

SHAYKH DĀWŪD AL-FĀTĀNĪ'S  
MANHAL AL-ŞĀFĪ:  
AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION\*

By:

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**Abstrak**

Makalah ini mengemukakan terjemahan Inggeris kepada karya Sheikh Daud al-Fatani yang berjudul *Manhal al-Şāfi fi Bayān Ramz Ahl al-Şūfi*, beserta anotasi. Paparan ringkas tentang manuskrip *Manhal al-Şāfi* dan kaedah penterjemahan yang diguna pakai juga turut dikemukakan.

**Introduction: Note on Editing and Rendering**

The process of editing and translating the text of *al-Manhal al-Şāfi* is based on three manuscripts. They were selected for the simple reason that the manuscripts are in good condition and the writing is tidy and legible. In addition, the issue of the authorship of the text is also taken into our consideration for the selection. Hence, the manuscripts used for our edition here will represent the three names which

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were mentioned as the author of the treatise; Shaykh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin ‘Abd al-Mubīn al-Faṭānī, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Faṭānī and Shaykh Dāwūd bin ‘Abd Allāh al-Faṭānī.<sup>1</sup> By this criterion, we hope to see any differences that may occur in the texts. The manuscripts, we refer to are the MI17, MS693 and MS232. The MI17 was selected from the collection of Muzium Islam Malaysia (MIM) or Islamic Museum of Malaysia, while the MS232 and MS693 were selected from the collection of Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia (PNM) or National Library of Malaysia. Photocopies of each of the manuscripts were made available.

The procedure adopted for editing here has been to adhere to the MS232, on the basis of which the other two manuscripts, MI17 and MS693, have been collated and textual differences indicated in the footnotes. Our choice for this manuscript is because it is in excellent condition and well preserved, although it is not entirely free of errors. Furthermore, it is considerably more clear, neat and legible as compared to the other two manuscripts. This manuscript, which contains twenty pages, was written in a finer naskh script. It uses two colours of ink; red and black. The red ink is used for the Arabic text or words, while the black ink is used for a general explanation of the text. More important than that, the colophon of the text stated the historical background of the treatise, that is the name of the author of the treatise was stated clearly as Shaykh Dāwūd bin ‘Abd Allāh al-Faṭānī. It was then transcribed by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin ‘Abd al-Ṣamad who finished transcribing the text in Makkah, in 1295 after Hijrah. This information can be found in the colophon of the manuscript as follows:

Telah khatamlah risalah ini yang bernama *Manhal al-Ṣāfi fī Bayān Ramz Ahl al-Ṣūfi*, wa’Llahu a’lam, karangan Dāwūd ibn ‘Abd Allāh Faṭānī. Dan yang menyalinkan kitab ini, faqīr al-ḥaqīr ‘Abd al-Raḥmān

<sup>1</sup> The issue on the controversy of the authorship of the text can be referred to my “Shaykh Dāwūd al-Faṭānī and his *Manhal al-Ṣāfi*: An Overview”. *Afkar: Journal of Aqidah and Islamic Thought* (5/Mei 2004), p. 72-77.

bin 'Abd al-Şamad. Selesai di dalam negeri Makkah, pada hari Jum'at, waktu 'Asar, pada hijrat al-nubuwwah sanat 1295.

(We completed this treatise namely *The Pure Beaker in Explaining the Sign of the Sufis*, God Knowth Best, written by Dāwūd bin 'Abd Allāh Faṭānī. This treatise was transcribed by the poor and destitute 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin 'Abd al-Şamad. Completed in the city of Makkah, on Friday afternoon, in the year 1295 of the Prophet's Migration.)

Meanwhile, the collated manuscripts are the MS693 and MI17 which were also written in a finer naskh script. Both manuscripts are complete and in good condition. The MS693, which contains 30 pages, named Shaykh 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin 'Abd al-Mubīn as the author of the treatise. However, the text does not state the name of the transcriber or its date of completion. The only information available is mentioned on the cover page and the colophon of the manuscript as follows:

Ini kitab *Manhal al-Şāfī fī Bayān Ramz Ahl al-Şūfī*, karangan Shaykh yang 'Ārif al-Rabbānī, lagi Waliy Allāh Ta'ālā al-Ghanī 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin 'Abd al-Mubīn, tuntutlah segala yang muridin. Dan yang memilik akan dia Hajj Wan 'Abd Allāh bin Muḥammad Sammān negeri Faṭānī, daerah Kampung Peronggok adanya. Sallāma'LLāh fī al-dārayn. Āmīn.

(This treatise namely *The Pure Beaker in Explaining the Sign of the Sufis* is written by the Adept Master versed in the knowledge of the Lord, and the Saint of God the Most Glory, 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin 'Abd al-Mubīn whom the novices should seek. This treatise belongs to Hajj Wan 'Abd Allāh bin Muḥammad Sammān of Patani, from the village of Peronggok. May God shower His blessings upon us in both worlds. Āmīn.)

and

Tammat kalam pada hari al-thālith pada waqtu Zuhur adanya di Fatani.

(The treatise was completed on Tuesday noon in Patani.)

The MI17 is also complete but the script is untidy and consist a lot of wrong spellings particularly in the Arabic quotations. The manuscript of 23 pages was transcribed in 1311 after Hijrah by Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadīr al-Fatānī who was a student of Shaykh Dāwūd. The colophon of this manuscript states;

Telah terjemahlah risalah ini yang bernama *Manhal al-Ṣāfi fī Bayān Amr<sup>2</sup> Ahl al-Ṣūfī*, Āmīn. Telah selesai daripada faqīr ilā Ta'ālā menyurat kitab ini pada hari Arba', tiga belas haribulan Rajab, pada hijrah seribu tiga ratus sebelas, iaitu 'Abd al-Qādir Fatānī.

(We have translated this treatise namely *The Pure Beaker in Explaining the Order of the Sufis*, Āmīn. The treatise was written by the poor toward God on Wednesday, 13th of Rajab, in the year 1311 of the Prophet's migration, he is 'Abd al-Qādir of Patani.)

Regarding our method of editing and translating, we have made a footnote for each variant word. In places where a word or a string of words or a whole phrase is augmented or amended to our edition, the word, the string of words or the whole phrase is reproduced in the footnote, with full citation of the page number of the augmentation and emendation. This is to minimize any confusion that may arise as to whether it is a word with the footnote number only, the whole string of words or phrase with the footnote number that is added in our edition.

In rendering the text, we have done our utmost to be faithful to the original, hence producing a translation that is true to the text but at the same time idiomatic. In order to

<sup>2</sup> The title of this manuscript is slightly different from the others which bear the term *Amr* instead of *Ramz*. This difference, perhaps, occurs due to wrong spelling or the mistake of the transcriber since the content of the text is the same.

maintain the accuracy, I have tried to stick as far as possible to the original text, but in many instances, I opted to translate the Malay into English from the Arabic, since it is the meaning of the Arabic that is intended. Knowing well that translation cannot always capture the language and meaning of the original, where necessary, we approximate the meanings intended. All in all, being well aware of our shortcomings, we have exercised all our skills to present the ideas there in a straightforward manner. In addition, we have divided the text into various paragraphs and assigned to them Arabic numbers in order to facilitate efficient cross referencing between the edition and the translation. Identification of figures and verification of most of the quotations, verses of the Qur'an and the hadith are noted in my translation. Insofar as the translation of the Qur'anic verses is concerned, we rely upon Abdullah Yusuf Ali's *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*, new revised edition (Brentwood: Amana Corporation, 1989) and where appropriate, we render our own.

With regard to our romanised edition, we have tried to be as faithful as possible to the original text. We have done so in order to highlight the style of the Malay language used by the author which represents the style used during his time. We hope also to see the influences of the other languages especially Arabic on the Malay language. We have tried to avoid any unnecessary additional words or phrases that we might feel missing in the text, unless they are truly needed in order to facilitate our understanding. Any additions, that is in our own edition and translation, are indicated by words or phrase in [ ] brackets.

***Al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi fī Bayān Ramz Ahl al-Ṣūfī* by Shaykh Dāwūd bin ‘Abd Allāh al-Faṭānī: An Annotated Translation**

*In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful the Most Beneficent*

1. My Lord, ease my task<sup>3</sup>, O Most Generous One (*yā Karīm*). In the Name of Allah, the Most Benevolent to all His servants, the Most Loving to all His believers. All praise be to God, He is the First (*al-‘Awwal*) that nothing is before Him, and the Last (*al-‘Akhīr*) that nothing is after Him. He is the Manifest (*al-Zāhir*) that nothing is more manifest than He, and the Hidden (*al-Bāṭin*) that nothing is more hidden than He. Prayers and peace be upon our leader Prophet Muḥammad who has been delegated with clear evidence, and upon his family and Companions who have clarified all the difficulties (*al-mushkilāt*) and obscurities (*al-mutashābihāt*).

2. I have compiled this brief epistle with the grace of God, the Most Generous (*al-Karīm*) and the Most Beneficent (*al-Mannān*), to answer some questions with the clearest possible answers, in order to enlighten the hearts of my dear friends, brothers and sisters who constantly come to see me. Despite the little knowledge that I have, I firmly believe in God’s grace, the Most Generous (*al-Karīm*) and the Most Merciful (*al-Raḥmān*), that He shall guide me along the right course and grant me success on the Day of Return.

3. Know, O my brothers who are bestowed with guidance: Allah has illuminated my heart and your hearts with the Light of Belief (*nūr imān*) and the Light of Divine Unity (*nūr tawḥīd*), that the prominent Sufi masters use several terms that only their associates understand. Thus, it is impermissible for non-Sufi associates to study their books because those who do not understand their intended meanings will take the literal meanings of their terms; thus it can lead to unbelief (*kufr*). Due to this, the non-Sufi associates are prohibited from studying their books, as

<sup>3</sup> *ṭāhā*, 20: 26.

Shaykh Muḥy al-Dīn ibn al-‘Arabī<sup>4</sup> (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

*We are people, whose books are forbidden,*

that is: for a person who does not understand their technical terms.

