If the Pole is called from [behind] a rock, he responds.”<sup>565</sup>

Al-Suyūṭī comments that if the *qutb* fills up the universe, the Prophet, the leader of the messengers, is all the more capable of doing so.

The third reference is a story involving a certain Abū l-‘Abbās al-Ṭanjī. He is informed by Aḥmad al-Rifā‘ī that his master is a man by the name of ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, presently living in Qinā (Egypt). Al-Ṭanjī recounts:

So I traveled to Qinā and came to see Shaykh ‘Abd al-Raḥīm. He asked me, “Do you truly know the Messenger of God?” I replied, “No.” He said, “Go to Jerusalem.” When I placed my two feet [on the ground], suddenly [I was] in heaven, and the earth, the Throne, and the Footstool were pervaded by the Messenger of God. So I returned to the Shaykh, and he asked me [again], “Do you truly know the Messenger of God?” [This time] I replied, “Yes.” He said, “Now your path is complete. Poles are not Poles, Pegs are not Pegs, and saints are not saints unless [they have true] knowledge of him.”<sup>566</sup>

To summarize al-Suyūṭī’s teaching, we can do no better than quote the author himself:

So, it results from this collection of traditions and hadiths that the Prophet is alive with his body and spirit, and he moves freely and travels wherever he wants on the earth and in the heavenly realms. He is in his form that he had before his death, not at all departing from it. He is concealed from the vision [of others] just as angels are concealed while still being alive with their bodies. When God desires, he lifts the veil from one he wishes to grace with the vision of him, so he sees him in the form that he had [before his death]. There is no hindrance to that and no need to restrict [it] to being a vision of the [Prophet’s] imaginal form.<sup>567</sup>

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<sup>565</sup> حجبت فلما كنت في الطواف رأيت الشيخ تاج الدين في الطواف فنويت أن أسلم عليه إذا فرغ من طوافه فلما فرغ من الطواف جنبت فلم أراه ثم رأيت في عرفة كذلك وفي سائر المشاهد كذلك فلما رجعت إلى القاهرة سألت عن الشيخ فقيل لي طيب فقلت ه سافر قالوا لا فجنبت إلى الشيخ وسلمت عليه فقال لي من رأيت فقلت يا سيدي رأيتك فقال يا فلان الرجل الكبير يملأ الكون لو دعي القطب من حجر لأجاب

al-Suyūṭī, *al-Hāwī lil-fatāwī*, 2:252.

<sup>566</sup> فسافر إلى قنا فدخلت على شيخ عبد الرحيم فقال لي عرفت رسول الله ﷺ قلت لا قال رح إلى بيت المقدس فحين وضعت رجلي وإذا بالسماء والأرض والعرش والكرسي مملوءة من رسول الله ﷺ فرجعت إلى الشيخ فقال لي عرفت رسول الله ﷺ قلت نعم قال الآن كملت طريقك لم تكن الأقطاب أقطاباً والأوتاد أوتاداً والأولياء أولياء إلا بمعرفة ﷺ

al-Suyūṭī, *al-Hāwī lil-fatāwī*, 2:247. Ibn Ḥajar (*Fath al-bārī*, 12:384) mentions a metaphorical interpretation of the Prophet’s body pervading a house in a dream in which it represents the pervasion of goodness (*khayr*) through the house.

<sup>567</sup> فحصل من مجموع هذه النقول والأحاديث أن النبي ﷺ حي بجسده وروحه وأنه يتصرف و يسير حيث شاء في أقطار الأرض وفي الملكوت و هو بهيئته التي كان عليها قبل وفاته لم يتبدل منه شيء و أنه مغيب عن الأبصار كما غيبت الملائكة مع كونهم أحياء بأجسادهم فإذا أراد الله رفع الحجاب عمن أراد إكرامه برويته رآه على هيئته التي هو عليها لا مانع من ذلك و لا داعي إلى التخصيص بروية المثال

al-Suyūṭī, *al-Hāwī lil-fatāwī*, 2:251.

The last sentence of this summary concerns the final aspect of al-Suyūṭī's doctrine that must be addressed here. Despite insisting that one can see the Prophet's physical body, he does acknowledge that, as far as he knows, the stance of experienced mystics (*arbāb al-aḥwāl*) is that the object of a waking vision is the Prophet's imaginal form, not his body and spirit. In this respect, he cites the explanation of al-Ghazālī in a letter to his student Abū Bakr b. al-ʿArabī (d. 543/1148). According to al-Ghazālī, one does not see the Prophet's spirit or person (*shakhs*), but rather an imaginal form that functions as an instrument through which a quality of the Prophet's self is communicated (*ṣāra dhalika l-mithāl āla yata'addi bihā l-ma'nā lladhi fī nafsih*). Sometimes the form corresponds to the Prophet's physical attributes, while at other times it does not; but the Prophet's self is not itself an imaginal form.<sup>568</sup> Al-Ghazālī considers the vision of God in a dream to occur in the same manner. Because His essence transcends (*munazzaha*) form, one acquires knowledge of Him through the medium of a sensible form (*mithāl maḥsūs*) consisting of light or something else.<sup>569</sup>

The idea of al-Ghazālī's correspondent Ibn al-ʿArabī is, however, more appealing to al-Suyūṭī, who describes it as being of "the highest excellence." According to Ibn al-ʿArabī, a vision of the Prophet with the attributes that he is known to have had is a perception of reality (*idrāk ʿalā l-ḥaqīqa*)—which al-Suyūṭī evidently interprets to mean his body and spirit—while a vision of him with other attributes is a perception of an imaginal form. Perhaps influenced by these ideas, al-Suyūṭī concedes that most waking visions of the Prophet occur with the heart. Only at a more advanced level do they occur through eyesight (*baṣar*), and even then they do not involve the kind of ocular vision through which people see one another. Rather, such a waking

<sup>568</sup> *wa-l-āla tāratan takūn ḥaqīqatan wa-tāratan takūn khayāliyyatan wa-l-nafs ghayr al-mithāl al-mutakhayyal.*

<sup>569</sup> al-Suyūṭī, *al-Hāwī lil-fatāwī*, 2:249-50; Abū Hāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Ajwibat al-Ghazālī ʿan asʿilat Ibn al-ʿArabī*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbdū (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2012), 72.

vision is a “spiritual meeting” (*jam ‘iyya ḥāliyya*), an “isthmus-like state” (*ḥāla barzakhiyya*), and “ecstatic affair” (*amr wijdānī*), the reality of which is perceived only by one who experiences it directly.<sup>570</sup> In other words, the waking vision occurs during a temporary ecstatic state (*ḥāl*). Al-Suyūṭī supports this with a story about a morning prayer (*ṣubḥ*) performed in 673/1274-75 in the Great Mosque of Mecca by a certain ‘Abdullāh al-Dalāṣī,<sup>571</sup> who went so far as to declare that it was the only valid prayer he had ever performed in his life. After beginning the prayer, al-Dalāṣī says, he was suddenly “overcome” (*akhadhatni ukhdha*), whereupon he saw the Prophet praying as the imam for the ten early Muslims promised paradise (*al-‘ashara*), and he prayed together with them. Al-Suyūṭī points to al-Dalāṣī’s use of the verb *akhadha*, “to overcome,” as an indication of the kind of state in which this more advanced type of waking vision occurs. Furthermore, he adds, the waking vision of the Prophet’s body and spirit occurs in the heavens (*‘ālam al-malakūt*), not in the material world (*‘ālam al-mulk*); that is, the heavens are the place where one is transported when experiencing such a state.<sup>572</sup>

Al-Suyūṭī’s position is contradictory. On the one hand, he insists on the possibility of seeing the Prophet’s real, physical body. But on the other, he admits that one usually sees his imaginal form and that even a vision of his spirit and body is unlike an ordinary perception through eyesight. Furthermore, while claiming that one sees the Prophet “in the form that he had before his death,” he also suggests that the object of one’s vision is a kind of pervasive presence. Fritz Meier views this discrepancy as intentional, proposing that “the first [stance is] for people who are not really willing to believe that Muhammad has mobility after his death, and the second for others who, on the contrary, would like to hold on to the belief that Muhammad goes

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<sup>570</sup> al-Sha‘rānī (*al-Yawāqūt wa-l-jawāhir*, 1:239) attributes this explanation to a certain Qāsim al-Maghribī.

<sup>571</sup> This may in fact be the Egyptian poet *Abū ‘Abdillāh al-Dalāṣī*, better known by his surname al-Buṣīrī. He was a student of al-Mursī and contributed to the emergence of the Shādhiliyya. See Editors, “al-Buṣīrī,” in *EP*, 12:158-59.

<sup>572</sup> al-Suyūṭī, *al-Ḥāwī lil-fatāwī*, 2:247, 249-50, and 252.

everywhere and can be everywhere at the same time.”<sup>573</sup> Perhaps, this contradiction results from al-Suyūṭī’s aim, as a committed traditionist, to retain the literal sense of the hadiths that he adduced while at the same time providing a more persuasive explanation for his readers.

