The Organs of God: *Ḥadīth al-Nawāfil* in Classical Islamic Mysticism

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This article focuses on *ḥadīth al-nawāfil* ("the tradition concerning supererogatory works"), which is one of the most quoted traditions in Islamic mystical literature. The tradition describes how the believer may draw close to God and gain His love by performing supererogatory works, to such an extent that her organs become divine. The article discusses the significance of the *nawāfil* tradition in various mystical writings composed in the formative and classical periods of Islamic mysticism (third–seventh/ninth–thirteenth centuries), with special attention given to the writings of the influential mystic Muḥyī l-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240). The article likewise attempts to demonstrate the relevance of certain Shii conceptions to the understanding of *ḥadīth al-nawāfil* and its interpretations in Sunni mysticism.

The following divine saying (*ḥadīth qudsī*), commonly referred to in Islamic sources as *ḥadīth al-nawāfil* ("the tradition concerning supererogatory works," henceforth, the *nawāfil* tradition), is one of the most quoted traditions in Islamic mystical literature:

> Allah has said: Whoever treats a friend (*walī*) of mine with enmity, I declare war on him. There is nothing by which my servant draws close to me that is dearer to me than that which I have imposed (*iftaraḍtu*) upon him; and my servant does not cease to draw close to me by supererogatory works (*nawāfil*) until I love him, and when I love him, I become his hearing (*samʿ*) by which he hears, his sight (*baṣar*) by which he sees, his hand by which he forcibly seizes, and his leg by which he walks. If he asks me, I give him, and if he seeks my refuge, I grant it to him. There is no action of mine in which I waver more than [taking] the soul of a believer: he hates dying, and I hate doing him wrong.[1]

As reflected in this *nawāfil* tradition, central to Islamic mystical thought are (1) the pivotal role of obligatory (*farāʾiḍ*) and supererogatory religious actions in the advancement toward God, and (2) the notion that at the climactic end of this advancement God assumes control of the will and faculties of His beloved servant. In what follows I will discuss the significance of the *nawāfil* tradition in various mystical writings composed in the formative and classical periods of Islamic mysticism, i.e., from the third/ninth to the seventh/thirteenth centuries. A substantial part of my discussion will be dedicated to the celebrated mystic Muḥyī l-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240), who quotes or refers to the *nawāfil* tradition throughout his writings and whose influence on subsequent generations of mystics was such that he was known as *al-shaykh al-akbar*. I will also allude in passing to certain Shii conceptions that I believe are relevant to the understanding of the *nawāfil* tradition and its interpretations in Sunni

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1. Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ed. M. D. al-Bughā, 6 vols. (Damascus: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1987), 5: 2384–85 (*kitāb al-riqāq*); cf. Ibn Balabān, *al-Iḥsān bi-tartīb Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, ed. K. Y. al-Ḥūt, 7 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1987), 1: 280; al-Bazzār, *al-Baḥr al-zakhkhār al-maʿrūf bi-Musnad al-Bazzār*, ed. ʿĀ. b. Saʿd et al., 20 vols. (Beirut: Muʾassasat ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān, 1988–2009), 15: 270.

mysticism, thereby emphasizing once again the important role that the Shia played in the development of Islamic esotericism and mysticism.[2]

1. BACKGROUND

The hadith version quoted above from al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870) comprises four parts: (1) the war that God wages on the enemies of His friends (*awliyāʾ*, sg. *walī*); (2) the importance of supererogatory works in achieving divine love, as a result of which God becomes the very organs of His servant; (3) the theurgical power of the servant, who is able to invoke God and have his prayers answered (*ijābat al-daʿwa*); and (4) the "wavering" of God in taking the life of the believer.

In terms of their content, these four parts are not necessarily correlated, and it seems that they originally formed four disparate traditions.[3] Thus, in one early source the second and third parts stand alone as one tradition, albeit in a somewhat different version and with a divergent chain of transmission (*isnād*).[4] In other sources, the first and fourth components appear—again, with different wording and *isnād*—as separate or added to other traditions;[5] and in certain versions, the order of the four parts diverges and additional elements are added.[6] It should be noted that it is mainly the second part (often accompanied by the third) that one encounters in mystical literature.

The notion that the organs of God's intimate servant become divine is quite radical from the viewpoint of Islamic orthodoxy.[7] In fact, in certain versions of the *nawāfil* tradition, the

2. See M. A. Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide in Early Shiʿism: The Sources of Esotericism in Islam* (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1994); idem, *The Spirituality of Shiʿi Islam: Beliefs and Practices* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011).

3. See also W. A. Graham, *Divine Word and Prophetic Word in Early Islam* (Paris: Mouton, 1977), 174. The second and fourth parts may have been joined together due to their similar opening phrases (*wa-mā taqarraba* / *wa-mā yazālu* / *wa-mā taraddadtu*).