4. Therefore, we must be careful not to take their expressions lightly, for their words are based on Divine Inspiration (*ilhām*). Moreover, most of their terms are not of well-established meaning (*mutashābihāt*) which the literalists (*ahl al-zāhir*) should not take literally because although their literal meanings appear to contradict the Prescribed Law (*sharī‘ah*), their inner meanings do not contradict the hidden sense of the Prescribed Law (*bāṭin sharī‘ah*). Therefore, it is a must for a novice (*murīd*), who does not understand their intended meanings, to leave them as they are neither to disavow nor to criticize them, as Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī<sup>5</sup> said:

<sup>4</sup> He is Muḥy al-Dīn Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn al-‘Arabī, born in 560 A.H./1165 C.E. in the city of Murcia in Andalusia. He was a descendent of Ḥātim al-Tā‘i, the legendary model of Arab generosity. He was 76 years old when he died in 638 A.H./1240 C.E. and he was buried in the quarter of Ṣalīhiyyah, Damascus. For a detailed analysis on the biography of Ibn ‘Arabī based on his writings as well as the secondary sources of this figure, see Claude Addas (1993), *Quest for the Red Sulphur: The Life of Ibn ‘Arabī*, translated from French by Peter Kingsley, Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society; and a good summary of his life and works by S. H. Nasr (1964), in *Three Muslim Sages*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press; and Henry Corbin (1969), *Introduction to Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn ‘Arabī*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

<sup>5</sup> He is Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Shādhali or al-Shādhilī, born in Northern Morocco, in the village of Ghumara, in a part of the country between Ceuta and Tangiers, in 593/1196. He received his first *khirqah* from Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Harāzīm (d. 633/1236), a pupil of Abū Madyān, and continued his education in Iraq with Abū al-Faṭḥ al-Wāsi‘ī (d. 632/1234), the disciple and *khalīfah* of Aḥmad Rifā‘ī. Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhali settled in Alexandria, Egypt in 1244 or 1252 C.E., the place where he won great renown whereby he and his successors received recognition and encouragement not only among the populace, but also the *‘ulamā’*. He died at Humaithira, in the Upper Egyptian desert whilst on his way back from performing *Hajj* in 656/1258. See P. Lory, “al-Shādhilī”, *EF* 9 (1997): 170-72. See also J. Spencer Trimingham (1971), *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

*The assent to our knowledge is a lesser sainthood.*

5. Among their technical terms are the Lofty Letters (*hurūf 'āliyat*) that will soon be explained in a couplet by Shaykh Muḥy al-Dīn ibn al-'Arabī. This is followed by his student and his successor Ṣadr al-Dīn Būnī<sup>6</sup> who said:

*wa ra'a al-ḥaqq mir'āt yurā*

and other sayings such as this, the expositions of which will follow soon.

6. If you learned the terms of the Sufis by means of the indications (*ishārāt*), then it is a must to know the indications (*ishārāt*). Now, I shall explain. Know, that the Truth Most Glorious and Exalted has several degrees (*marātib*):

First, *Aḥādiyyah* (Transcendent Oneness): that is the degree of non-determination (*martabat lā ta'ayyun*); that is God's Innermost Essence (*kunhi dhātNya*).

Second, *Waḥdah* (Divine Unity): called the first determination (*ta'ayyun 'awwal*), it refers to the relation between God's knowledge and His Essence, His Attributes, and the attributes of all being-existents in a general way. It is also called the Reality of Muḥammad (*ḥaqīqat muḥammadiyyah*).

Third, *Wāḥidiyyah* (Divine Unity): called the second determination (*ta'ayyun thānī*), it refers to the relation between God's knowledge and His Essence, His Attributes, and the attributes of all being-existents in a

<sup>6</sup> We believe he is Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qunawī, a student and successor of Muḥyiddīn ibn al-'Arabī. He was born in the province of Malathīyyah in Anatolia in 606/1209. It is reported that Ibn 'Arabī was a friend of Majd al-Dīn Ishāq, the father of Ṣadr al-Dīn. After the death of Majd al-Dīn, Ibn 'Arabī married Majd al-Dīn's wife and became the adopted father to Ṣadr al-Dīn. From then, Ṣadr al-Dīn began his study under Ibn al-'Arabī and became acquainted with the teaching of Ibn al-'Arabī and seems to have taken over the training of some of his disciples. He died in 673/1274 soon after the death of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, the most famous Persian Ṣūfī poet and a good friend of him. He was buried in a mosque of Qunīyah which is attributed to his name. See William Chittick (1996), "The School of Ibn 'Arabī", in *History of Islamic Philosophy*, edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman, London: Routledge, v. 2 (pt. 1), pp. 510-23.



particular way. It is also called the Reality of Man (*ḥaqīqat 'insāniyyah*). Since eternity (*qadīm*), this degree is called the Divine Degree (*martabat ketuhanan*).

7. The Sufis symbolize the degree of *'aḥādiyyah* with a blank sheet of paper without anything written on it as **O**. Due to this, it is called the Degree of the Absolute (*martabat 'iṭlāq*), that is free from any relation with anything, and also called the degree of non-determination (*lā ta'ayyun*) since nothing has come into manifestation.

8. Then, they symbolize the degree of *waḥdah* with a dot in the circle, like so **O**. The dot, in fact, is the origin of all letters, meaning it carries in it all letters yet to be written out undifferentiated in it; that is they are not yet manifested as individual letters.

9. They also signify the degree of *wāḥidiyyah* with an *alif* or any other letter that has become manifested in the circle, like so **O**. The letter *alif* is the perfection of the potentialities of the all encompassing dot which has become individuated and manifested so long as there is no more change. It is called the second determination (*ta'ayyun thānī*) because the dot is the first determination (*ta'ayyun 'awwal*), while the *alif* is the second determination (*ta'ayyun thānī*). Such is a simile implying no likeness for it is unto Allah alone is the highest similitude.<sup>7</sup>

10. Some other Sufis have given other examples of the three degrees in order to facilitate our understanding. The degree of *'aḥādiyyah* is likened to our intellect (*dhihn*) when it is free from intellectualizing on any particular thing - that is referred to as non-determination (*lā ta'ayyun*). When it begins to intellectualize on something, it is called the first determination (*ta'ayyun 'awwal*). As you proceed further and the intellectualization remains continuous, that is called the second determination (*ta'ayyun thānī*). The two degrees of *waḥdah* and *wāḥidiyyah* are likened to the realm of the known in God's eternal knowledge, hence they are called the permanent archetypes (*a'yān thābitah*). The permanent archetypes (*a'yān thābitah*) are those that are established in

<sup>7</sup> *Al-Nahl*, 16: 60; "*wa-li Allāh al-maṭhal al-a'lā*".

relation to the known in God's knowledge; since pre-eternity (*'azal*) nothing exists except His Essence (*dhātNya*) and His Eternal Attributes (*ṣifātNya yang qadīm*). The permanent archetypes (*a'yān thābitah*) are those that will never smell the fragrance of existence, meaning even before the word 'Be' is uttered.

11. When God wills it to exist, He commands the permanent archetypes (*a'yān thābitah*) by rendering its hearing keen, and by the utterance of the word 'Be' (*kun*), the like of the permanent archetypes (*a'yān thābitah*) come into existence by the Power of God the Most Glorious and Exalted. That which comes into existence after the command is called the external archetypes (*a'yān khārijīyyah*). It is originated because of the effect of the power of the Eternal. Never once should you think that the external archetypes (*a'yān khārijīyyah*) are from the permanent archetypes (*a'yān thābitah*), because the permanent archetypes (*a'yān thābitah*) shall never, ever smell the fragrance of existence since eternity, how can they exist and how can they become originated (*ḥādith*). Verily, the external archetypes (*a'yān khārijīyyah*) are the image (*bayang-bayang*) of the permanent archetypes (*a'yān thābitah*). The permanent archetypes (*a'yān thābitah*) are created (*kā'in*); that is every instant of its re-creation, they are established continuously as they had always been since what is known in His Knowledge is not separated from His Essence, just as His Eternal Attributes which are not as separated from one another. Such is the manner in which these words are understood, and the external archetypes (*a'yān khārijīyyah*) are at the rank of servanthood (*martabat 'ubūdiyyah*).

12. In the degree of the first determination (*ta'ayyun 'awwal*) and the second determination (*ta'ayyun thānī*) are the Station of the Prophets (*maqām 'anbiyā'*) and the Poles (*'aqtāb*). [As for] those who inherit these stations in their respective ranks and they are able to contemplate unity in multiplicity (*pandang wahdah di dalam kathrah*), they are at the station of the ascending ones (*taraqqī*), that is to see God the Most Exalted in everything, as the people of God (*'ahl Allāh*) say:

*I see nothing except that I see God in it.*<sup>8</sup>

13. If the multiplicity of things does not prevent one from contemplating the Unity of God the Most Exalted and at the same time one is able to contemplate multiplicity in unity (*pandang kathrah di dalam waḥdah*), then that is the station of the descending ones (*tanāzzul*), that is to contemplate multiplicity which is originated in the unity, which is God. Therefore, there is no hindrance for the perfect knower (*'arif yang kāmīl mukammīl*) to contemplate both of them together because multiplicity cannot be without unity, since one cannot be independent by itself, and because the condition of divine unity (*waḥdah*) contains the attributes, names, and acts, which establish the effect of power (*qudrat*) and will (*'irādat*), which in turn establish the existence of the multiplicity, meaning the existence of this world.

14. If you have understood all these technical terms, then, know the meaning of the two verses from the poem by the leader of all knowers and my master Muḥy al-Dīn ibn al-'Arabī in his book, *Manāzil al-'Insāniyyah*<sup>9</sup>, which run as follows:

*We were Lofty Letters yet unmoved,*

<sup>8</sup> Shaykh Ḥamzah al-Faṣṣūrī quoted this saying by referring to 'Alī (may Allah be well pleased with him). In fact, he quoted another three sayings of the three Companions; Abū Bakr al-Šiddīq, 'Umar al-Khaṭṭāb and 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān (may Allah be well pleased with them all) respectively:

I see nothing except I see God before it.

I see nothing except I see God after it.

I see nothing except I see God with it.

He quoted this in explaining that the entire universe is the effects of God's act in manifest form. See Syed Muḥammad Naquib al-Attas (1970), *The Mysticism of Ḥamzah al-Faṣṣūrī*. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, pp. 265-266 and pp. 385-386. Here after cited as *Mysticism*.

<sup>9</sup> This work seems to be popular among the Sufis of the Malay world. It revolves around the famous poem about the Lofty Letters (*Ḥurūf 'āliyyāt*). This work is attributed to Ibn al-'Arabī but so far the book has not been discovered by anybody either in published form or in manuscript. This work has its commentary which al-Rānī<sup>2</sup>'s mentioned in his *Jawāhir*, entitled *Sharḥ Manāzil al-'Insāniyyah* by 'Abd Allāh

*Attached to our Abode in the Highest Peaks;  
I was thou within It, and we wert thou and thou He,<sup>10</sup>  
Everything is in 'He is He' - ask of those in Union.*

Meaning: We existed as lofty letters even before we were created by His command 'Be' (*kun*), and our existence relates all of us, that is the existence of all creatures is in the unveiling of God's Knowledge, each one of us in our separate quiddities, and they are in the "peaks of mountains"<sup>11</sup>, that is their summits, I am you in Him and we are you and you are Him and all in *hurwa* are but Him. Ask of those who have attained (union).