#### 4.3.2.2.2 Ibn Mughayzil: Seeing the Imaginal Form

In contrast to his teacher, Ibn Mughayzil is inflexible. He insists that the notion of seeing the Prophet’s body is untenable on rational grounds. If such were possible, and someone saw him outside of his tomb, or if two people, one in the East and the other in the West, saw him simultaneously, his body would have had to exit the grave, which is inconceivable, since one body cannot be in two places at the same time. Therefore, the correct view, as affirmed, Ibn Mughayzil says, by all preeminent scholars (*al-muḥaqqiqūn mina l-‘ulamā’*) without exception, is that the Prophet’s spirit manifests in an imaginal form resembling his true form.<sup>574</sup>

To support his view, Ibn Mughayzil cites the same passage of al-Ghazālī’s letter to Ibn al-‘Arabī excerpted in al-Suyūṭī’s treatise. More importantly, he grounds himself on the well-known concept of the “imaginal world” (*‘ālam al-mithāl*) by quoting at length from a lost work by ‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Qūnawī.<sup>575</sup> As this Shāfi‘ī author explains, the imaginal world is intermediate between the physical world, than which it is more subtle, and the spiritual world/world of spirits (*‘ālam al-arwāḥ*), than which it is more compact. To prove the existence of this world, al-Qūnawī explains, Sufis adduce the manifestation of Gabriel to Mary mentioned in Q 19:7: “He appeared (*tamaththala*) to her as a well-proportioned man”. This indicates that one and the same spirit,

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<sup>573</sup> Meier, “A Resurrection of Muḥammad in Suyūṭī,” 532.

<sup>574</sup> *Kawākib*, 26-27. Al-Maghribī is of the same view as Ibn Mughayzil and likely an inspiration. See al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 2:215; al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Yawāqūt wa-l-jawāhir*, 1:239.

<sup>575</sup> Entitled *al-I‘lām bi-ilmām al-arwāḥ ba‘da l-mawt maḥall al-aḥsām*.

such as that of Gabriel, can simultaneously control its original form (*shabḥ aṣlī*) and its imaginal form (*shabḥ mithālī*). The imaginal world also accounts for the location of Gabriel’s true body with wings that fill the entire horizon when he appeared to the Prophet in the form of Dihya (a Companion).<sup>576</sup> Al-Qūnawī states that some scholars, believing that bodies can undergo dissolution and condensation (*al-taḥallul wa-l-takāthuf*), argued that some parts of Gabriel’s body merged with others so that it shrunk to the size of Dihya’s form before expanding again to its previous, large one. Sufis, on the contrary, insist that Gabriel’s large body never changed; rather, God brought forth for him another form, and his spirit controlled both simultaneously.<sup>577</sup>

Just as al-Suyūṭī based his belief in the life of prophets in their tombs on an analogy to that of martyrs, al-Qūnawī (again, as cited by Ibn al-Mughayzil) points out that belief in prophets’ capacity to manifest in multiple forms is premised on the like capacity of angels. That is, after death, the prophets’ spirits occupy the same level of being as angels (*bi-manzilat al-malā’ika*) and are even superior to them; thus, just like angels, their spirits can manifest in various forms.<sup>578</sup> Furthermore, since prophets can resurrect the dead, transform a cane into a snake, cross a great distance (e.g., that between heaven and earth) in an instant, and perform other acts that contradict the customary order of things (*al-khawāriq*), it is not inconceivable that God also granted them the ability to control two or more bodies simultaneously.<sup>579</sup>

The same evidence that al-Suyūṭī presents for his position is interpreted by al-Qūnawī in accordance with the concept of the imaginal world. According to him, prophets make, after

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<sup>576</sup> Specifically, with six hundred wings. See al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 799 (no. 3232).

<sup>577</sup> *Kawākib*, 56. For hadīths about Gabriel’s appearance to the Prophet as Dihya, see al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 893-94 (no. 3634) and 1273 (no. 4980); Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 1147 (no. 2451).

<sup>578</sup> According to Ibn Mughayzil (*Kawākib*, 54), the capacity of saints to manifest in various forms is, in turn, derived from the “prophetic station” (*al-maqām al-nabawī*), that is, from the identical capacity of prophets. Moreover, as Ibn Mughayzil often repeats throughout the *Kawākib* (e.g., p. 26), what is a miracle for a prophet (*mu’jiza*) can be a miracle for a saint (*karāma*) provided that he does not intend for it to be a challenge (as a prophet would to demonstrate the truth of his mission).

<sup>579</sup> *Kawākib*, 55-56.

dying, imaginal pilgrimages and imaginal utterances of the *talbiyya* with their imaginal forms, and it is possible that Moses was (truly) in the sixth heaven during the Prophet's Ascension while appearing in another, imaginal form and praying in his grave.<sup>580</sup> Ibn Mughayzil, however, diverges from al-Qūnawī on this point. He instead agrees with Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's (d. 751/1350) view that the Prophet saw the spirits of other prophets in the heavens in their imaginal forms while they were also alive in their graves and praying. Like Ibn Qayyim, Ibn Mughayzil analogizes the connection of the spirit wherever it is with the (real) body of a person to that of the sun's attributes (i.e., its light or rays) wherever they reach with the body of the sun itself.<sup>581</sup>

Ibn Mughayzil also supports his position with the perspective of Badr al-Dīn al-Ahdal.<sup>582</sup> Al-Ahdal explains that the vision of the Prophet is "isthmus-like" (*barzakhiyya*). According to al-Qāshānī in his Sufi lexicon, the term "isthmus" (*barzakh*) signifies a barrier between two things and thus is used to signify the imaginal world, which represents a divider between compact bodies and the world of pure spirits.<sup>583</sup> Hence, al-Ahdal seems to mean that the vision occurs in the imaginal world. He further claims that the vision is derived from the prophetic station (*al-maqām al-nabawī*) that God graced his saints with to allow them to witness the heavens (*malakūt*). His proof for this is that the Prophet still involved in worldly life while receiving revelation. When a man once asked him, "Does good come with evil?", he was quiet, and it was thought that he was receiving revelation. Then he wiped his forehead and replied, "What I fear

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<sup>580</sup> *Kawākib*, 57.

<sup>581</sup> *Kawākib*, 86 and 378. Al-Qūnawī does not, however, deny a relationship between prophets and their graves. He argues that since it is always recommended to visit their graves, there must exist a constant and special connection between the two. See *Kawākib*, 54-55. For Ibn Qayyim's view, see also Shams al-Dīn Abī 'Abdillāh Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr Ayyūb b. Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *al-Rūḥ*, ed. Muḥammad Farīd (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Tawfiqiyya, 2013), 165-66.

<sup>582</sup> Perhaps the father of Ibn al-Ahdal (d. 855/1451)? On him, see *GAL* S2:238-39; *HAWT* S2:247.

<sup>583</sup> al-Qāshānī, *Mu'jam Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyya*, 63. Cf. Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī's (d. 751/1350) explanation that the imaginal world is an isthmus and dividing boundary between composite material body and immaterial intellectual substance. See Dāwūd b. Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad al-Qayṣarī, *The Horizons of Being: The Metaphysics of Ibn al-'Arabī in the Muqaddimat al-Qayṣarī*, tr. Mukhtar H. Ali (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 147.



most for you is that God does not provide you with the blessings of the earth,” which he explained is the “beauty of the world” (*zahrāt al-dunyā*).<sup>584</sup> Therefore, al-Ahdal concludes, the Prophet was transported from an ordinary state to one that necessitated total absorption and concealment from the world until the revelation finished and the angel left him. Hence, al-Ahdal implies, during a waking vision the saint is likewise transported from an ordinary state in the world and back again once the vision finishes—that is, to the imaginal world and back.<sup>585</sup>

Although Ibn Mughayzil’s viewpoint might be more convincing on rational grounds than the idea of seeing the Prophet’s real, physical body, it still raises the question as to whether the imaginal form that one perceives is in fact the Prophet. To demonstrate that it indeed is Muḥammad, Ibn Mughayzil could have applied the Prophet’s dictum that Satan does not manifest as him in a dream to the waking vision. Instead, he observes that when Gabriel met the Prophet in the form of Diḥya, the Prophet would say that Gabriel came to and spoke with him, or even that Gabriel came to him in the form of Diḥya.<sup>586</sup> Not only is this proof more explicit than an analogy to the dream vision would be; it also avoids raising the difficulty of determining whether the waking individual truly saw the Prophet when he appears in an unusual form, since in this case, Ibn Mughayzil implies, one simply knows that it is him.

#### 4.3.2.3 Eligibility

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<sup>584</sup> إن أكثر ما أخاف عليكم ما يخرج الله لكم من بركات الأرض قيل وما بركات الأرض قال زهرة الدنيا *Kawāḳib*, 45; al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 1601 (no. 6427). In Bukhārī’s collection, the man’s question follows the Prophet’s remark about the blessings of the earth.

<sup>585</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 45. See also *Kawāḳib*, 385.

<sup>586</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 59.

Seeing the Prophet after his death, whether with his real, physical body or imaginal form, is an extraordinary experience. It is thus understandable that scholars and Sufis stipulated conditions for its occurrence. In the *Kawākib*, one encounters a wide range of views. On one side of the spectrum lie more general requirements. According to al-Bābartī, two people can meet in a dream or while awake if they share five things: an essence, at least one attribute, at least one state (*ḥāl*), actions, and ranks (*marātib*).<sup>587</sup> Ibn Abī Jamra, as we have seen, posits that while the waking vision is common for the “People of Success,” it is also possible for others, since a violation of the customary order of things occurs for a heretic as a trial and temptation, just as it occurs for the truthful as a miracle and honor.<sup>588</sup> Similarly, Ibn al-‘Arabī argues that since the waking vision is possible, it can be experienced by anyone, whether a Muslim or disbeliever; for the Muslim it is a miracle, while for the disbeliever it is a punishment and warning.<sup>589</sup>

Most authors cited in the *Kawākib* agree that some measure of spiritual quality and exercise is necessary before one can meet the Prophet while awake. This includes Ibn Mughayzil, who rejects Ibn al-‘Arabī’s idea. He argues that while it is rationally conceivable for anyone to have a waking vision of the Prophet, it in fact occurs only for saints and the pious as their miracle. For it is not necessary that something rationally conceivable happens to every individual, even if it is a common event.<sup>590</sup> Ibn Mughayzil elaborates his perspective in commenting on the opinion, which he does not attribute, that seeing a deceased individual is the result of a highly purified heart, “the manifestation of [divine] lights” (*zuhūr al-anwār*), and abundant divine assistance through knowledge transmitted directly from God (*‘ilm ladunī*). According to Ibn Mughayzil, one is granted such a vision to strengthen his certainty about God’s

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<sup>587</sup> *Kawākib*, 394.

<sup>588</sup> al-‘Asqalānī, *Fath al-bārī*, 12:385.

<sup>589</sup> *Kawākib*, 40.

<sup>590</sup> *Kawākib*, 40.

power to breach the customary order of things (*kharq al-‘ādāt*), his opinion about the saints or his master, or his belief in his own sainthood and the fact that he is well guided by his Lord (‘*alā bayyina min rabbih*).<sup>591</sup>

Abū l-Su‘ūd al-Yādhīyīnī, while speaking of entrance into the Prophet’s presence (*ḥaḍrat al-nabī*) rather than a vision of or meeting with him,<sup>592</sup> also links this experience to sainthood:

The presence of the Prophet is in a white land on the earth; al-Shāfi‘ī is there. When you enter its environs, [you will notice that] its extent is equal to that of the land on which it exists and [that] it has stairs. When God wants to appoint a saint, he dispatches angels to follow behind him wherever he is. They come to the presence of the Prophet, Poles, veracious, and pious, and they send him [the new saint] forth to the noble Muḥammadan presence. The decree of sainthood is written for him, and he is compelled by it in accordance with the degree to which his devotees follow him. When this procedure is finished, the angels call out, “O saint, Poles, martyrs, and pious!”<sup>593</sup>

Among the authors cited in the *Kawāḳib* who emphasize the necessity of spiritual exercise, ‘Abd al-Salām al-Maqdisī (d. 678/1279) contends that when the animal faculties of the soul (*al-quwwa al-nafsāniyya*) weaken, and thus the spirit becomes pure, and the soul is cleansed through spiritual exercises, one witnesses in a waking state what another witnesses only in a dream while his senses are inactive.<sup>594</sup>

Al-Ghazālī offers a lucid account of the importance of spiritual training to experience the waking vision along with its roots in the Quran:

Think not that the window of the heart does not open to the heavens. Indeed, if a man trains himself spiritually; purifies his heart of anger, desire, and vile qualities; empties his heart of desire for this world; sits in an isolated place; closes

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<sup>591</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 388-89.

<sup>592</sup> Immediately prior to this description, however, an account of al-Yādhīyīnī’s time in the Prophet’s presence is narrated in which he does encounter him, thus suggesting a link between the presence and a vision. See *Kawāḳib*, 390.

<sup>593</sup> حضرت النبي ﷺ في أرض بيضاء صفة فيه الإمام الشافعي رضي الله عنه في برا وإذا دخلت جواها فسعتنهما قدر الأرض التي هي فيها ولها درج فإذا أراد الله أن يولي ولياً بعث وراءه ملائكة حيث كان فيأتون إلى حضرت النبي ﷺ والأقطاب والصدّيقين والأولياء والصالحين فيقدموه والملائكة إلى الحضرة الشريفة المحمدية ﷺ فيكتب له منشور الولاية و يدفع له بقدر الإتياع الذي يتبعونه فعند فراغ التوقيع له تنادي الملائكة يا ولي والأقطاب والشهداء والصالحين

*Kawāḳib*, 391.

<sup>594</sup> *Kawāḳib*, 384; al-Maqdisī, *Ḥall al-rumūz*, 169.

his eyes; suspends [the activity of] his senses; establishes a connection between his heart and the heavens, constantly saying, “God! God!”—with the heart, not with the tongue—until he becomes of no use to himself and to the entire world, except to God—then, even while he is awake, the [heart’s] window opens to him so that what people see in a dream he sees while awake. The angels’ spirits appear to him in sensible forms, and he sees all the prophets, benefitting and receiving assistance from them [...] The beginning of all of this is striving. God says, “Remember the name of your Lord and devote yourself to Him completely” (Q 73:8); that is, cleanse [yourself] of everything, withdraw from everything, surrender your entire self to Him, and do not busy yourself with managing [your] worldly life, for God will sufficiently provide you with it: “Lord of the East and the West; there is no God but He, so take Him as Manager of [your] affairs” (Q 73:9).<sup>595</sup>

For al-Ghazālī, total devotion to God and utter reliance on Him are key. This is also true for al-Maghribī, though he is more radical. Not only, in his view, must one do his utmost to prepare himself spiritually (*al-mubālāgha fī l-isti‘dād*) to experience the waking vision; he must also traverse “200,000 stations, 74,000 [further] stations, and 999 [final] stations.” Essentially, one draws near to God until achieving a certain union with Him, as shown by al-Maghribī’s citation of a famous hadith *qudsī*:

A servant draws near to Me with supererogatory prayers until I love him. When I love him, I become his hearing through which he hears; his vision through which he sees; his hand with which he strikes; and his leg with which he walks. If he asks me [for something], I give it; if he asks Me for protection, I protect him. I do not hesitate about anything I do to the extent that I hesitate about [taking] the soul of My faithful servant who hates death and whom I hate to hurt.<sup>596</sup>

لا تظن أن روزنة القلب لا تنفتح للملكوت بل لو أن رجلاً راض نفسه و تخلص قلبه من الغضب و الشهوة و الأخلاق الرديئة و يخرج من قلبه مراده<sup>595</sup> لهذا العالم و يجلس في موضع خال و يغمض عينيه و يعطل حواسه و يعطي لقلبه المناسبة لعالم الملكوت يقول على الدوام الله بالقلب لا باللسان إلى أن يصير من نفسه و من جميع العالم بلا خبر من شيء إلا من الله فإذا صار كذلك و إن كان مستيقظاً انفتحت له الروزنة و ما يراه الخلق في النوم يراه هو في اليقظة و أرواح الملائكة تظهر له في صورة حسبية و يرى الأنبياء كلهم و يأخذ عنهم الفوائد و يحصل له منهم المدد [...] و بداية هذا كله المجاهدة قال الله تعالى (و اذكر اسم ربك و تبتل إليه تبتيلاً) يعني تنظف من كل شيء و انقطع عن كل شيء و اعط كليتك له و لا تشتغل بتدبير الدنيا فإنه سبحانه و تعالى يكفيك مؤنتتها (رب المشرق و المغرب لا إله إلا هو فاتخذة و كياً)

*Kawākib*, 39-40. This passage is from al-Ghazālī’s originally Persian work *Kimyā’ al-sa’āda*, but the language of this passage in the modern Arabic editions is considerably different from that in the *Kawākib*. See Abū Hāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Kimyā’ al-sa’āda*, in *Jawāhir al-ghawālī min rasā’il ilā l-Imām Hujjat al-Islām al-Ghazālī*, ed. Muhyī l-Dīn Ṣabrī al-Kurdī (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Sa’āda, 1934), 15-16; Abū Hāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Kimyā’ al-sa’āda*, ed. Abū Sahl Najāḥ ‘Iwaḍ Ṣiyām (Cairo: Dār al-Muqaṭṭam, 2010), 37-39.

وما يزال عبيدي يتقرب إلي بالنوافل حتى أحبه فإذا أحببته كنت سمعه الذي يسمع به وبصره الذي يبصر به ويده التي يبطش بها و رجله التي يمشي<sup>596</sup> بها و إن سألني لأعطينه و لئن استعاد بي لأعيذنه و ما ترددت عن شيء أنا فاعله ترددي عن نفس المؤمن يكره الموت و أنا أكره مساءته al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 1617 (no. 6502).

Al-Maghribī states that once this intimate relationship with the divine is established, the state of the sleeper becomes the waking state of the saint, who begins to witness hidden divine realities either at most times or, for those who are completely prepared, constantly. In other words, one’s inner vision radiates into or manifests in one’s ocular vision (*anna l-mar’ī bi-‘ayn al-baṣar innamā huwa li-ishrāq al-baṣīra ‘alayhī*), as expressed in this (unattributed) verse:

أبعيني أراك أم بفؤادي كل ما في الفؤاد للعين بادي

Is it with my eye or my heart that I see you?  
Everything that is in the heart appears to the eye<sup>597</sup>

Al-Maghribī also draws a connection between the waking vision and the Sufi station of “the annihilation of self-annihilation” (*fanā’ al-fanā*). Whereas mere “self-annihilation” (*fanā’*) consists of the elimination of human qualities and adoption of divine qualities, the annihilation of self-annihilation involves the loss of awareness of one’s connection to the divine qualities due to one’s witnessing (*shuhūd*) God. According to al-Maghribī, one may advance from the waking state in which the vision of the Prophet occurs to the station of the annihilation of self-annihilation, thus indicating that, although exalted, the waking vision is not the supreme spiritual achievement.<sup>598</sup>

In the material presented in the *Kawākib*, only Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh explicitly dismisses the condition for prior spiritual training and experience (without extending the vision to unbelievers, like Ibn Abī Jamra and Ibn al-‘Arabī). He contends that sometimes God attracts (*yajdhib*) a person to Him. In that case, instead of granting him the blessing of a teacher, he meets with the Prophet and learns from him, being well content with this blessing. In fact, reports Ibn ‘Aṭā’

<sup>597</sup> *Kawākib*, 384-85; al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 2:215; al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Yawāqīt*, 239.