15. By, "We were lofty letters even before we were create", the Shaykh means since pre-eternity (*azal*), we were hidden realities (*ḥaqā'iq ghaybiyyah*) existing in God's knowledge, as yet uncreated, for there had not yet been applied to us the command to be.

16. And by, "Our existence relates all of us", he means that all of us, each one of us, are held in latency together with our behavior, characteristics and forms, for each being-existent has its quiddity, states, ranks, and characteristics, and all these exist among the known in the knowledge of the eternal.

17. And by, "And they are all in the peaks of mountains", he means the first determination (*ta'ayyun*

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al-Bastamī. See Syed Muḥammad Naquib al-Attas (1986), *A Commentary on the Hujjat al-Ṣiddiq of Nūr al-Dīn al-Rāniri*, Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of Culture Malaysia, p. 22. Hereafter will be cited as *Commentary*. Besides, the work is also mentioned in al-Qāshānī's *Laṭā'if al-I'lām*, which also revolved around the poem about the Lofty Letters without further information about the work. See, 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī (1996), *Laṭā'if al-I'lām fī Ishārat Ahl al-Ilhām*, edited by Sa'īd 'Abd al-Fattāh, 2 vols., Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, v. 1, p. 407.

<sup>10</sup> The translation of these verses is based on al-Attas' (1971) translation in his *Concluding Postscript to the Origin of the Malay Sha'ir*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, p. 20.

<sup>11</sup> For further elaboration of the meaning of the "peaks of mountains" as connotated here, please see the discussion on *rawasiya* in Syed Muḥammad Naquib al-Attas (1995). *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam*, Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), pp. 322-3.

*'awwal*) which is referred to previously as the degree of the all encompassing unity (*wahdah yang 'ijmāl*).

18. And by, "I am you in Him" and "We are you" and "you are Him", he means with respect to the degree of the all encompassing realities, yet undifferentiated, one rank does not differ from another, nevertheless "I am I" and "you are you" and "He is He". Here is a simile implying no likeness, just as water when it flows into the sea: when it is impossible for us to distinguish it from the sea, we may say that water is the sea and that the sea is water. But the sea remains as sea and water remains as water since they cannot be interchanged. This is because realities cannot be interchanged. When we forget about water because of our awe at the sight of the sea, at that moment we may say that all is the sea.

19. And by, "All in He (*huwa*) are but Him", he means that everything, at the degree of *'ahādiyyah*, with respect to being obliterated (*tams*) in Him, is also He, for at that degree no other name is applicable to them except He. This is also known as the presence of "*there is nothing with Him*", and all presences below it are named "*He is with you wherever you are*".<sup>12</sup>

20. And by, "Ask those who have arrived", he means that if you wish to understand this, you should ask those who have attained this knowledge. When you ask them this question, they will answer in the same way.

21. Thus: What can be derived from the meaning of these two verses is that our existence is at the first determination (*ta'ayyun 'awwal*), which is the presence of all encompassing knowledge, also known as "unseen realities" (*ḥaqā'iq ghaybiyyah*) and "essential predispositions" (*shu'ūn dhātiyyah*). There is no difference between one from another with respect to their being undifferentiated. But these predispositions, at the presence of the second determination (*ta'ayyun thānī*), which is the presence of particular knowledge, are called the "permanent archetypes" (*a'yān*

<sup>12</sup> *Al-Ḥadīd*, 57: 4.

*thābitah*). At that presence, there is differentiation, so that man has his own particular form, and so has the *jinn* with their own forms, the angels, the earth, the moon, and the rest of creation, each with its own dispositions in that presence - that is the second determination (*ta'ayyun thānī*), although we cannot say "I am you" and "we are you", as each entity possesses its own characteristics. All are eternal in virtue of the relation between [God's] knowledge and them. When our gaze rises to the furthest limit of the second determination (*ta'ayyun thānī*), that is the first determination (*ta'ayyun 'awwal*) which is the all encompassing presence, only then can we say: "I am you" and "we are you" and "you are He" and "all is He", from the standpoint that all relations are obliterated. As our master 'Alī (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

*And all is He without any doubt,  
when all relations and determinations are obliterated,  
and all is we, oh youth,  
for we are the limit manifestation.*

22. If someone were to say: "I am you", or "We are you", or "You are He", or "All is He", and if he means by these statements referring to pre-eternity (*'azal*) that is to say at the first determination (*ta'ayyun 'awwal*) where all things are encompassed in it, and if what he means by "All is He" is the degree of *aḥādīyyah* where at that degree things are obliterated (*tams*) in Him, that is true. It is in this way that we must interpret the words of the author of *Tuḥfat al-Mursalah*:<sup>13</sup>

*With respect to reality, all is the truth.*

Meaning: As far as reality is concerned - that is its origin - all is God. Do not take these words literally, for literal

<sup>13</sup> The full title is *Tuḥfat al-Mursalah 'ilā Rūḥ al-Nabī*, the known Sufi treatise on the theory of Seven Degrees of Existence (*Marātib al-Wujūd al-Sab'ah*) or better known among the Malays as *Martabat Tujuh*). It was written by Shaykh Muḥammad Faḍl Allāh al-Burhanpūrī (d. 1620 C.E.). The work has been translated into Malay and Javanese whereby A.H. Johns has made an English translation of the Javanese version of the *Tuḥfat* and also the Arabic original. See A. H. Johns (1965). *The Gift Addressed to the Spirit of the Prophet*, Canberra: Centre of Oriental Studies, The Australian National University. Hereafter cited as *GASP*.

interpretations is the cause for the indiscriminating to be led astray.

23. But if the intended meaning of "I am you" or "We are you", is now, after everything has become manifest, then it is wrong. The more so if one were to say "All is He". There are two illustrations for a simile implying no likeness. The first illustration is the twenty-eight letters of the alphabet. Before they are written out hidden in the ink they are ink, even until they are at a nib of the pen - they are still ink, but as soon as they are written out on a tablet they are different both from the ink and the pen.

24. The second illustration is that of twigs, branches and leaves. When they are all contained in the seed unseen, that is all of them, then/, they are referred to as the very seed itself. Once they become manifested, each with their own characteristics, then they are different from the seed. Do not misunderstand by these words that all these existed prior to the manifestation of the very seed and that they change from one to the other. This is impossible, for the seed is a seed, the twigs are twigs, the branches are the branches, and the leaves are leaves even before they grow from the seed. Realities do not become mixed or exchange, only analogies do, that is, form. As some of the Knowers said:

*The servant remains a servant, even if he were to ascend,  
and the Lord remains the Lord, even if He were to descend.*

Meaning: The servant remains a servant, even if he were to ascend to the degree of absoluteness, and the Lord remains the Lord, even if He were to descend in self-manifestation in whatever form He chooses. These are two illustrations that can help us to understand the problem of individuality (*'ayniyyah*) and otherness (*ghayriyyah*).

25. What can be derived from this is that the world and everything in it are neither the Truth Most Exalted nor other than He in the sense that they are independent (*mustaqill*) in themselves. Shaykh Šadr al-Dīn al-Būnī, the successor of Shaykh Muḥy al-Dīn ibn al-'Arabī (may God sanctify their souls) in explaining the vision of those who have attained to perfect illuminative knowledge said:

*The knower sees himself and everything in one aspect as different from the Truth, and in another aspect as His Act, while in other aspect as His being. And he sees the Truth as a mirror in which he sees some of his own states as he sees his self as a locus of manifestation of God's being - and all these take place at one and the same time.*

26. What is meant by "Seeing himself and everything", is that such claims, with respect to the second determination (*ta'ayyun thānī*), are different from the Truth Most Exalted because each is with its own specific being even though they may be eternal (*qadīm*) because they are [metaphorically] the known in His knowledge.

27. And what is meant by "And in one aspect is His Act", is with respect to the first determination (*ta'ayyun 'awwal*), the undifferentiated all encompassing is His Act because they are essential pre-dispositions (*shu'ūn dhātiyyah*) which are unseen. Thus, they are His Acts because there is no difference among them.

28. And what is meant by "In another aspect is His being", meaning with respect to obliteration at the degree of *'ahādiyyah*, at that moment he sees his being as God the Most Exalted.

29. And what is meant by "And he sees the Truth Most Exalted as a mirror in which he sees his states", is that his self as well as other things do not possess individual existence that is different from God's independent existence. A simile implying no likeness is the world of images (*'alam bayang-bayang*) that points to the existence of God the Most Exalted while an image does not possess independent individual existence different from its possessor's. Thus, the manifestation of the image possessor is just as a mirror to an image.

30. And what is meant by "As he sees his self as the locus of self-manifestation of God's existence" is he sees his God in his self and His names and attributes according to the degree of their reception, meaning His self-manifestation is mentally posited because this whole world is a self-manifestation of the being-existent of His existence. Things



become manifest with each and every one of His self-manifestations, just as the mirror in which he sees his self. Thus, what is understood from these statements refers to two stations:

31. At the first station: "The Truth Most Exalted is seen as a mirror that manifests the specific state of his self" is to contemplate multiplicity in unity (*pandang kathrah di dalam wahdah*), as some knowers symbolize it with the date's seed. The seed contains the trunk, the frond, the flower, the fruit, and everything complete in it. As for one who says: "Seeing his self as the locus of manifestation of God's existence" is an indication of one who contemplates unity in multiplicity (*pandang wahdah di dalam kathrah*), that is to see the fruit, the trunk, the flower, the frond and the branch as contained in the seed. Thus, it is clear from the saying of Shaykh Şadr al-Dīn (may Allāh be pleased with him):

*The world and everything in it have no individuality whatsoever, never once are they an independent other (ghayr yang mustaqill), while individuality is affirmed, at the same time the other is also affirmed.*

The Prophet (God's blessing and peace be upon him) refers to this when he says:

*He who knows his self, knows his Lord*

That is: Whosoever knows his self; that is his existence and his reality, meaning his existence as well as his reality are not independent existents and there is no reality in their existence in relation to God's existence because everything is non-existent (*ma'dūm*) in the realm of pre-eternity (*'azal*) and post-eternity (*'abad*), as stated in the *ḥadīth*:

*God was and there was nothing with Him,  
and He is now even as He was.*

32. It is understood from this hadith that all beings do not have real existence, and the only true and real existence is the existence of God, because the existence of man's self and other things are obliterated at the degree of *'aḥādīyyah*. Hence, the knowers say: "*He who knows his Lord, is ignorant (jāhil) of his self (nafs)*". What is meant by the word self

(*nafs*) in this *ḥadīth* is his self and his reality and not the seven kinds of selves (*nafs*) as commonly understood among the People of the Path ('*ahl al-sulūk*); or if it is said: "He who knows his self as His essential predisposition (*shu'ūn dhātNya*), knows his Lord and his reality"; or if it is said: "He who knows his self as an image of the permanent archetypes ('*a'yān thābitah*), he knows his Lord", because the permanent archetypes ('*a'yān thābitah*) are in fact, the image of the Truth. Since an image belongs to its owner by way of an intermediary, the image is neither the state of the owner nor different from it. Hence, "He who knows his self, knows his Lord", that is: He who knows his self as a dependent effect ('*athar*) in itself who needs a cause (*mu'aththir*), knows his Lord, the True-Real independent Existence". By these analogies, it becomes clear that his self is a theater of His self-manifestation, he is neither He nor other than He. Considered as the first determination (*ta'ayyun 'awwal*), it is He, but considered as the second determination (*ta'ayyun thānī*), it is not He. This is what is meant from the saying of Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn:

*Looking at the Truth Most Exalted is a mirror.*

That is: The knower looks at the Truth Most Exalted as a mirror.