<sup>598</sup> *Kawākib*, 385. This recalls the view of Ibn al-Ḥājj’s master Muḥammad (noted above) that the waking vision results from a spiritual death, having claimed that each saint dies seventy times per day.

Allāh, Makīn al-Dīn al-Asmar (d. 692/1293) claimed to have received instruction *only* from the Prophet, while implying the same case for ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Qināwī (d. 592/1196).<sup>599</sup>

Based on Ibn Mughayzil’s statements about eligibility for attaining the waking vision, he seems to prefer, like most authors, effort over grace. Perhaps, he hoped to deter excessive claims to the experience, thereby ensuring the integrity and rigour of the Sufi way while appealing to exoteric brethren who might have qualms about the vision and its consistency with the Law.

#### 4.3.2.4 Legal Implications

We have seen that scholars deliberated whether one should accept legal rulings received from the Prophet in a dream. This issue as concerns the waking vision is hardly discussed in the *Kawākib*. Ibn Mughayzil relates only the view of Ibn ‘Arabī that a Sufi might learn about the soundness of a hadith that scholars deemed weak or invalid directly from the Prophet.<sup>600</sup> This gap may seem surprising in view of Ibn Mughayzil’s goal of uniting Sufism and the traditional sciences. It appears that, as the stories of waking visions narrated above suggest, it was uncommon for the Prophet to pronounce legal judgments in that type of vision, and thus scholars, even if they believed the Prophet could be seen while awake, had not produced opinions about the matter that Ibn Mughayzil could discuss.

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<sup>599</sup> *Kawākib*, 394-95. The published edition of the *Laṭā’if al-minan* states that one “unifies” (*yajma ‘shamluhu*) rather than “meets” (*yajtami*) with the Prophet. See Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, *Laṭā’if al-minan*, 88; Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, *The Subtle Blessings*, 114-15.

<sup>600</sup> Ibn ‘Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, 1:150-51 and 3:70. According to Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, Ibn ‘Arabī was capable of meeting with the spirit of any prophet or past saint he wished to. This encounter occurred in one of three ways: 1) God caused the person’s spiritual substance (*rūḥāniyya*) to descend into this world, and Ibn ‘Arabī perceived him embodied in an imaginal form resembling the sensible form that he possessed during his life on earth; 2) God made him present in Ibn ‘Arabī’s dream; or 3) Ibn ‘Arabī cast off his own form (*haykal*). See Yūsuf b. Ismā‘īl al-Nabhānī, *Jāmi‘ karamāt al-awliyā’*, ed. Ibrāhīm ‘Aṭwa ‘Awaḍ (Porbandar, India: Markaz Ahl Sunna Barakāt Riḍā, 2001), 201.

A more prominent legalistic question in the *Kawāḳib* is whether the waking vision makes the beholder a Companion of the Prophet. For Muslim scholars, seeing the Prophet was indeed a key criterion for earning this title. For example, al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870) defines a Companion as a Muslim who accompanied the Prophet or saw him;<sup>601</sup> Ibn Ḥanbal as a person who accompanied the Prophet for a year, month, day, or hour, or someone who saw him;<sup>602</sup> and Ibn Ḥajar as someone who met the Prophet while believing in him and died a Muslim.<sup>603</sup>

Some Sufis seem to have suggested that waking encounters with the Prophet do render one a Companion. For example, Ibn ‘Arabī remarks that those who meet the Prophet while awake “will be gathered with him like the Companions, in the most noble of places and the most sublime of states.”<sup>604</sup> In his *Bughyat al-sālik*, Andalusian Sufi Abū ‘Abdillāh al-Sāhilī (d. 754/1353) records a story in which a certain Abū ‘Imrān rather smugly equates his fellow mystics with the Companions. After perceiving an exceedingly wonderful odour of musk resulting from the invocation of God’s blessing upon the Prophet, he says, “Did Muḥammad’s Companions think that they achieved this and we did not? By God, if life returned to them and they gazed upon us, they would know that after them were created men who enjoy with the Prophet while dreaming and awake.”<sup>605</sup> Many, however, rejected the idea altogether. This includes Ibn Mughayzil’s teachers al-Maghribī and al-Suyūṭī. In accordance with his belief that

<sup>601</sup> al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 897.

<sup>602</sup> ‘Abd al-Qādir b. Badrān al-Dimashqī, *al-Madkhal ilā madhhab imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal*, ed. ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risāla, 1981), 83.

<sup>603</sup> Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Aḥmad b. Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *al-Iṣāba fī tamayīz al-ṣaḥāba*, ed. ‘Ādil Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Mawjūd and ‘Alī Muḥammad Mu‘awwid (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1995), 1:158. Some scholars, however, were more stringent. One view was that a person must have accompanied the Prophet for a long period of time, memorized one of his statements, fought in a war with him, or died as a martyr before his eyes. See al-‘Asqalānī, *al-Iṣāba*, 1:159.

<sup>604</sup> Denis Gril, “Hadith in the work of Ibn ‘Arabī,” The Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi Society, accessed October 18, 2022, <https://ibnarabisociety.org/ahadith-in-the-work-of-ibn-arabi-denis-gril/>.

<sup>605</sup> أیظن أصحاب محمد ﷺ أنهم فازوا به دوننا فوالله لو ردت لهم الحياة ونظروا إلینا لعلموا أنهم خلقوا بعدهم رجال تتعموا بالرسول ﷺ مناماً ویقظة Aḥmad b. ‘Ajība, *al-Lawāqih al-qudsiyya fī sharḥ al-Wazīfa al-zarrūqiyya*, in *al-Jawāhir al-‘ajība min ta’līf sayyidī Aḥmad b. ‘Ajība*, ed. ‘Abd al-Salām al-‘Imrānī al-Khālīdī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2004), 102.

one sees only the Prophet's imaginal form, al-Maghribī declares that someone who claims to have seen the Prophet in the manner that the Companions saw him is a liar.<sup>606</sup> Similarly, al-Suyūfī asserts that a vision of the Prophet's imaginal form does not render one a Companion. As for seeing his essence as body and spirit, it makes one a Companion only if the vision occurs in the material world, while (after his death) this vision takes place in the heavens. As evidence for this claim, al-Suyūfī refers to hadiths stating that even though all Muslims appeared before the Prophet so that he saw them and they saw him, not all were designated Companions, because the vision happened in the heavens.<sup>607</sup>

While Ibn Mughayzil does not recount affirmations of Companionship or the denials of his teachers, he notes the rejection of Ibn Ḥajar. Despite his rather broad definition of a Companion, Ibn Ḥajar insists that it is impossible for companionship (*ṣuḥba*) with the Prophet to last until the Day of Resurrection.<sup>608</sup> Ibn Mughayzil himself denies Companionship by defining a Companion as one who met the Prophet and believed in him during his mission and died as a Muslim.<sup>609</sup> In this way, he implies that however remarkable the waking vision may be, and however much it signals the high spiritual standing of its beholder, it does not confer the prestige traditionally attributed to the early Muslims. Accordingly, he once again upholds the Law, represented here in the form of a traditional belief about and attitude toward the Companions.

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<sup>606</sup> al-Sha' rānī, *al-Yawāqīt*, 239.

<sup>607</sup> al-Suyūfī, *al-Ḥāwī lil-fatāwī*, 2:252.

<sup>608</sup> *Kawākib*, 43.

<sup>609</sup> *Kawākib*, 43-44.



#### 4.4 The Waking Vision after Ibn Mughayzil

Ibn Mughayzil's extensive discussion of the waking vision of the Prophet reveals the significance that the experience had acquired by his time. The well-established discourse reflected in his text, the potential reference to the waking vision in a hadith, and continuous reports of seeing the Prophet ensured that hadith commentators, Sufis, and other scholars continued to discuss the vision long after the *Kawākib* was composed. A case in point is the Palestinian Sufi Ismā'īl Yūsuf al-Nabhānī (d. 1932), who devoted over fifty-five pages of his treatise about praying for the Prophet to exploring the waking vision.<sup>610</sup> While it is beyond our scope to investigate this literature, my aim in this final section is to better our understanding of the place of Ibn Mughayzil's project in the history of the discourse on the waking vision by outlining the development of two features that shaped (or continued to shape) the vision in subsequent centuries: ritualization, whereby formulae or other means are employed to invoke a vision; and increased importance as a source of spiritual authority, represented especially by the formation of Sufi orders after a founder's vision.

Ritualization of the vision is detectable prior to the composition of the *Kawākib*, though it is essentially absent from the text. While Ibn Mughayzil mentions that Ibn bt. al-Maylaq received part of his formal Shādhilī initiation from the Prophet directly, he does not specify whether he both heard and saw the Prophet or that he induced the encounter with some act.<sup>611</sup> The earliest explicit reference to this aspect that I have located is in the *Futūḥāt*. Ibn 'Arabī speaks of someone who patiently applies himself to what God prescribed for him through the Prophet. He explains that God will assuredly cause the Prophet to appear to this person in a vision (*mubashshara yarāhā*) or an unveiling (*kashf*) of the good things (*khayr*) that God has stored up

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<sup>610</sup> Ismā'īl Yūsuf al-Nabhānī, *Sa 'adat al-dārayn fī l-ṣalāt 'alā sayyid al-kawnayn* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), 409-65.

<sup>611</sup> *Kawākib*, 236.

for him. The person must send many blessings for the Prophet, thereby controlling his carnal soul (*nafs*) and patiently persisting until the Prophet manifests to him. According to Ibn ‘Arabī, everything that arises for this person is true, infallible knowledge, for it is all transmitted through the Prophet.<sup>612</sup> However, he intimates that this practice was not common in confessing that the only person he ever met who employed it was a large-bodied blacksmith in Seville, who was known for constantly reciting, “O God, bless Muḥammad,” pausing only to establish a contract with a client.<sup>613</sup>

Roughly two centuries later, the Andalusian Sufi Abū ‘Abdillāh al-Sāḥilī (d. 754/1353) specified four ways in which the Prophet’s form may be imprinted in one’s soul or mind (*nafs*) that correspond to the degree of the mystic’s spiritual attainments (*bi-ḥasab mashāribihim wa-adhwāqihim fī l-ṣidq wa-l-ḥudūr*). He seems to be elaborating the view of a certain Ibn Farḥūn al-Qurṭubī, reported by Ibn ‘Ajība (d. 1223-24/1809) immediately prior to al-Sāḥilī’s idea, that imprinting of the Prophet’s form in one’s mind is the forty-first fruit of invoking God’s blessing upon him. First, according to al-Sāḥilī, the Prophet’s form becomes established only after contemplation, cautiousness (*tathabbut*), righteous deeds, and reflection; the person is still obstructed by the carnal soul (*nafs*) and thus rarely sees the Prophet in a dream. Second, the Prophet’s form becomes established in his mind (*nafs*) during his remembrance (*dhikr*) of him, especially during periods of seclusion (*khalawāt*) when reflection gives rise to the essence (*ma‘nā*) of purification; when this essence subsides, the Prophet’s form vanishes. This person sees the Prophet in a dream in his entire form. Third, whether awake or asleep, the person closes his eyes and sees the Prophet with the eye of his inner vision (*‘ayn baṣīratihi*); he is among the “people of utmost degrees whose hearts are satisfied with remembrance of God to such an extent

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<sup>612</sup> Ibn ‘Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, 4:184.

<sup>613</sup> Ibn ‘Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, 4:184.

that their souls ascend to the paradises of nearness and succeed in [attaining] proximity to those whom God has blessed among the prophets, veracious, martyrs, and pious.”<sup>614</sup> Lastly, the fourth is a person who sees the Prophet directly in the sensible world with the two eyes of his head, especially during *dhikr*. For when spirits establish a strong connection with one another through prayer (*ṣalāt*) for the Prophet, his spirit assumes the form of his pure body so that the reciter of the litany sees him. Sometimes his vision occurs with his physical eyes while at others it occurs through an inner perception (*idrāk bi-l-bāṭin*), depending on the strength of the connection of the spirits; the inner vision, while inferior, is stronger than the ocular vision.<sup>615</sup>

Moving to Cairo, Abū l-Mawāhib al-Tūnisī advised one who wants to see the Prophet simply to increase his remembrance of him while loving the saints,<sup>616</sup> while al-Sha‘rānī depicts a more formal, elaborate, and even corporate exercise. According to al-Sha‘rānī’s master Muḥammad al-Shināwī,<sup>617</sup> a group in Yemen would establish a direct initiatory link (*sanad bi-talqīn*) to the Prophet by sending him blessings and salutations until they were able to meet and talk with him. The novice who achieves this in only a few days, he says, no longer requires a master, and his meeting with the Prophet is considered a sign of his sincerity, while a novice’s failure to meet the Prophet demonstrates that he is worthless (*baṭṭāl*). One successful novice was Aḥmad al-Zawāwī (d. 923/1517-18), who recited 50,000 times each day, “O God, bless and greet our master Muḥammad, the illiterate Prophet, and his family and companions.”<sup>618</sup> Al-Zawāwī

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أهل النهايات الذين اطمأنت قلوبهم بذكر الله حتى رقت نفوسهم إلى فرادس التقريب وظفروا بمجاورة الذين أنعم الله عليهم من النبيين والصدّيقين و الشهداء و الصالحين

Ibn ‘Ajība, *al-Lawāqih al-qudsiyya*, 100.

<sup>615</sup> Ibn ‘Ajība, *al-Lawāqih al-qudsiyya*, 100-1.

<sup>616</sup> al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 2:152. Abū l-Mawāhib is the earliest Sufī cited by Meier in his article on the use of the *taṣliya* to invoke a vision. Meier notes that “we do not know the beginnings of this intentional exercise.” See Meier, “Die *taṣliya* als mittel,” 410-15.

<sup>617</sup> On him, a popular Sufī master, see Winter, *Studies*, 46.

<sup>618</sup> In *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* (2:257), al-Sha‘rānī gives the number of 40,000 recitations in addition to 20,000 acts of glorifying God (*tasbīḥa*) each day. See the same passage for his brief biography of al-Zawāwī.

informed al-Sha‘rānī that the method of his group was to invoke abundant blessings on the Prophet until he sat with them while they were awake. They accompanied him like the Companions, asked him about worldly matters and hadiths that hadith scholars (lit. *al-ḥuffāz*) had deemed weak, and acted in accordance with what he said. If these things did not occur, al-Zawāwī said, it was due to not having sufficiently invoked blessings upon the Prophet.<sup>619</sup> Other successful practitioners, according to al-Sha‘rānī, included al-Suyūṭī and Nūr al-Dīn al-Shinwānī. The latter held a gathering to pray for the Prophet (to invoke his appearance, evidently) in al-Azhar Mosque. Al-Sha‘rānī says that he learned this exercise with al-Shinwānī and attributes to him the prescription that the practitioner must eat lawful food and not be occupied with anything except what the law permits.<sup>620</sup>

These sources specify praying for and remembering the Prophet in addition to legal scrupulosity as means to achieve a waking vision. Two twelfth/eighteenth-century figures place even greater stress on devotion to the Prophet and his customs. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān (d. 1189/1775), a Medinan Khalwatī Sufī who founded his own branch of the order (the Khalwatiyya-Sammāniyya),<sup>621</sup> conceives “self-annihilation” (*fanā*) and “subsistence” (*baqā*) in the Prophet as the first step to achieving a waking vision of him. He explains that these stations

<sup>619</sup> ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha‘rānī, *Lawāqih al-anwār al-qudsiyya fī bayān al-‘uhūd al-Muḥammadiyya*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Salām Ibrāhīm (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2005), 224; Ibn ‘Ajība, *al-Lawāqih al-qudsiyya*, 101. Although it is not clear whether he was related to Aḥmad al-Zawāwī, it is worth noting that the North African Sufī and jurist Muḥammad al-Zawāwī (d. 882/1477) recorded his 109 dream meetings with the Prophet in a diary, and he occasionally met the Prophet while awake. See Jonathan G. Katz, *Dreams, Sufism, and Sainthood: The Visionary Career of Muhammad al-Zawāwī* (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

<sup>620</sup> ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Anwār al-qudsiyya fī bayān qawā‘id al-ṣūfiyya*, ed. Lajnat al-Turāth fī l-Dār [The Local Heritage Board] (Beirut: Dār al-Ṣādir, n.d.), 55. Al-Sha‘rānī clarifies that, as one would expect, meeting with the Prophet is not the supreme goal of praying for him. Rather, he explains, it is the shortest route to God’s presence and indeed requisite for the journey there, and thus one who desires to reach it without such prayer is ignorant of proper etiquette with God. Al-Sha‘rānī likens such a person to a farmer who wants to meet with the sultan directly without any intermediary. See al-Sha‘rānī, *Lawāqih al-anwār*, 224; Ibn ‘Ajība, *al-Lawāqih al-qudsiyya*, 101.

<sup>621</sup> On him, see Knut S. Vikør, “Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān,” *EP*. For a more detailed survey of his life and teachings, see Muthalib, “The Mystical Teachings.”

are obtained through love for the Prophet so intense that the devotee feels it in his very spirit, blood, flesh, hair, and skin. At the same time, one visualizes or “makes present” (*istiḥdār*) the Prophet in both his physical form (*ṣūra*) and, at a higher stage, his essence or metaphysical form (*ma‘nā*) as the Light of Muḥammad.<sup>622</sup> According to al-Sammān, this Light emerged from the Reality of Muḥammad and gradually transmuted into the Prophet’s physical form while he was sitting near the minbar of the Prophet’s Mosque in Medina. Thus, when his student Sa‘d al-Dīn al-Qabūlī asked him how to see the Reality of Muḥammad, al-Sammān instructed him to visit the Prophet’s tomb. Upon doing so, al-Qabūlī experienced precisely the same vision as his master and even shook hands with the Prophet.<sup>623</sup>

Muḥammad al-Sanūsī (d. 1276/1859), founder of the Sanūsī order, prescribed an intensive method to secure a waking vision in one of his two definitions of the “Muḥammadan Way” (*al-ṭarīqa al-muḥammadiyya*), which he derived from Abū l-Baqā’ al-‘Ujaymī (d. 1113/1702):

The basis of this path [the Muḥammadan Way] is that the inner being of the one who follows it is absorbed in the vision of Muḥammad’s essence, while he is zealously imitating the Prophet outwardly in word and deed, busying his tongue invoking blessings upon him, and devoting himself to him at all times whether in seclusion or in public until honouring the Prophet comes to dominate his heart and to permeate his inner being to such an extent that he need only hear the Prophet’s name to start trembling and have his heart overwhelmed by beholding him as the imaginal forms of the Prophet emerge before his inner sight. God then showers him with blessings outwardly and inwardly, and his visions of him ever increase—first in his dream, then in a state of half-consciousness, and finally in a waking state, which is a level attained only through mystical experience. There remains no strength for this individual but the Prophet. The one who reaches this level is called a Muḥammadiyyan in a genuine sense, while he who aspires after it is called so only in a figurative sense.<sup>624</sup>

<sup>622</sup> Muthalib, “The Mystical Teachings,” 140-44; Radtke, “Sufism in the 18th Century: An Attempt at a Provisional Appraisal,” *Die Welt des Islams* 33, no. 3 (Nov., 1996): 355.