33. He sees the details of the states of his self while he is a mirror to his Lord. He sees in it his self, all His Names and Attributes in accordance with their reception not in accordance with God, because He, with respect to His Essence, is not confined by limits. Therefore, His self-manifestation in it varies because its receptivity and states vary, as it takes the varying form of the mirror, its reception varies.

34. Sometimes the forms in the mirror are small because the mirror is small, at other times long because the mirror is long, sometimes they move because the mirror moves, at other times they are reversed because the mirror is either above or below, sometimes the right of the object coincides with the right of the mirror, as when there are many mirrors, and sometimes the right of the object coincides

with the left of the mirror, when the mirror is in front of the object. All these serve to demonstrate that the form visible in the mirror is neither the person in himself nor other than he. As the state of the person who holds the mirror, he is as he was, unchanged; it is the manifestation of his image in the mirror that varies because of the mirror's reception. It is in this way that we wish to show by a simile implying no likeness that the self-manifestation of God to His servants varies. As 'Ārif bi Allāh Aḥmad al-Qushāshī<sup>14</sup> said:

*Existence is one in essence but manifold because of relation.*

Meaning: Existence is one with his Essence, but because of kinds and accidents, it becomes many. God Knoweth best.

35. Those that come into being through His manifestation and determination are no longer referred to as the Truth. The Truth is the Truth, while the servant is the servant, and it is His manifestation and determination, that He is called the First (*al-'Awwal*) and the Last (*al-'Ākhir*) and also the Manifest (*al-Zāhir*) and the Hidden (*al-Bāṭin*). He is the First (*al-'Awwal*) in relation to His manifestation due to His Predispositions (*shu'ūn*), His Acts (*'af'āl*), and His Rules (*'aḥkām*), and not due to His Essence (*dhāt*) because His Essence has no beginning. He is the Last (*al-'Ākhir*) in relation to all acts return to Him since His Essence has no end. He is the Manifest (*al-Zāhir*) in relation to the hearts of those who are perfect (*kāmil*) and who have arrived (*wāṣil*). He is the Hidden (*al-Bāṭin*) in relation to the hearts of those ignorant unbelievers (*kafir laji jahil*). In fact, He is the Manifest in His very Hiddenness, and the Hidden in His very Manifestness, the First in His very Lastness, and the Last in His very Firstness. He is the All-

<sup>14</sup> He is Ṣafiy al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Qushāshī, born in Madinah in 991 A.H./1583 C.E., and died in the same city in 1071 A.H./1661 C.E. The well-known Sufi master of the 17th century to many great scholars including the scholars of the Malay world. For further biographical background on him, see A.H. Johns, "al-Kushashī", *EI2*, 5 (1986), pp. 525-6. See also Brockelmann's *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur*, 2 vols. & 3 Suppl. vols., Leiden: E.J. Brill, Reprinted, 1996. (GAL) S II, 86i.

Encompassing, meaning He encompasses the beginning and the end, the manifest and the hidden, as God the Most Exalted said:

*But Allah doth encompass them from behind.*<sup>15</sup>

That is God encompasses all creatures. This has been pointed out by Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn<sup>16</sup> in his book, *Jawāhir al-'Ulūm*.<sup>17</sup>

36. The fourth degree in the degrees of existence is the World of Spirits (*'ālam 'arwāh*), that is the realm of all living things and what is posited in the mind as creatures which comes under the sway of the command "Be" (*kun*), that come into existence by virtue of Act including God's simple beings which are independent of habit (*ṭabī'ah*), simple without any composition which is superadded to their essences. They know themselves and each other based on likeness. Thus, The first thing that God the Most Exalted created is the Light of Muḥammad (*nūr Muḥammad*), (God's blessing and peace be upon him), from His Light; that is the Light of Muḥammad is created from God's Light, but it does not mean that it is a part of God's Light, because one

<sup>15</sup> *Al-Burūj*, 85: 20.

<sup>16</sup> He is Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Ḥasan-Ji ibn Muḥammad who came from the Arab family of a noble Shaykh known as al-Ḥamīd, one of the ten clans of the Quraysh. The date of his birth is not known, but he was born in Rānīr, a famous old port in the Gujarat close to or within the district of Sūrāt in India probably towards the end of the 16th century. He was appointed as the *Shaykh al-Islām* of the Aceh Empire during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Thānī (d. 1641 C.E.), a friend of his during his stay in Pahang. For the full historical background on him, see Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (1966), *Rānīrī and the Wujudiyyah of 17th Century Aceh*, Singapore: Monograph of the JMBRAS. See also *Commentary*, pp. 3-15.

<sup>17</sup> The last work of Rānīrī was written in Aceh sometime between 1642-1644 C.E. The text, which comprised seven parts, discussed mainly the concept of Being or Existence, the Divine Names and Attributes, and the Permanent Archetypes (*a'yān thābitah*). Its manuscript, which remains unpublished, is kept in the Marsden Collection, text no. 1215; pp. 21v-158r., School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, London. See *Commentary*, p. 153, footnote 61. Another manuscript of this text is kept in the personal collection of Tgk. M. Djamil. See Ahmad Daudy (1983), *Allah dan Manusia Dalam Konsep Syeikh Nuruddin ar-Raniry*, Jakarta: CV. Rajawali, pp. 53-4.

of God's Names is *Nūr* (the Light), as God the Most Exalted says:

*Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth.*<sup>18</sup>

That is: God the Most Exalted has illuminated the seven layers of heavens and earth, hence our Prophet is referred to as the Light (*nūr*) because of the Qur'anic verse:

*There hath come to you from Allah a (new) light.*<sup>19</sup>

Meaning: Indeed, there has come to you from God a light; that is Muḥammad, since some of the ignorant ones have misunderstood that Muḥammad originated from God's Light. It is His other that becomes manifest, hence Muḥammad is a part of God Most Glorious and Exalted - *He is high above all that they say, Exalted and Great*<sup>20</sup> - from what have been described by the transgressors (*zālimūn*). From the Light of Muḥammad, the spirits of all the Prophets ('*anbiyā'*), the Messengers (*mursalīn*) and the Believers (*mu'minīn*) were created. Since the spirit of our Prophet is the origin of all spirits ('*aṣāl al-arwāḥ*), it is called the Perfect Manifestation (*maẓhar al-'atamm*), the Seal of the Prophets (*khātam al-nabiyyīn*)<sup>21</sup>, the Leader of the Messengers (*sayyid al-mursalīn*) and the Mercy to all creatures (*raḥmatan lī al-'ālamīn*).<sup>22</sup> Our Prophet is the perfect manifestation of God's Names and Attributes. He is the one who governs the Macrocosmos ('*ālam kabīr*) and Microcosmos ('*ālam saḡhīr*).

37. The fifth degree is the World of Images ('*ālam mithāl*), also called the World of Imagination ('*ālam khayāl*), which occurs in the frontal lobe<sup>23</sup> and it is known as '*ard*

<sup>18</sup> *Al-Nūr*, 24: 35. Upon the issue of light, see al-Ghazālī's *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, trans. by W. H. T. Gairdner (1994) as *The Niche for Lights*, New Delhi: Kitāb Bhawan, 4th edition.

<sup>19</sup> *Al-Mā'idah*, 5: 15.

<sup>20</sup> *Al-Isrā'*, 17: 43.

<sup>21</sup> *Al-Aḥzāb*, 33: 40.

<sup>22</sup> *Al-Anbiyā'*, 21: 107.

<sup>23</sup> The author used the term "*di hadapan otak*" which is a direct translation from al-Ghazālī's term "*fī muqaddim al-dimāgh*" whilst explaining the faculty of *khayālī*. See al-Ghazālī (1994), *Mi'rāj al-Sālikīn*, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, p. 70.

*al-simsimah*<sup>24</sup> and *'ard al-ḥaqīqah*. The World of Images (*'ālam mithāl*) is what is posited in the mind as created things that come under the sway of the command "Be" (*kun*), composed of imaginary parts that cannot be further sub-divided nor separated, and cannot be halved, that is, it cannot be apportioned, separated or combined because of its subtleness and fineness.

38. The sixth degree is the World of Bodies (*'ālam 'ajsām*), rough, composed of the four elements, namely fire, air, water, and earth. From these elements, five things come into being: the mineral (*jamād*), the vegetable (*nabāt*), the animal (*ḥayawān*), man (*'insān*), and the *jinn*. The World of Bodies (*'ālam 'ajsām*) is what is posited in the mind as created things that come under the sway of the command "Be" (*kun*), composed of rough things that can be further sub-divided, separated and combined.

39. The seventh degree is the degree that combines all the physical degrees, namely the World of Images (*'ālam mithāl*), the World of Bodies (*'ālam 'ajsām*), and the eternal light, that is the *'ahādiyyah*, and the originated, that is the World of Spirit (*'ālam rūḥ*), that combines both the degree of *waḥdah* and *wāḥidiyyah*. This is the last degree of God's self manifestation, and it is called the degree of the Perfect Man (*martabat 'insān kāmīl*).

40. Know that the traveler (*sālik*) on the path of God who earnestly travels to God whilst keeping good demeanors (*'adab*) toward his Sufi master shall traverse all the worlds until he reaches God. The first world that he shall traverse, meaning travel, is the World of the Kingdom (*'ālam mulk*)<sup>25</sup>, also known as the World of Humanity (*'ālam*

<sup>24</sup> *Simsimah*: Sesame seed. A realization (*ma'rifah*) too subtle for expression. Ibn 'Arabī (1948), *al-Isṭilāḥāt al-Šūfiyyah*, Hyderabad-Deccan: Maṭba'ah Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-Uṯmāniyah. Translated into English by Rabia Terri Harris, "Sufi Terminology: Ibn 'Arabī's al-Isṭilāḥāt al-Šūfiyyah", *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society* 3 (1984), p. 43.