<sup>623</sup> Muthalib, “The Mystical Teachings,” 130-31 and 132 with n206. Although al-Sammān does not elaborate his own interaction with the Prophet, his hagiographers claimed that the Prophet instructed him to spread esoteric teachings. See Muthalib, “The Mystical Teachings,” 130-31.

<sup>624</sup> إن مبنى هذا الطريق على استغراق باطني صاحبها في شهود ذاته ﷺ عمارة ظاهرة متابعته قولاً و فعلاً و شغل لسانه بالصلاة عليه و عكوفه عليها في غالب أوقاته في خلواته و جلاواته إلى أن يستولي على قلبه و يخامر سره تعظيمه ﷺ بحيث يهتز عند سماع ذكره و يغلب على قلبه مشاهدته و تصير

The vision of the Prophet as a source of spiritual authority leading to the formation of Sufi orders appears to begin later. Admittedly, al-Sha‘rānī described three short chains of transmission linking him to the Prophet:

- 1) Prophet Muḥammad → Ibrāhīm al-Matbūlī (d. ca. 877/1472) → ‘Alī l-Khawāṣṣ → al-Sha‘rānī
- 2) Prophet Muḥammad → ‘Alī l-Khawāṣṣ → al-Sha‘rānī
- 3) Prophet Muḥammad → a number of jinn → al-Sharīf al-Sāwī → Ibrāhīm al-Qayrawānī → al-Sha‘rānī<sup>625</sup>

Al-Sha‘rānī did not, however, claim that new orders began with the figure initiated directly by Muḥammad, let alone that the Prophet authorized them to establish a new brotherhood and provided litanies. The earliest case of this phenomenon that I have come across involves Aḥmad al-Tijānī (d. 1230/1815), founder of the Tijāniyya. According to al-Tijānī’s disciple Ibn al-‘Arabī Barādah (wrote ca. 1212-15/1798-1800), al-Tijānī achieved spiritual illumination (*fath*) in 1196/1781-82 upon reaching the village of Abī Samghūn. After having avoided all human interaction due to his preoccupation with training his lower soul (*nafs*) and refrained from

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تمائله بين عيني بصيرته فيسبح الله عليه نعمه ظاهرة و باطنة فتكثر رؤياه في غالب أحيانه في منامه أولاً ثم في وقائعه في سنة غفلته ثم في حال يقظته وهي درجة لا تترك إلا بالذوق فيستر شده إذ ذاك فيما يهيمه من غالب أمره واقفاً عند أمره و نهيه فلا تبقى لمخلوق عليه منة إلا النبي ﷺ و يسمى صاحب هذه الرتبة محمدياً لذلك حقيقياً و مرید سلوك سبيله مجازياً al-Sanūsī, *Kitāb al-Manhal al-rawī*, 76-77. I have used, with modifications, the complete translation of this passage by Knut S. Vikør, *Sufi and Scholar on the Desert Edge: Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Sanūsī and his Brotherhood* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1995), 233-34; and the partial translation by John O’Kane and Knut S. Vikør as the translators of the article by Bernd Radtke, “Ibrīziana: Themes and Sources of a Seminal Sufi Work,” *Sudanic Africa* 7 (1996): 125-26. In al-Sanūsī’s other definition, the Muḥammadan Way represents a chain of transmission in which the master is initiated by Khidr, who himself was initiated by the Prophet while he was alive. Since, al-Sanūsī argues, the position of Khidr in this respect is analogous to that of the Companions, who were initiated directly by the Prophet, the position of the master is analogous to that of the Successors, who were initiated by the Companions. According to him, this is the highest chain of transmission, though it is rare. See al-Sanūsī, *Kitāb al-Manhal al-rawī*, 76. On al-‘Ujaymī, see *GAL* S2:536-37; *HAWT* S2:557-58. On the Muḥammadan Way, including a number of misconceptions of the notion, see R.S. O’Fahey and Bernd Radtke, “Neo-Sufism Reconsidered,” *Der Islam* 70, no. 1 (1993): 64-71.

<sup>625</sup> For the first two chains, see al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Anwār al-qudsiyya*, 54-55. For the third chain, see ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Minan al-kubrā al-musammā Laṭā’if al-minan wa-l-akhlāq fī wujūb al-tahadduth bi-ni‘mat Allāh ‘alā l-iṭlāq*, ed. Sālim Muṣṭafā al-Badrī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2010), 44. On al-Khawāṣṣ, an illiterate master, see Winter, *Studies*, 46-47. Al-Khawāṣṣ maintained that one cannot even become a saint before meeting the Prophet and Khidr. See Muthalib, “The Mystical Teachings,” 135.

becoming a master, the Prophet appeared to him in a waking vision in which he permitted him to initiate people and provided him with litanies:

The Prophet informed him that he is his teacher and supporter and that nothing would reach him from God except through him. He said, “No master of any order has authority over you. I am your intermediary and your helper for spiritual realization. Renounce everything you have acquired from an order and cling to this path without seclusion or withdrawing from people until you reach the station that you have been promised. You shall be without distress, anguish, or much struggle.”<sup>626</sup>

Barādah confirms that after the Prophet spoke these words, al-Tijānī renounced all orders and recourse to any saint.<sup>627</sup>

Another prominent case is Aḥmad b. Idrīs (d. 1253/1837), founder of the Idrīsiyya. After the death of his master, Abū l-Qāsim al-Wazīr, he met the Prophet and Khidr in bodily form (*ijtimā’an ṣūriyyan*). The Prophet ordered Khidr to teach various litanies to him before instilling in him directly the litanies that he would subsequently record in three prayer books.<sup>628</sup> Similarly, Ismā’īl al-Walī (d. 1268-69/1852), founder of the Ismā’īliyya order in Sudan, claims to have had a litany (*tawassul*) “inscribed” in his heart after meeting the Prophet in a state between waking and sleeping.<sup>629</sup> Although this was the fulfillment of al-Walī’s request for a litany after having been asked to write one rather than a step in the foundation of his order,<sup>630</sup> he also claimed to have received the Prophet’s permission to found the Ismā’īliyya.<sup>631</sup>

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أخبره أنه هو مربيه وكافله وأنه لا يصله شيء من الله إلا على يديه و بواسطته ﷺ و قال له لا منة لمخلوق عليك من أشياخ الطريق فأنا واسطتك و ممدك على التحقيق فاترك عنك جميع ما أخذت من جميع الطريق و قال له الزم هذه الطريقة من غير خلوة و لا اعتزال عن الناس حتى تصل مقامك الذي وعدت به و أنت على حالك من غير ضيق و لا حرج و لا كثرة مجاهدة

‘Alī Ḥarāzam b. al-‘Arabī Barādah, *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī wa-bulūgh al-amānī fī fayd sayyidī Abī l-‘Abbās al-Tijānī*, ed. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1997), 1:40-41.

<sup>627</sup> Barādah, *Jawāhir al-Ma‘ānī*, 1:41. On al-Tijānī’s founding of the order, see also Jamil M. Abun-Nasr, *The Tijaniyya: A Sufi Order in the Modern World* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 19 and 37-38.

<sup>628</sup> Bernd Radtke, R. Seán O’Fahey, and John O’Kane, “Two Sufi Treatises of Aḥmad Ibn Idrīs,” *Oriens* 35 (1996): 161-64.

<sup>629</sup> Bernd Radtke, “Lehrer – Schüler – Enkel: Aḥmad b. Idrīs, Muḥammad ‘Uṭmān al-Mirgānī, Ismā’īl al-Walī,” *Oriens* 33 (1992): 107.

<sup>630</sup> Radtke, “Lehrer – Schüler – Enkel,” 107.

<sup>631</sup> Mahmoud Abdallah Ibrahim, “The History of the Isma’īliyya Tariqa in the Sudan: 1792-1914,” PhD diss., (University of London, 1996), 56. On the prevalence of waking visions of the Prophet for al-Walī and his conception

Apart from the foundation of new orders, the significance of waking visions of the Prophet in later centuries is evident in their contribution to other decisions and movements. As part of his attempt to move beyond the traditional schools of law, Muḥammad Majdhūb (d. 1247/1831), a Sudanese Shādhilī master who later became recognized as the founder of the Majdhūbiyya order,<sup>632</sup> used dreams and waking visions to learn the Prophet’s views on personal matters in particular, though also general issues such as correct burial practice. Because Majdhūb announced the Prophet’s opinions publicly and stressed that they resulted from his dreams or visions, people shared their questions with him to communicate to the Prophet.<sup>633</sup> Ibrāhīm Niasse (d. 1395/1975), a Senegalese Tijānī master and founder of the Ibrāhīmiyya branch of the order, reportedly adopted the practice of *qabḍ*—that is, the placement of the right hand over the left hand in ritual prayer—after having been instructed to do so by the Prophet in a waking vision.<sup>634</sup> Outside of Africa and the Middle East, a kind of waking vision of the Prophet, although very different from what we have thus far observed, played a role in the formation of the Indonesian mystical, Sufi-inspired movement known as Subud. The founder, Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo (d. 1407/1987), was practicing *dhikr* (specifically, “There is no god but God”) when a book suddenly fell into his lap. On the first page was a picture of an Arab man in a long robe and turban accompanied by an Arabic caption that transformed into Dutch and read, “The Prophet Muhammad Rasulu’llah”; the man in the picture smiled and nodded as confirmation of this identification.<sup>635</sup>

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of them, see Bernd Radtke, “Ismā’īl al-Walī: Ein sudanesischer Theosoph des 19. Jahrhunderts,” *Der Islam* 72 (1995): 152-53.