<sup>25</sup> The physical world of existence; the sphere of material forms; the same as *'ālam 'ajsām* or *'ālam nāsūt*: insofar as it is perceptible by the sense

*nāsūt*), a world perceptible to our naked eyes, such as bodies and others, which is also known as the World of Soul ('*ālam nafsu*). After that, he passes through the World of the Dominion ('*ālam malakūt*)<sup>26</sup> which is perceptible to the heart; that is the World of the Heart ('*ālam al-qalb*), or referred to also as the World of the Hereafter ('*ālam al-ākhirah*). After that, he goes on through the World of Sovereignty ('*ālam al-jabarūt*)<sup>27</sup>, that is the World of Spirits ('*ālam 'arwāḥ*). Then, he goes on through the World of Divinity ('*ālam lāhūt*), that is the World of Secret ('*ālam sirr*), the secret of God the Most Exalted. At this stage, all is obliterated: names ('*asmā'*) and forms (*rasm*), that is the effects ('*āthār*). He sees nothing except God the One and the only One (*al-wāḥid al-aḥad*), and in that state of passing away (*fanā'*) in God, he sees not all, that is other than God, and his heart is free of any impurities ('*akḍār*) and all that is other than God ('*aḡhyār*). At this moment, his heart is filled with illuminative knowledge (*ma'rifah*) and secrets ('*asrār*), and therefore, ready to be a place of self-manifestation of God since it is free from being enslaved by things other than God ('*aḡhyār*). His heart, at that moment, is called the House of God (*ka'batu 'Llāh*) or God's palace or God's mansion, meaning the place of His self-manifestation, a place to contemplate Him and to keep His secret, the right place

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faculties, it corresponds to the human body (*jism*) in man, and is therefore the same as '*ālam al-shahādah*'; the third and the lowest of the degrees of universal manifestation (*al-jabarūt, al-malakūt, al-mulk*). This station circumscribes the totality of the world of forms. See Muḥy al-Dīn ibn al-'Arabī, *Kernel of the Kernel*, trans. Ismail Hakki Bursevi, Sherborne: Beshara Publications, n.d., p. 11. See Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh, *Kitāb al-Ḥikam*, translated into English by Victor Danner (1984), *Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh's Sufi Aphorisms*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, p. 71. Here after cited as *Sufi Aphorisms*.

<sup>26</sup> This is the psychic world, intermediate between the '*ālam al-jabarūt* and the '*ālam al-mulk*; the world of the soul ('*ālam al-nafs*) and corresponds to the soul (*al-nafs*) in man with the heart (*al-qalb*) as its center. This is also described as the World of Images ('*ālam mithāl*) and the Second Manifestation (*ta'ayyun thāmi*). See Ibn Arabī, *Kernel of the Kernel*, p. 11; and also *Sufi Aphorisms*, p. 71.

<sup>27</sup> Also called the World of Domination, which is that of the Spirit; the highest of the three worlds (*al-jabarūt, al-malakūt, al-mulk*); the spiritual world. Ibn 'Arabī, *Kernel of the Kernel*, p. 12; *Sufi Aphorisms*, p. 71.

to receive the responsibility of God's trust, and the means to know God with God, as He says in the Holy tradition (*ḥadīth qudsī*):

"I have built inside the heart of the Son of Adam, a palace (*qaṣr*); in the palace, there is a chest (*ṣadr*); in the chest, there is a heart (*qalb*); in the heart, there is a the inner heart (*fu'ād*); and in the inner heart, there is a innermost heart (*shaghaf*); and in the innermost heart (*shaghaf*), there is the kernel (*lubb*); and in the kernal, there is secret (*sirr*); in the secret, there is Me; that is the secret refers to the place for My manifestation and the place to know Me."

41. And God commands the Prophet Dāwūd (peace be with him): "Build Me a house that I can stay in it". Meaning: "O Dāwūd, build Me a house that I can stay in it and (you) worship it". "How my Lord", says Dāwūd. He commands: "Give Me your heart". When a person is passed away and has lost the awareness of his self, then that is the degree of true and real certainty (*martabat ḥaqq al-yaqīn*), as Shaykh Raslān<sup>28</sup> says in his *Hikam*:<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> The data concerning Raslān's full name found in Brockelmann's *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur (GAL)* are inconsistent. According to Drewes, there are two names mentioned in *GAL* as the author of *Risālah fī al-Tawḥīd* who was the saint of Damascus: Raslān b. Ya'qūb b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ja'barī al-Dimashqī, died 695 A.H./1296 A.D., and Raslān b. Sibawaih b. 'Abdallāh al-Dimashqī, died 711 A.H./1369 A.D. So, the most reliable source to determine the author of *Risālah* is the statement in a manuscript copy of Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī's *Fath al-Raḥmān* preserved in the Zaitūna Library in Tunisia in which the name of the author of the original work is given as Raslān b. Sibawaih 'Abdallāh b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dimashqī and the year of his death as after 540 A.H./1145 A.D.. For a full biography of Wali Raslān, see G.W.J. Drewes (1977). *Directions for the Travelers on the Mystic Path*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, pp. 6-25.

<sup>29</sup> It is referring to Raslān's major work *Risālah fī al-Tawḥīd*. There are some commentaries upon this work, the most famous one is *Fath al-Raḥmān* by Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī. This commentary was translated into English by G.W.J. Drewes in his *Directions for the Travelers on the Mystic Path*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff. Meanwhile, Raslān's *Risālah fī al-Tawḥīd* was also translated into English by Muhtar Holland (1997) entitled *Concerning the Affirmation of divine Oneness (Risāla fī' al-Tawḥīd): A Treatise on Hidden Association (Shirk Khafi)*, Hollywood: al-Baz Publishing.



*Certainty is to leave the self*

Meaning: "Certainty is when you pass away and have lost the awareness of your self", that is to loose the awareness of the existence of your self, its power and strength, and to contemplate them as from God, by God, and for God. This is what Shaykh Raslān (may God be pleased with him), says:

*You are not right for Us as long as there remains in you something other than Us,*

*When you are away from other things, We may make you pass away,*

*Then you are right for Us, then We place our secret.*

Meaning: "You are not right for Us as long as there remains in you something other than Us", that is whenever you are reminded of that which is other than Us, even your own self, for that brief moment you have sinned the like of which as if you are co-existing with God the Most Exalted. "When you are away from other things, We may make you pass away", that is from your self and from your passing away such that you are conscious of neither your existence nor your non-existence. "Then you are right for Us", that is you are unfit to receive God's secret unless you are made to pass away. "Then We place our secret", that is illuminative knowledge which is called by the people of God *jannat al-'ājilah*. It is only then that he receives a vision of God and becomes the locus of [His] self manifestation. Hence the Holy Tradition (*ḥadīth qudsī*):

*man is My secret and I am his secret*

Meaning: "All perfect knowers are My secret", meaning those who receive My secret, referring to illuminative knowledge of Me; and "I am his secret", means, I am what he sees, his hearing, and his sight and [he exists] by My existence, and from Me, and for Me, there is nothing else with him. This is the degree of *wahdah* that is free from names and forms. Referring to this, the Prophet (God's blessing and peace be upon him), says:

*God was, and there was nothing with Him*

Meaning: "God the Most Exalted exists even before this world and there is nothing with Him". And Junayd<sup>30</sup> (may God be pleased with him), says:

*and He is now even as He was*<sup>31</sup>

There can be no knowledge of God except with God, and no mention of God except with God. No one knows his self except with God, and no one knows of his existence and his non-existence. This is called passing away in God (*fanā' fī Allāh*) and subsisting in God (*baqā' bī Allāh*). It is also called true and real certainty (*ḥaqq al-yaqīn*).

42. The meaning of secret (*sirr*) according to Shaykh Qāsim Khān<sup>32</sup> in his book entitled *Sayr al-Sulūk 'ilā Mālik al-Mulūk*:<sup>33</sup>

*The secret is the divine subtlety,  
hidden in spirit.*

Some Sufi masters say that the meaning of secret (*sirr*) cannot be captured in words, that is love concealed in the inner depths of the act of the Unseen. And the place for its contemplation (*mushāhadah*) is the World of the Dominion (*'ālam malakūt*) with the Truth Most Exalted inasmuch as it can hear God's words at the place where all attributes of the Truth Most Exalted occur in the unseen and imperceptible.

<sup>30</sup> He is Abū al-Qāsim al-Junayd ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Junayd al-Khazzāz al-Qawārīrī who was born and brought up in Baghdad. This great Sufi of Baghdad and the author of many early treatises on Sufism died in Baghdad in 298/910. See Ali Hassan Abdel-Kader (1976), *The Life, Personality and Writings of al-Junayd*, London: E.J.W. Gibb Memorial.

<sup>31</sup> This saying is also mentioned in the aphorism of Ibn 'Atā' Allāh in which it is widely circulated among the Sufis as indicative of the absoluteness of God. See *Sufi Aphorisms*, p. 30.

<sup>32</sup> He is Qāsim ibn Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Khānī al-Ḥalabī al-Qādirī (d. 1109/1697), the author of at least eight treatises. The most popular work of his is *Sayr al-Sulūk 'ilā Mālik al-Mulūk* as revealed by Brockelmann, *GAL II*, p. 344; *S II*, p. 472. See also van Ronkel (1913), *Supplement to the Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts Preserved in the Museum of the Batavia Society of Arts and Sciences*, Batavia: [s.n.], pp. 1-7.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

43. The secret of the secret (*sirr al-sirr*) is something behind the veil beyond the World of the Dominion (*'ālam malakūt*) and the place to contemplate (*mushāhadah*) the World of Sovereignty (*'ālam jabarūt*), and witnessing (*mu'āyanah*) the essence (*dhāt*), the attributes (*ṣifāt*), and the miracles (*'ajā'ib*) of the Light of God. Thus, God is known as God with God, and therefore, he says "and in the secret there is Me". He is able to hear the speech of God with God without any intermediary, and there is the place for conversation (*muḥādathah*), and whispering (*munādamah*) and intimacy (*qurb al-qurb*) and union (*dunū al-dunū*) until he is drowned in the ocean of divinity (*laut 'ulūhiyyah*), having no opinion of his own and knowledge of his self.

### The Sufi Technical Terms

44. One of their technical terms is Union (*al-'ittiṣāl*): with regard to the term 'Light' (*nūr 'ittiṣāl*) means the unveiling (*mukāshafah*) of the heart and the contemplation (*mushāhadah*) of the secret.<sup>34</sup> Some Sufis said union (*'ittiṣāl*) is when the servant witnesses none other but his Creator, and when nothing crosses to his secret except God.

45. And another term is Arrival at God (*wuṣūl 'ilā'LLāh*): What is meant by arriving at God is to arrive at the knowledge of Him, that is to know that nothing acts and takes effect in this creation that possesses attributes and being existent except God based on taste (*dhawq*) and ecstasy (*wijdān*), not by logical proof (*dalīl*) and demonstration (*burhān*).

46. Vigilance (*murāqabah*): the servant is constantly aware that God is observing all his actions; it is also said that the meaning of vigilance (*murāqabah*) is the servant's acts, attributes and essence are made to pass away (*fanā'*) in God's Acts, His Attributes and His Essence.

<sup>34</sup> Al-Nūrī's popular definition of *al-'ittiṣāl* (union) mentioned in al-Kalabādhi (1960), *al-Ta'arruf li madhhab 'Ahl al-Taṣawwuf*, ed. 'Abd al-Halīm Maḥmūd, Cairo: Dār 'Ihyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīyah, p. 108.

47. Contemplation (*mushāhadah*): to contemplate God as the reality in every single atom (*dharrah*) that exists and to dissociate unworthy things from His Majesty.
48. Witnessing (*shuhūd*): to witness the Truth (*Haqq*) with the Truth (*Haqq*).
49. Self-Manifestation (*tajallī*): the unveiling of the seeker's heart with illuminations from the unseen world (*ghayb*). If the illumination comes from His Essence without any relation to any of the Attributes, then it is known as Self-Manifestation of the Essence (*tajallī dhāt*); and if it is from the Attributes, then it is known as Self-Manifestation of the Attributes (*tajallī ṣifāt*); and if it is from the Acts, then it is known as Self-Manifestation of the Acts (*tajallī 'af'āl*). The Self-Manifestation of Names (*tajallī 'asmā'*) is something that God has unveiled to the heart of the seeker through one of His Names whereby the seeker is passed away under the illumination of that Name. The seeker responds to whatever comes into being when God calls by that name. The Self-Manifestation of Attributes (*tajallī ṣifāt*) is something that God has unveiled from one of His Attributes to the heart of the seeker, and this happens after the passing away (*fanā'*) of his attribute. For instance, if God the Most Exalted were to manifest with the Attribute of hearing (*samā'*), then the seeker would be able to hear from all that exists, the vocal like animals, and the non-vocal like the tree, the stone and so on. The Self-Manifestation of Acts (*tajallī 'af'āl*) is something that God has unveiled to the heart of the seeker from His Acts in view of all that takes effect from the power of God the Most Exalted. It is He who initiates and stops what is known as subjective vision (*shuhūd yang ḥālī*), and the taste of it, none knows of it except those who are endowed with it. And it is here that it is said where a seeker may fall astray because he denies his acts, therefore, it is a must to strongly hold to the Prescribed Law (*sharī'ah*).
50. Longing (*al-shawq*): a desire to behold the Beloved.
51. Love (*mahabbah*): the heart's inclination to behold the beauty of the Divine Presence (*hadrat ketuhanan*).

52. State (*ḥāl*): thing which descends to the heart of the seeker from joy, sadness or awe. If it comes and goes inconsistently without his attempt and effort, it is called state (*ḥāl*). But if it is consistent, [and] it becomes his habits, it is called station (*maqām*). So, a state (*ḥāl*) is given, while a station (*maqām*) is acquired.

53. The Knowledge of Certitude (*'ilm al-yaqīn*): knowledge that is arrived at by rational evidence; The Eye of Certitude (*'ayn al-yaqīn*) is knowledge that is arrived at by sight; and the Real and True Certitude (*ḥaqq al-yaqīn*) is the passing away (*fanā'*) of the servant's attribute in God and subsisting (*baqā'*) in Him.

54. Obliteration (*al-tams*): the disappearance of all traces in God's Attributes; it is one of the kinds of passing away (*fanā'*).

55. The Gathering (*al-Jam'*): the witnessing of everything to be with God the Most Exalted and to lose one's power and will to God the Most Exalted.

56. The Gathering of Gathering (*jam' al-jam'*): the passing away (*fanā'*) of one's self and all created beings (*'akwān*) such that nothing exists except God the Most Exalted; this is called the degree of *'ahādīyyah*.

57. First Separation (*al-farq al-'awwal*): the state where the seeker sees creatures being veiled from the Truth, hence, he sees nothing but creatures only.

58. Second Separation (*al-farq al-thānī*): the state where the seeker, who is adept, (*muntahī*) sees all creatures subsist by the Truth, and unity in multiplicity and multiplicity in unity, one does not veil the other.

59. Isolation (*tajrīd*): the heart is free from what is other (than He) and created things in his heart and secret.

60. Piety (*taqwā*): to avoid committing sinful acts and to obey His commands, that is the piety of the general believers (*'awwām*), while the piety of the elect (*al-khawāṣṣ*) is to purify the heart from everything that may create doubt in God the Most Exalted.

61. Spiritual Aspiration (*himmah*): to direct the heart with all its spiritual strength toward the Real Truth in order to attain perfection for himself or others.
62. Sincerity (*'ikhlās*): to perform external acts in accordance with internal motives or to direct his acts of obedience to the Truth Most Glorious and Exalted or to purify his heart from seeing his own power and will.
63. Truthfulness (*ṣidq*): to render the external acts in agreement with the internal, or in other words, to render his intention true to God regardless of blame from others.
64. Awe (*al-haybah*): to be true to the Truth Most Exalted by disparaging all creatures, therefore, glorification is to verify the Greatness of the Truth Most Exalted by disdaining creatures.
65. Intimate Conversation (*munājāt*): the communication between the secret (*sirr*) and God, the Almighty King, while the heart is pure.
66. Uprightness (*ṣāliḥ*): to stand firm in fulfilling the right of God as well as the right of His servant, and to be consistent in obedience and to avoid prohibitions and not to follow his self desire.
67. The Saints (*walī/'awliyā'*): are those who are commanded to perform good deeds. Among the signs of the saints (*walī/'awliyā'*) are fine speech, excellent temperament, delightful countenance, generous, agreeable, forgiving, [and] kind toward God's creatures. Muḥammad son of Sahl son of 'Aṭā'<sup>35</sup> (may Allah bless him) said:

*"There are four signs of sainthood (walī); first: to preserve the secret between him and God the Most Exalted; second: to preserve his limb from transgressing God's command; third: to be patient in the affairs between him and other*

35

Perhaps he is the father of Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Sahl ibn 'Aṭā' al-'Adamā, the celebrated Sufi master who was a contemporary of al-Junayd al-Baghdādī and Ibrāhīm al-Marasānī. Shaykh Aḥmad died in the year 309/921. See al-Qushayrī (1987). *al-Risālah al-Qushayriyyah fī 'Ilm al-Taṣawwuf*, Beirut: Dār Usāmah, p. 40.

*creatures of God the Most Exalted; fourth: to accept the differences of the intellectual capacities among them”.*

68. Sufism (*taṣawwuf*): not to exceed the inner and outer meanings of the Prescribed Law (*sharī'ah*) by looking at the outer meaning in its inner meaning and also from the inner in its outer. As a result, a complete meaning is arrived at. Thus, it is said the outward aspect is clear from any sins, and the inward aspect is clear from any impurities.

69. The Prescribed Law (*al-sharī'ah*): to obey all God's commands and to avoid all His prohibitions.

70. The Love (*'ishq*), the Lover (*'āshiq*) and the Beloved (*ma'shūq*): the meaning of the love (*'ishq*) is like a gaze into the mirror, while the meaning of the lover (*'āshiq*) is like the clean mirror, and the meaning of the beloved (*ma'shūq*) is the image in the mirror. The gazer looking in the mirror is God's Essence, while the clean mirror is the permanent archetypes (*'a'yān thābitah*), and the image in the mirror is the relative existence (*wujūd 'idāfī*) which is desired by the permanent archetypes (*'a'yān thābitah*).

71. The Permanent Archetypes (*'a'yān thābitah*): refers to the reality of all things (*'ashyā'*) in the degree of [God's] knowledge, never once do they come into existence, for they are non-existent (*ma'dūm*) fixed in the knowledge of the Truth Most Exalted. Never once do they become manifest as exterior archetypes (*'a'yān khārijīyyah*) nor appear (*zāhir*) as individual existence (*wujūd 'aynī*). They remain in their state (*hāl*) in the interior condition (*buṭūn*) of being eternal, that is the Predespositions of the Essence (*shu'ūn dhāt*) that appear in the degree of *waḥdah* since the interior condition (*buṭūn*) is essential for them, while what becomes manifest are the exterior archetypes (*'a'yān khārijīyyah*) which are its characteristics (*ḥukum*), effects (*'āthār*) and concomitant (*lawāzim*) due to the existence of the Truth Most Exalted, since there is no other existence therefrom except the existence of the Truth Most Exalted.

72. Exterior Archetypes (*'a'yān khārijīyyah*) and Clothing (*'ilbās*) that which is associated with the word 'Be' (*kun*). It is called the world (*'ālam*), the second shadow (*zill*)

*al-thānī*)<sup>36</sup>, beings (*kā'ināt*)<sup>37</sup>, the being-existent (*mawjūdāt*) and also creatures (*makhlūq*).

73. Individuality (*Huwiyyah*): His pure Essence as conceived neither with any attributes nor without any attributes, and it is called the Reality of Realities (*ḥaqīqat al-ḥaqā'iq*). If it is conceived with any of the attributes above the essence, then it is called '*aḥādiyyah* (the Transcendent Oneness) and *al-'amā*' (the blind). If it is conceived with all the attributes of perfection (*ṣifāt kamālāt*), then it is called Divine Unity (*wāḥidiyyah*) and divinity (*'ilāhiyyah*). All these attributes of God, if they were under the control of Love and Mercy, then they are referred to as the Attribute of Beauty (*Jamāl*), or if they were to be under the control of His Overwhelming sway, then they are referred to as the Attribute of Majesty (*Jalāl*).

74. Ecstasy (*sukr*) and Sobriety (*ṣaḥw*); Ecstasy (*sukr*) means to be overwhelmed in one state while under intoxication from remembering the beloved. Sobriety (*ṣaḥw*) means to return to normalcy, that is to establish servanthood (*al-'ubūdiyyah*) toward God.<sup>38</sup>

75. Obliteration (*maḥw*) and Affirmation (*'ithbāt*); Obliteration (*maḥw*) means the loss of all attributes of one's self, while Affirmation (*'ithbāt*) means the affirmation of gifts from the beloved.