<sup>632</sup> Knut S. Vikør, “Majdhūb, Muḥammad,” *EP*.

<sup>633</sup> Albrecht Hofheinz, “Transcending the Madhhab—in Practice: The Case of the Sudanese Shaykh Muḥammad Majdhūb (1795/6-1831),” *Islamic Law and Society* 10, no. 2 (2003): 244.

<sup>634</sup> Zachary Valentine Wright, “Embodied Knowledge in West African Islam: Continuity and Change in the Gnostic Community of Shaykh Ibrāhīm Niasse,” PhD diss., (Northwestern University, 2010), 264.

<sup>635</sup> Antoon Geels, “Subud: An Indonesian Interpretation of Ṣūfism,” in *Handbook of Islamic Sects and Movements*, ed. Muhammad Afzal Upal and Carole M. Cusack (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 570-71.



To conclude, it is worth observing that opposition to the waking vision has likewise continued since Ibn Mughayzil’s time. While a careful survey of hadith commentaries would likely uncover many rejections,<sup>636</sup> the modernist Rashīd Riḍā (d. 1354/1935), a proponent of the modern critique of Sufism as superstitious and irrational, attempted to refute the waking vision in a four-page fatwa, warning the reader to “beware of the Tijānī order and the enormous superstitions and heresies attributed to its founder,” whose followers have “corrupted the religion and worldly life of Muslims.”<sup>637</sup> More importantly, a substantial refutation was penned by the (Mauritanian-born) Medinan mufti Muḥammad al-Shinqīṭī (d. 1405/1986) in his stinging, book-length attack on the Tijāniyya. Taking aim at al-Tijānī himself, al-Shinqīṭī rehearses earlier arguments against the waking vision, such as Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr’s observation of the absence of this experience among early Muslims, while rejecting al-Tijānī’s claim to be a Companion by insisting that this status is conferred only upon those who met the Prophet during his earthly life.<sup>638</sup>

#### 4.5 Conclusion

Based on the material examined here, the trajectory of the waking vision of the Prophet can be summarized as follows. Reports of the experience begin in the fourth/tenth century and are attributed to prominent mystics such as al-Jīlānī and al-Rifā‘ī along with minor or unknown individuals. The waking vision figures prominently among the Shādhiliyya, including the

<sup>636</sup> For example: Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl al-Amīr al-Ṣan‘ānī, *al-Tanwīr sharḥ al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaghīr*, ed. Muḥamma Ishāq Muḥammad Ibrāhīm (Riyadh: Maktabat Dār al-Islām, 2011), 10:229.

<sup>637</sup> ناهيك بطريقة التجانية وما ينسبونه إلى صاحبها من عظام الخرافات والبدع [...] أن أهل هذا الطريقة و أمثالهم قد أفسدوا دين المسلمين و دنياهم Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Fatāwā al-imām Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munjad and Yūsuf Q. al-Khūrī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Jadīd, 2005), 1:2384-87 (no. 917), here 2387.

<sup>638</sup> Muḥammad al-Mukhtār al-Jakanī al-Shinqīṭī, *Mushtahā al-khārif al-jānī fī radd zalaqāt al-Tijānī al-jānī* (Amman: Dār al-Bashīr, 1993), 91-101; Muthalib, “The Objection to the Claim,” 294-302.

founder himself and especially Abū l-Mawāhib and al-Suyūṭī. Meanwhile, scholars began discussing the waking vision likewise as early as the fourth/tenth century in their commentaries on hadith collections, and Sufis offered opinions in their mystical writings from at least the fifth/eleventh century. It appears that the vision became a contentious issue in late ninth/fifteenth-century Cairo. It is in this context that Ibn Mughayzil responded to a question about the vision with a fatwa, which gave rise to a dispute over whether and how it might occur, while his teachers al-Suyūṭī and al-Sakhāwī wrote brief treatises and al-Qaṣṭallānī addressed the matter in his history of the Prophet.

Invocation of the vision as ritual began as early as the sixth/twelfth century, as attested in Ibn ‘Arabī’s masterpiece. Al-Sha‘rānī signals an important development with his reports of the employment of ritual in groups, while, several centuries later, al-Sammān and al-Sanūsī prescribe zealous devotion to the Prophet, such as strict emulation of his customs and visiting his tomb, as means to encounter him. More noteworthy in this later period, however, is the increased importance of the waking vision as a source of authority, especially in the foundation of such orders as the Tijāniyya, Idrīsiyya, and Ismā‘īliyya, in addition to its role in personal and legal decisions. Meanwhile, theoretical treatment of the vision has continued in the writings of such figures as al-Nabhānī, while opposition is found among scholars such as Rashīd Riḍā and al-Shinqīṭī.

It is true that Ibn Mughayzil often adds little to the stories and opinions that he compiles on the waking vision. He is, however, the first author we know of to treat the topic in a comprehensive manner. He stands at a juncture in which reported experiences of the waking vision, already plentiful as I have shown, had been theorized to a good extent even if not completely. He skillfully brings together this extensive material while mounting a defence in an

atmosphere in which the powerful proposition that one can see the Prophet even while awake faced considerable opposition.

A close reading of the way Ibn Mughayzil selects and juxtaposes his material (while strategically leaving out some that was surely available) tells us that he was engaged in a defence of the waking vision as not only an authentic but also rationally conceivable miracle. How he accomplishes this is, in my view, critical. First, he emphasizes the connection, suggested already by a hadith, between waking and dream visions of the Prophet. This allows him to legitimate what might have been perceived by some as a strange or outlandish experience by associating it with one that is well known and accepted by Muslims, authenticated by a hadith stating that a righteous dream represents one forty-sixth of prophethood as well as many traditions that, as we have seen, guarantee the veracity of an oneiric encounter with the Prophet.<sup>639</sup> However, this move is not sufficient for Ibn Mughayzil to obtain his objective. For while the perception of a deceased individual in a dream is an indisputable, universal phenomenon (regardless of whether one believes the form is truly that person), the same perception while awake requires an ontological explanation. While admitting that one usually sees the Prophet's imaginal form, al-Suyūṭī insisted that the Prophet's physical body can also be the object of one's vision. He based this contention on literal readings of traditions about the post-mortem lives of prophets and a belief in God's power to unveil their earthly presence. Given the controversy surrounding the waking vision in late ninth/fifteenth-century Cairo, al-Suyūṭī's opinion could have compromised Sufis by portraying them as believers in the delusional idea that the physical body of a deceased person can be seen as if he had never died. For this reason, it seems, Ibn Mughayzil is adamant that only the Prophet's imaginal form is perceptible, an arguably more tenable and reasonable

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<sup>639</sup> For the hadith about a righteous dream being a portion of prophethood, see al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 1731 (no. 6989).

position supported by the notion of the “imaginal world” (*‘ālam al-mithāl*), which was important for Sufis by the end of the medieval period.<sup>640</sup> Finally, Ibn Mughayzil increases the appeal of the waking vision to skeptical scholars by detailing the many spiritual conditions stipulated by Sufis, thus implying that it is a profound experience that not everyone is entitled to, and by insisting that the waking vision in no way erases the traditional distinction between the Companions and later Muslims. In sum, Ibn Mughayzil bridges, successfully I think, Reality and Law in his discourse on the waking vision, thus furthering the aim of the *Kawāḳib* as a whole.

It is suitable to conclude with some remarks on the rather spectacular phenomenon of the vision of the Prophet itself. It seems to me that the crucial aspect of seeing the Prophet, whether in a dream or waking state, is that one establishes contact with him after his death. The death of the Prophet was, after all, a traumatic experience for the early Muslim community, leading even to a crisis in leadership and schism. Albeit intermittent and fleeting, visions offer a reprieve from the longing for the most beloved human for all Muslims. Furthermore, visions address or satisfy the craving for certainty (*yaqīn*) that orients Sufi epistemology and is grounded in experience rather than book learning: one may be intimately familiar with the Prophet from collections of hadith and historical texts, but encountering him directly brings that knowledge to a whole new level.

Apart from the ontological dimension, there seems to be a qualitative distinction between dream and waking visions of the Prophet. Whereas the dreamer is unconscious and involuntarily engages in the oneiric events, the waking individual consciously and knowingly interacts with the Prophet, thus enjoying a more concrete and tangible experience in the sensible world. In this way, the waking vision represents the apex of post-mortem contact with Muḥammad, surpassing

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<sup>640</sup> See Fazlur Rahman, “Dreams, Imagination, and *‘ālam al-mithāl*,” *Islamic Studies* 3, no. 2 (1964): 167-180.

both the dream vision and simply kissing or shaking his hand or hearing his speech. At the same time, the stories of waking visions give the impression that they are also, like dreams, sudden, unavoidable encounters: the Prophet offers some sort of initiation, such as to al-Mursī and Abū l-Mawāhib; transmits mystical knowledge and instruction, such as to al-Shādhilī and al-Qurashī; or supplies crucial assistance, such as to al-Jīlānī and al-Suyūfī. In other words, the Prophet is, quite naturally, the star and commanding figure of all visions, and the participant is fortunate to obtain what he can and indeed to even have such a vision.