76. The Seeker (*murīd*) and The Sought (*murād*); The Seeker (*murīd*) is the one who seeks, while the Sought

<sup>36</sup> The Second Shadow (*zill al-thānī*), being a reflected shadow of the first, is referred to also as the First Intellect (*al-'aql al-'awwal*), the World of Spirits (*'alam al-arwāḥ*), the Perfect Man (*al-'insān al-kāmil*) and that which is other than God (*mā siwa Allāh*). See *Commentary*, p. 285

<sup>37</sup> *Mawjūdiyyah* means among others: (1) conditions or state of affairs (*ḥāl*); (2) coming-into-existence (*kawn*); (3) a series of coming-into-existence (*'akwān*); (4) is-ness (*kā'in*); (5) the being-existence (*mawjūd*). See Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam*, p. 295. See also *Commentary*, p. 263.

<sup>38</sup> It is the state of obedience; the intermediate state of the contemplative between *al-'ibādah* and *al-'ubūdiyyah*: it consists of fulfilling the rights due to the Lordship (*al-rubūbiyyah*) of God. See al-Jurjānī (1991), *Kitāb al-Ta'rīfāt al-Jurjānī*, edited by Abd al-Mun'im al-Ḥifnī, Cairo: Dār al-Rashād, p. 73.



(*murād*) is the one sought by God the Most Exalted.

77. God-given Knowledge (*'Ilm al-ladunnī*) is the knowledge that is attained without effort: it is a gift from God to His servants who are among the knowers.

78. Affirmation of Divine Unity (*tawhīd*): means to affirm the Oneness of God in His existence, and there are four types of; First: Affirmation of Divine Oneness (*tawhīd 'ulūhiyyah*); second: Affirmation of the Unity of Acts (*tawhīd 'af'āl*); third: Affirmation of the Unity of Attributes (*tawhīd ṣifāt*); and fourth: Affirmation of the Unity of Essence (*tawhīd dhāt*).<sup>39</sup> Affirmation of Divine Oneness (*tawhīd 'ulūhiyyah*) is to affirm that God is alone in His Divinity. Affirmation of the Unity of Acts (*tawhīd 'af'āl*) is to see that all acts are one, that it is He who creates and acts in creation, through intuition (*dhawq*) and ecstasy (*wijdān*). Affirmation of the Unity of Attributes (*tawhīd ṣifāt*) is to see all as one in respect to God, that is there is nothing living, knowing and powerful except God the Most Exalted, when his attributes, power and will are obliterated. Affirmation of the Unity of Essence (*tawhīd dhāt*) means nothing exists except God the Most Exalted and nothing is seen as existing except His existence, neither his self-existence nor his non-existence. Shaykh Abū al-Mawāhib Muḥammad Zayn al-'Ābidīn ibn Muḥammad al-Ghumrī<sup>40</sup> (may Allah bless him) said in his book, *Minaḥ al-'Ilāhiyyah*:<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Shaykh Muḥammad Nafīs al-Banjārī discussed this issue at length in his treatise *Durr al-Nafīs fī Bayān Waḥdat al-Af'āl wa al-'Asmā' wa al-Ṣifāt wa al-Dhāt Dhāt al-Taqdīs*. Makkah: al-Maṭba'ah al-Miriyyah al-Kā'inah bi Makkah al-Maḥmiyyah, 1315 A.H. This treatise was edited and romanised by Wan Muhammad bin Wan Ali as his M.A. thesis in 1973 at the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) entitled *Suntingan dan Anotasi Sebuah Kitab Tasawwuf Melayu Kurun Ketiga Belas Hijrah/ Kedelapan Belas Masihi: Ad-Durru'n-Nafīs Karangan Ash-Shaykh Muhammad Nafīs al-Banjariyy (rahimahu 'Llah!)*.

<sup>40</sup> He is Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghumrī Zayn al-'Ābidīn Sibī al-Marsafī. It is reported that he went to Makkah in 952 A.H./1545 C.E. and spent his life there for a period of time. But he died in Cairo soon after the year 970 A.H./1562 C.E. See GAL II, p. 440; S II, p. 463.

<sup>41</sup> The full title is *Minaḥ al-'Ilāhiyyah fī al-Taḥqīqāt al-Şāfiyyah*. See GAL S II, p. 463-464.

“There are four degrees of the affirmation of Divine Unity (*tawhīd*). First: the degree of declaring of ‘*there is no God but Allah*’ while the heart is neglectful and disobedient to God like the affirmation of divine unity (*tawhīd*) of a hypocrite (*munāfiq*). Second: the affirmation of divine unity (*tawhīd*) of the generality of Muslims, that is to declare ‘*there is no God but Allah*’ followed by the affirmation in the heart with what is declared. Third: the affirmation of divine unity (*tawhīd*) of those nearest to God (*muqarrabīn*), that is to contemplate with the eye of the heart through intuition (*kashf*) and the light of the Truth (*nūr al-ḥaqq*), seeing all things becoming manifest from God in a state (*ḥāl*). Fourth: the affirmation of divine unity (*tawhīd*) of the super elect (*khawāṣṣ al-khawāṣṣ*), that is nothing is seen in existence except the One God, and this is what the Sufis called passing away (*fanā*) in the affirmation of divine unity (*tawhīd*) since he sees nothing of his self because of seeing His God, and this is the furthest extent of the knowledge of unveiling (*kashf*), namely the witnessing of the veracious (*ṣiddīqīn*)”

## Conclusion

79. Know: A prerequisite for the novice who seeks God the Most Glorious and Exalted along the path of the People of God is to abide by the prescriptions of the law of our Prophet Muḥammad (Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him), that is to observe God’s commands and prohibitions. Then, he embarks on the journey following the path (*ṭarīqah*) of our Prophet Muḥammad (Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him), meaning to follow the way of the Prophet to the best of his ability. There is no other better station (*maqām*) than to follow the Prophet (Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him) in his practices and abstinences, acts and behaviour. There is no other way for him to arrive at God except by following the example of the Prophet (Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him) because he is the knower, that is he knows what is most preferred and loved by and what brings him near to God and His complete pleasure

(*riḍā*) for he has trodden the path himself. Hence, whoever follows him, there is no other station (*maqām*) that is better than his, and some have received love from God the Most Exalted who says:

*"Say (O Muḥammad): If ye do love God,  
follow me: Allah will love"*<sup>42</sup>

Hence, a grave neglect of God is when the servant forgets God and neglects His commands and His prohibitions, and is unmindful of his obligations toward His God. Whoever is forgetful of His God, may become a disbeliever (*kufur*), may God forbid us, since forgetfulness of God's commands and prohibitions follows from not maintaining the right and proper actions (*'adab*) before God.

80. The Sufis (may Allah be pleased with them) said: "Whoever does not preserve the roots (*'uṣūl*), he shall not arrive (*wuṣūl*)", meaning whoever does not follow the example of the Prophet (God's blessing and peace be upon him), is prohibited from arriving. What is meant by the roots (*'uṣūl*) is the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah, that is the way of the Prophet (God's blessing and peace be upon him). Thus, everything that is performed, be it prayer or fasting or other than these two, their origin must be ascertained, that is, they must be compared with the practices of the Prophet (Allah's blessing and peace be upon him), so that their legality become known, and as a result, their branches and fruits can be reaped, and they can be referred to as practice (*'amal*), and the sweetness of worship can be tasted and one is rewarded for these practices.

81. Some of the knowers said: "Every act of servitude to God (that you do) that is not rewarded in this world will not be rewarded in the Hereafter". So, by "being rewarded in this world", means to taste the sweetness of the act of worship while performing it. Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh<sup>43</sup>

<sup>42</sup> *Āli 'Imrān*, 3: 31

<sup>43</sup> Shaykh Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh al-Sakandarī was born in Egypt in the middle of the 7th/13th century, and he died there in the year 709 A.H./1309 A.D. The well-known Egyptian sufi who was the third great master of the Sufi order of the Shādhiliyyah, founded by Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī. For his detailed biographical background, see *Sufi Aphorisms*, pp. 1-14.

in his *Hikam*<sup>44</sup> said:

*"Whoever attains the fruit of his deeds right away,  
that is the sign of its acceptance (in the Hereafter)".*

Tasting the sweetness of the act of servitude to God is unattainable except at the station (*maqām*) of specific illuminative knowledge (*ma'rifah khass*) in which there is not a single sin (*ma'siat*) of showing-off (*riyā'*), pride (*'ujub*) and so on. The station of tasting the sweetness of the act of servitude to God cannot be attained unless there is a constant engagement in fighting against deplorable acts and those incited by desire (*nafsu*), since there can be no good deed unless there is hatred towards them and heaviness in the heart [in committing them] and it is truly a tough and difficult path that requires patience (*sabar*) in those who try to overpower them.

82. Whoever is patient in his difficulty, convenience and ease will follow. The first thing that he has to fight is his own lust (*hawā nafsu*), then his own desire (*keinginan*), then his love for the world. Then, he can enjoy the sweetness of servitude to God. In fact, he cannot taste the sweetness of the act of servitude to God unless he is true (*ṣahīh*) and upright (*mustaqīm*), that is to be in agreement with the prescribed law (*sharī'ah*) and true to the path, free from showing-off (*riyā'*) and vainglory (*sum'ah*). Due to this, God the Most Exalted signifies that:

*"But for such as fear the time when they will stand  
before (the Judgement Seat) of their Lord, there will be two  
Gardens."*<sup>45</sup>

The first Garden is the immediate one, that is the sweetness of obedience (*manis ta'at*) and the pleasure of intimate conversation (*munājāt*) and familiarity with all kinds of unveiling (*mukāshafah*) in accordance with his station (*maqām*). The second Garden is one with many layers, that

<sup>44</sup> Edited and translated into French by Paul Nwyia (1986) as *Ibn Ata' Allah et la naissance de la confrerie Sadilite*, Beyrouth: Librairies Orientale. For an English translation, see Victor Danner (1984), *Ibn 'Ata' Allah's Sufi Aphorisms*, Leiden: E. J. Brill.

<sup>45</sup> *Al-Rahmān*, 55: 46.

is given as a reward for those in the Garden who are of higher rank.

83. Thus, it is inappropriate for a novice who has tasted the sweetness in his intimate conversation (*munajāt*) of worship to stop there. He should not merely aim for this alone, but, in all earnestness, try to achieve it because it is a sign that his deeds are valid and a sign that his state (*ḥāl*) is strengthened, that he does not lose his sincerity (*'ikhlās*). He must devote his love only to God the Most Exalted, not to other than He since this is one of the veils (*ḥijāb*) for the traveler.

84. Shaykh Qāsim al-Jīlī<sup>46</sup> (may Allah grant him mercy) said: Know that between the servant and His God, there are seventy veils (*ḥijāb*) of darkness (*ẓulmah*) and light (*nūr*),<sup>47</sup> that are associated to the servant. What is meant by the veil (*ḥijāb*) is the distance between the servant and what is in conformity (*munāsabah*) to God, namely his disposition and desire toward God. The servant who is in search of God must not follow his self desire. A scholar compares the one who undertakes the journey to God to a traveler who reaches all the stations (*marāḥil*). During the journey, a traveler cannot do without an instructor who knows the right way, supplies, the means of travel, a companion, and arms in order to fight any threatening enemy.

85. Thus, the traveler needs a master (*shaykh*) to show him the right path who has already traveled the same path, one who knows its good and evil. And it is a must that he has plentiful supplies that is piety to God (*taqwā Allāh*), and means of travel that is spiritual aspiration (*himmah*), and a companion that is a fellow traveller who would accompany

<sup>46</sup> We have not been able to identify the biographical background of this scholar.

<sup>47</sup> Al-Ghazālī mentioned one tradition saying that Allah has seventy thousand veils of Light and Darkness, while some others said seven hundred veils. So, as for the fixing of the number of the veils, al-Ghazālī left this matter to the prophetic power. According to him, these veils among men are of three kinds, they are pure darkness, mixed darkness and light, and pure light. However, the subdivisions of these are numerous. See al-Ghazālī, *Mishkāt al-'Anwār*, p. 88.

him, and arms that is the Names of God ('*Asmā' Allāh*) as invocations (*dhikr*) to protect him from his enemy, that is the devil (*shayṭān*) and his self desire (*hawa nafs*), just as a traveler who passes through some lands and farms, and stops. Then, he continues on with his journey to the place that he desires. So, the traveler passes through stations (*maqām*) which are well-known among the people of God the Most Exalted, of which there are seven.

First: The Station of Darkness of what is other than God (*maqām zulumāt yang aghyār*), which is called the state of the soul that incites to evil (*nafs 'ammarāh bi al-sū'*).

Second: The Station of Lights (*maqām 'anwār*), which is called the state of the soul that censures itself (*nafs lawwāmah*).

Third: The Station of Secrets (*maqām 'asrār*), which is called the inspired soul (*mulhimah*).

Fourth: The Station of Perfection (*maqām kamāl*), which is called the state of the tranquil soul (*muṭma'innah*).

Fifth: The Station of Arrival (*maqām waṣāl*), which is called the soul that is pleased (*rāḍiyah*).

Sixth: The Station of the Self-Manifestation of Acts (*maqām tajalliyyāt 'af'āl*), which is also called the soul that is being pleased (*mardīyyah*).

Seventh: The Station of the Self-Manifestation of Attributes and Names (*maqām tajalliyyāt al-ṣifāt wa al-'asmā'*), which is also called the state of the perfect soul (*nafs kāmīlah*).

86. Each of the seven stations (*maqām*) veils the other, meaning whoever is in the Station of the Darkness (*maqām zulumāt*) is veiled from the Station of Lights (*maqām nūr*). And whoever is in the Station of Secrets (*maqām 'asrār*) is veiled from the Station of Perfection (*maqām kamāl*), and so forth. And whoever is at the Station of Attributes (*ṣifāt*) and Names (*asmā'*) is veiled from the Self-Manifestation of the Essence (*tajalli dhāt*). The Self-Manifestation of the Essence is obstructed because of the effulgence of darkness, like a man who looks at the sun and sees nothing.

87. Know, that the heart (*hati*) has several names; First: the breast (*ṣadr*). Second: the heart (*qalb*). Third: the inner heart (*fu'ād*). Fourth: the kernel (*lubb*). Fifth: the innermost heart (*shaghaf*). It is called the breast (*ṣadr*) because it is a place of the Light of Islam (*nūr al-Islām*), as God the Most Exalted says:

*"Is one whose heart Allah has opened to Islam,  
so that he has received Enlightenment from Allah"*<sup>48</sup>

It is called the heart (*qalb*) because it is the place of faith (*'imān*) as God the Most Exalted says:

*"He hath written Faith in their hearts"*<sup>49</sup>

It is called the inner heart (*fu'ād*) because it is the place of the illuminative knowledge (*ma'rifat*), as God says:

*"The (Prophet's) (mind and) heart in no way  
falsified that which he saw"*<sup>50</sup>

It is called the kernel (*lubb*) because it is the place of unity (*tawhīd*), as God says:

*"Verily in this are signs for men of understanding"*<sup>51</sup>

It is called the innermost heart (*shaghaf*) since it is the place of love (*maḥabbah*), as God says:

*"Truly hath he (Yūsuf) inspired her (Zulaykhā)  
with violent love"*<sup>52</sup>

### Admonition

88. Here is a lesson. Know O my bothers that the beginning of the journey is its end. Whoever embarks on the journey to God will arrive at God. Therefore, direct your acts of servitude (*'ibādah*) only to God, that is by

<sup>48</sup> *Al-Zumar*, 39: 22.

<sup>49</sup> *Al-Mujādalah*, 58: 22.

<sup>50</sup> *Al-Najm*, 53: 11.

<sup>51</sup> The Qur'anic verse is corrupted. There are two verses of the Qur'an which reflect the same meaning, one in *al-Zumar*, 39: 21, and the other one is in *Āli 'Imrān*, 3: 190. We believe that the author has referred to the latter.

<sup>52</sup> *Yūsuf*, 12: 30.

establishing servitude (*al-'ubūdiyyah*) to God, neither for the sake of self desire nor stations (*maqāmāt*) nor anything else.

89. Whoever knows with certainty that God the Most Exalted has the right over him willingly submits himself to God. And whoever knows that his acts belong to God the Most Exalted, then, he should place his trust (*tawakkal*) in Him, that is to submit all his acts toward God.

90. Everybody knows that this world will be destroyed and all things created will be demolished, and that all men - noble or not - will leave this world. Thus, a man whose heart is guided by his intellect will turn away from his anger and situation that would lead him to shame. He does not long for a position or a shelter. A man of intellect prefers something permanent to something transient. His heart is thus illuminated. He abhors this world, its grandeur and glory. He is more determined than ever to find God the Most Exalted, and as a result, unto God alone he asks for help in his journey towards Him. The means to achieve his goal is not stable throughout the journey until he arrives at the Presence of the Holy (*ḥaḍrat quds*),<sup>53</sup> the carpet of intimacy ('*uns*), the place of intimate supplication (*munājāt*), opening a conversation (*mufātaḥah*), anticipation (*muwājahah*), communion (*mujālasah*), conversation (*muḥādathah*), contemplation (*mushāhadah*) and attentive contemplation (*muṭāla'ah*). Thus, the Presence (of God) is a place for those of stable hearts, and a place of return and living.

91. What is meant by the Presence of the Holy (*ḥaḍrat quds*) is a state of sublime purity. And what is meant by intimacy ('*uns*) is a state of intimacy with his God. And what is meant by opening a conversation (*mufātaḥah*) is a state in which the Divine secret (*rahsia 'ilāhiyyah*) is disclosed. And what is meant by anticipation (*muwājahah*) is a state of beholding since the veils of darkness (*ḥijāb zulmāniyyah*) and light (*nūrāniyyah*) are lifted. And what is

<sup>53</sup> *Al-ḥaḍra*: the Presence of God or one of the Presences of God; one of the degrees of Reality viewed from the standpoint of the contemplative state. *Sufi Aphorisms*, p. 74.



meant by communion (*mujālasah*) is the meeting since he is free from the two kinds of polytheism (*shirk*) and from what is other than God the Most Exalted. And what is meant by conversation (*muḥādathah*) is the intimate conversation (*munājāt*) of his secret with God, and the contemplation (*mushāhadah*) of his God in every single atom (*dharrāt*)<sup>54</sup> that exists proper to what is contemplated.

*"It is God that doth encompass all things".*<sup>55</sup>

Then, he is attentively contemplating (*muṭāla'ah*) God with his God in all of his actions.

92. These are the eight things that God bestows upon His servant who seriously performs all His commands and abandons all His prohibitions, until God the Most Exalted loves him. As a result, he is granted with all kinds of noble states which cannot be described in any allusion, indicated by any symbols or thought of by any imagination (*citahati*). This is the state that is called the state of the gathering of the gathering (*jam' al-jam'*) and also the state of the passing away from the passing away (*fanā' al-fanā'*) and subsisting in God (*baqā' bi Allāh*). If the Prescribed Law (*Sharī'ah*) is lifted from heaven and what is imbued in nature (*ṭabī'ah*) is lifted from earth, by virtue of God's permission (*idhn*) and his steadfastness (*tamkīn*) and his deep rootedness (*rāsikh*) to certainty, he continues to perform the duties of servanthood (*ḥaqq 'ubūdiyyah*), and he does not submit to his evil disposition and negligence nor does he follow his desire and want for pleasure, but he remains steadfast on the path to God with God and from God and he shall leave it in the same manner as God says:

*"Say: "O my Lord! Let my entry be by the Gate of Truth and Honour,*

*and likewise my exit by the Gate of Truth and Honour;  
and grant me from Thy Presence an authority to aid (me)"*<sup>56</sup>

<sup>54</sup> See *Commentary*, pp. 122-128, a discussion on *dharr*.

<sup>55</sup> The verse is corrupted but its meaning refers to *Fuṣṣilat*, 41: 54.

<sup>56</sup> *Al-'Isrā'*, 17: 80.

Meaning: Say O Muḥammad! O my Lord let my entry be by the Gate of Truth and Honour - that is let me enter your gate by the virtue of Your Power and Will, not by my power and will, and let me exit through the true path, that is by submitting my self unto Your Power and Your Commands, and grant me the authority that will aid and guide me, and do not forsake me.

By Allah, it is He who guides to the truth, the Origin (*al-marāji'*) and the Return (*al-ma'āb*). Allah's blessing and peace be upon our leader Muḥammad, his family and his Companions, and all praises be to Allah, the Cherisher and the Sustainer of the worlds.

We completed this treatise namely  
*al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi fī Bayān Ramz 'Ahl al-Ṣūfi*  
(The Pure Beaker in Explaining the Sign  
of the Sufis), God Knoweth Best,  
written by Dāwūd bin 'Abd Allāh Faṭānī.

This treatise was transcribed  
by the poor and destitute  
'Abd al-Raḥmān bin 'Abd al-Ṣamad.  
Completed in the city of Makkah,  
on Friday afternoon,  
in the year 1295 of  
the Prophet's  
Migration.