Finally, the development of techniques to invoke a waking vision is only logical. The Sufi shaykh and the order to which he belongs are legitimized by their links to the Prophet through the initiatory chain (*silsila*). Although Sufis have valued the masters who constitute the intermediary links to the Prophet as sources of extra spiritual blessing,<sup>641</sup> the supreme and essential benefit is proffered by Muḥammad. Thus, the idea that one could meet with him directly would have an immediate appeal to Sufis. The authority and prestige that accompany the vision would have also been attractive to Sufis and, furthermore, could have provoked them to compete for it to such an extent that the legitimacy of orders such as the Sanūsiyya came to rest on encounters with the Prophet.

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<sup>641</sup> Carl Ernst, *Sufism: An Introduction to the Mystical Tradition of Islam* (Boston: Shambhala, 2011), 135.

## Conclusion

This study has explored the life and thought of the Shādhilī Sufi Ibn Mughayzil. In this concluding chapter, I summarize the main findings of the previous chapters and suggest that the *Kawākib* can help us understand and appreciate late Mamlūk Sufi literature.

Chapter 1 explored Ibn Mughayzil's life, education, and place within the Egyptian Shādhiliyya. Ibn Mughayzil was a student of al-Sakhāwī and al-Suyūṭī, a disciple of al-Maghribī, and a resident at the Sa'īd al-Su'adā' *khānqāh*. His link to al-Maghribī was especially significant, since it not only served as the channel through which he acquired his training in the Shādhilī Way but also situated him directly in one of the two Egyptian Shādhilī initiatory lines, thus creating the opportunity for him to pursue the office of the eighth *khalīfa*. However, there is no indication that he was ever recognized as such, and his precise social function is not known. In fact, while most of the leading masters in his Ḥabashī line were charismatic training masters rather than skilled authors like those in the Iskandarian line, Ibn Mughayzil seems to have primarily made a literary contribution to the Shādhilī tradition. Being well connected to the intellectual and Sufi elite of late-medieval Cairo, he was in an ideal position to address the concerns of that place and time.

Chapter 2 examined Ibn Mughayzil's works, including their editions, aims, structure, and major themes, in addition to his perspectives on select movements and figures. He conceived the significance of his *al-Kawākib al-zāhira fī ijtimā' al-awliyā' yaqẓatan bi-Sayyid al-Dunyā wa-l-Ākhira*, the principal text on which this study draws, in grandiose terms as a text that “combines Law and Reality in a way never before seen.” This aim of drawing from both sources is indeed central to the book. Before even specifying its topics and objectives, Ibn Mughayzil extols the virtue of “esoteric” or mystical knowledge and asserts both its superiority to “exoteric” or

rational and transmitted knowledge and their essential harmony. Throughout the *Kawāḳib* as well as his other extant text, *al-Qawl al-‘alī fī tarāduf mu‘jiza bi-karāmat al-walī*, he cites both Sufis and scholarly authorities, while frequently defending the orthodoxy of his fellow mystics such as Ibn ‘Arabī and Ibn al-Fāriḍ. This tendency reflects the drive to synthesize Sufism and the traditional sciences characteristic of the late Mamlūk period. Two other major themes of the *Kawāḳib*, the saints’ miracles and Sufi epistemology, likewise evince the nature and concerns of late Mamlūk Sufism. I conclude that Ibn Mughayzil’s work stands as an ideal introduction to the Sufism of this period, especially when compared to other texts.

Chapter 3, focusing on issues pertaining to God and the world, offered us our first look at the character and style of Ibn Mughayzil’s mystical thought. His defensive posture is perhaps the most prominent aspect of his discussions of these topics. It is most pronounced in his engagement of those subjects that are located in his final apologetic chapter, that which concerns controversial or difficult teachings and statements of Sufis. These include the eternity and creation of the world, in which he defends Sufi claims about its eternity by demonstrating the harmony of those claims with established Sunnī beliefs; the vision of God, in which he accounts for Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s request to see God in this world by suggesting two ways such a vision may be realised; and religious diversity, in which he justifies Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s recognition of the monotheism of idolaters by presenting the idea of an inner and universal monotheism. Ibn Mughayzil’s use of sources is striking for its breadth, shown especially by his references to Anṣārī’s commentators and to Sufis who affirm the distinction between vision and witnessing. He also strikes a balance between mystical and scholarly authorities. This is particularly evident in his citation of al-Ghazālī to buttress a monistic teaching; his appeal to Ibn al-Fāriḍ, a number of hadiths, and al-Subkī to prove the precedence of the Muḥammadan Spirit; and his references

to the Quran, early Muslims, Ḥanafī law, and the Sufis Ibn al-Fāriḍ and al-Qāshānī to support his understanding of worship. This twin aim of defending the Sufis and reserving a place for representatives of both Law and Reality, in addition to the ample material at Ibn Mughayzil's disposal, appears to have sometimes made his positions inconsistent or imprecise. Some examples are his two notions of essential and attributive manifestation, one clearly monistic and the other not; his quoting of the Akbarian poem on the "new creation" alongside *kalām*-style arguments; and his disparate indications that the Muḥammadan Spirit is the first creation, uncreated, or an emanation. Nonetheless, the *Kawāḳib* remains a rich source of Sufi thought on these issues and an engaging account of one author's attempt to work out his perspectives.

Chapter 4 explored the key topic of the *Kawāḳib*, the waking vision of the Prophet Muḥammad. Reports of the experience of the waking vision and its theorization began to surface as early as the fourth/tenth century, leading eventually to a debate over the authenticity of the vision among late ninth/fifteenth-century Cairene scholars and Sufis. Ibn Mughayzil delved into the dispute with a fatwa, followed by his discourse in the *Kawāḳib*. By skillfully bringing together disparate material on the vision, he offered a thorough account of its experiential and conceptual elements. Critically, he defends the vision as a rationally conceivable miracle by linking it to the dream vision of the Prophet, adducing the imaginal world to explain the Prophet's form, detailing views about requirements for obtaining it, and denying Companionship for the vision's beholder. This defense was important because by respecting traditional views and distinctions, it could appeal to scholars, some of whom had been skeptical or even hostile towards the vision. Ibn Mughayzil's work prefigures the increased significance of the waking vision in subsequent centuries as the fruit of ritual and intense devotion as well as a source of spiritual authority.



To conclude this study, let us consider what Ibn Mughayzil and the *Kawāḳib* tell us about scholarship in the late Mamlūk period, which a number of Western and Arab scholars have criticized for a lack of originality. As Éric Geoffroy explains, it is argued that:

From one generation to another, thought ossified, with authors simply following the paths already laid out, as indicated by the countless “supplements” (*ḡayl*) to ancient works. It is “the era of commentaries and supercommentaries” (*‘aṣr al-ṣurūh wa al-ḥawāṣī*) [...] An inverse proportion can thus be established between quantity (the enormous production) and quality (absence of creation, development in thought).<sup>642</sup>

In the same vein, Elizabeth Sartain writes in her study of al-Suyūṭī that:

It is generally true to say that few outstanding works were produced during the late Mamlūk period, apart from some historical and biographical works [...] The usual picture given by literary historians of an age of compilations, encyclopaedic works, commentaries, glosses, extracts, and abridgements appears to be correct in the main.<sup>643</sup>

Some scholars have indeed singled out al-Suyūṭī as a prime example of this decline. Sa‘dī Abū Jīb, for example, argued that his “writings are not innovative nor do they show creative thought; this is only to be expected as that was the style for scholarly writing in his day. His value lies in the fact that he preserved for us earlier writings that were otherwise destroyed by the Mongol invasions and the fall of Spain.”<sup>644</sup>

Certainly, Ibn Mughayzil can be characterized in part as a compiler. He makes ample use of the works of his predecessors and often quotes them at length without comment. Yet, this does not mean that he was uncritical or unoriginal. His discussion of the waking vision in particular, as I have argued, shows his strategic use of material to intervene in a contemporary debate. His treatments of topics such as God’s oneness and the Muḥammadan Spirit likewise reveal the

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<sup>642</sup> Geoffroy, *Le soufisme en Égypte et en Syrie*, 85.

<sup>643</sup> Sartain, *Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī*, 1:131-32. However, Sartain (p. 131) acknowledges that “as yet the literature of this period has not been studied thoroughly, and many works are still in manuscript or have not survived; it is possible that this view of the age will have to be modified later.”

<sup>644</sup> Saleh, “Al-Suyūṭī and His Works,” 81.

creative ways in which he develops his positions. He is to be credited with engaging a mass of rich literature that had accumulated over the centuries, which is no easy task, requiring both broad knowledge and analytical skill. Appreciation of a text like the *Kawākib* may arouse interest in the rich heritage of Sufi writings of the period, many of which are unstudied and even unpublished, with some authors remaining virtually unknown.<sup>645</sup>

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<sup>645</sup> See the survey of Sufi manuscripts in the Egyptian National Library of Gril, "Sources manuscrites," 97-185. See also *GAL* S2:146-54; *HAWT* S2:150-59.

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