4. See Ibn al-Mubārak, *Kitāb al-Zuhd wa-yalīhi Kitāb al-Raqāʾiq*, ed. Ḥ. al-Aʿẓamī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2004), 304; cf. al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Adab al-nafs*, ed. A. al-Sāʾiḥ (Cairo: al-Dār al-Miṣriyya l-Lubnāniyya, 1993), 42–43. In yet another version (al-Kulaynī, *al-Uṣūl min al-Kāfī*, ed. ʿA. A. al-Ghifārī, 2 vols. [Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya, 1377–81*h*], 2: 354), the first, fourth, and third parts appear together (in this order), while the second one is missing altogether.

5. Al-Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-Zuhd*, ed. Y. Ibn Muḥammad and G. Ibn Ghanīm (Helwan, Egypt: Dār al-Mishkāt, 1993), 33; al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Nawādir al-uṣūl fī maʿrifat aḥādīth al-rasūl*, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1992), 2: 121–22 (*aṣl* 228); Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ wa-ṭabaqāt al-aṣfiyāʾ*, 10 vols. (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Saʿāda, 1932–38), 1: 4–5, 4: 32; al-Haythamī, *Majmaʿ al-zawāʾid wa-manbaʿ al-fawāʾid*, 10 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1982), 10: 269–70.

6. See, for example, the tradition going back to Anas b. Mālik (< Prophet < Jibrīl < Allāh) in Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, *al-Awliyāʾ*, ed. M. Zaghlūl (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Kutub al-Thaqāfiyya, 1993), 9; cf. al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilya*, 8: 318–19; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīkh madīnat Dimashq*, ed. ʿU. al-ʿUmrawī, 80 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1995–2001), 7: 95–96. The Bukhārī (n. 1 above) and Anas b. Mālik versions are the most common in mystical writings.

7. This anthropomorphic notion may have its roots in Christian, Gnostic, and other pre-Islamic traditions; see, for example, 1 Cor 6:15–20, 12: 1–31; Eph. 1:22–23, 4:1–16; M. Smith, *The Way of the Mystics: The Early Christian Mystics and the Rise of the Sufis* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978, repr. 1931 ed.), 236, 243, 253; A. D. DeConick, "How We Talk about Christology Matters," in *Israel's God and Rebecca's Children: Christology and Community in Early Judaism and Christianity*, ed. D. B. Capes et al. (Waco: Baylor Univ. Press, 2007), 1–23, esp. 19–23; idem, "Becoming God's Body: The KAVOD in Valentinianism," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1995 Seminar Papers*, ed. E. H. Lovering (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 23–36 (I am grateful to Yakir Paz for the last two references); *Philo*, 10 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1932–62), 7: 137 (= *The Special Laws*, 1: 65). In several sources, the tradition is attributed to Jesus or John the Baptist; see al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb fī muʿāmalat al-maḥbūb*, ed. S. N. Makārim, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 2007), 2: 199 (*faṣl* 33); al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilya*, 10: 81.

human organs and their divinization are omitted altogether.[8] On the other hand, in the early Shii milieu, particularly among disciples of the Imams Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. ca. 114/732) and Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765), anthropomorphic perceptions of God were not uncommon.[9] Moreover, in traditions going back to these early circles, the Imams, descendants of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, are mythically perceived as God's organs on earth:

> I [ʿAlī] am the eye of Allah, I am the hand of Allah, I am the flank (*janb*) of Allah [see Q 39:56] [. . .] I am the heart of Allah, which comprehends, the tongue of Allah, which speaks, and the eye of Allah, which looks; I am the flank of Allah and the hand of Allah. [. . .] We [Imams] are the tongue of Allah, the face of Allah, the eye of Allah among His created beings. [. . .] We are His ear, which hears, His eye, which looks, His tongue, which speaks with His permission.[10]

The Imams are the divine face (*wajh Allāh*) that never perishes (Q 28:88) and that grants access to God Himself, and they are the very attributes of God that enable created beings to gain knowledge of their creator.[11]

It is highly unlikely that the second part of the *nawāfil* tradition originated among Shii circles—it does not occupy a central place in Shii compilations and it is not interpreted therein as referring to the Imams.[12] It is more conceivable that it emerged among pious Sunni groups in the mid-second/eighth century.[13] Still, both the *nawāfil* tradition and the aforementioned Shii sayings reflect similar speculations on God and the organs of His chosen ones.[14] However, whereas according to the Shia the *awliyāʾ* (= the Imams) are God's organs, in the *nawāfil* tradition God is the organs of the *awliyāʾ*. Put differently, the Shiis claim that the

8. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad al-imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal*, ed. Sh. al-Arnaʾūṭ et al., 52 vols. (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1993–2008), 43: 261; Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, ed. M. Ibrāhīm, 16 vols. (Cairo: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyya, 1959–61), 11: 75. In another version and in contradistinction, two additional organs are found: "his heart by which he perceives and his tongue by which he speaks." Similarly, the eye (*ʿayn*) and ear (*udhn*) are explicitly mentioned, not "hearing" and "sight"; see al-Bazzār, *al-Baḥr al-zakhkhār*, 18: 137–38; cf., e.g., Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, *Awliyāʾ*, 23; Abū Yaʿlā, *Musnad Abī Yaʿlā l-Mawṣilī*, ed. Ḥ. S. Asad, 16 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Maʾmūn li-l-Turāth, 1984–94), 12: 520; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīkh*, 37: 277–78; al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-awsaṭ*, ed. A. Ṣ. Shaʿbān and S. A. Ismāʿīl, 10 vols. (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 1996), 9: 243–44.

9. For Hishām b. al-Ḥakam and Hishām b. Sālim al-Jawālīqī, see Amir-Moezzi, *Divine Guide*, 54, and refs. there; see also S. Wasserstrom, "The Moving Finger Writes: Mughīra b. Saʿīd's Islamic Gnosis and the Myths of Its Rejection," *History of Religions* 25 (1985): 1–29.

10. Al-Ṣaffār al-Qummī, *Baṣāʾir al-darajāt fī faḍāʾil Āl Muḥammad*, ed. M. Kūchah Bāghī ([Tehran]: Chāp-i Kitāb, 1380*h*), 61–62, 64–66. See also al-Kulaynī, *Uṣūl*, 1: 143–46; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, ed. J. al-ʿAlawī and M. al-Ukhwandī, 110 vols. (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya, 1376–1405*h*), 24: 191–203; A. R. Lalani, *Early Shīʿī Thought: The Teachings of Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2000), 83; Amir-Moezzi, *Divine Guide*, 45–46; idem, *Spirituality*, 112, 114–15, 389.

11. See M. Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy in al-Andalus: Ibn Masarra, Ibn al-ʿArabī and the Ismāʿīlī Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 146–48, and refs. there.

12. See, for example, al-Barqī, *Kitāb al-Maḥāsin*, ed. J. al-Ḥusaynī (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya, 1370*h*), 291; al-Kulaynī, *Uṣūl*, 2: 352.

13. See al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilya*, 10: 82; cf. L. Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallāj: Mystic and Martyr of Islam*, 4 vols. (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1982), 3: 36–37; idem, *Essay on the Origins of the Technical Language of Islamic Mysticism* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 172.

14. Note especially the addition of "his tongue by which he speaks" in certain versions of the *nawāfil* tradition (see n. 8 above), an addition much favored by the mystics. A similar expression applied to the Imams is found in Shii sources; see al-Ṣaffār al-Qummī, *Baṣāʾir*, 62; al-Kulaynī, *Uṣūl*, 1: 144. According to the Shii belief, the Imams function as the channel through which the living divine word reaches mankind. See Amir-Moezzi, *Divine Guide*, 79; idem, *Le Coran silencieux et le Coran parlant: Sources scripturaires de l'islam entre histoire et ferveur* (Paris: CNRS, 2011), 101–7, 115. Note also the resemblance between radical Shii sayings such as those quoted above and Sufi ecstatic utterances (*shaṭaḥāt*); see C. W. Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism* (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1985), 9–10, 14 n. 22; Amir-Moezzi, *Spirituality*, index, s.v. *shaṭḥ*.

Imams are the instrument by which God manages creation; they are therefore essential for the implementation of the divine plan and manifestation of God's will. Conversely, the hadith presents God, who assumes control of His servant's organs, as the instrument by which the *walī* operates; the *walī* is in need of God, not vice versa. The difference between these two approaches can also be defined in terms of an individual versus a collective perspective: while the *nawāfil* tradition focuses on the individual and her private relationship with God, the Shii perspective stresses the social, political, and even cosmic-universal implications of the relationship between God and His chosen ones, the mediators between the creator and the created. I shall return to this in the conclusion of this article.

Finally, it is plausible that the first part, "whoever treats a friend of mine with enmity, I declare war on him," originated within the early Shii milieu, or at least was interpreted therein as referring to the Imams and to their supporters who suffered persecution during Umayyad times.[15]

2. EARLY SUNNI MYSTICS, NINTH CENTURY

By the first half of the third/ninth century, the *nawāfil* tradition was already circulating among Sunni mystics. Al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857), the renowned mystic-theologian, quotes it as proof of the importance of both obligatory and supererogatory works for purifying the inner realm of man and for establishing mutual love between him and God.[16] At the same time, al-Muḥāsibī is careful to emphasize that the hadith does not imply that Allah "dwells" (*yaskunu*) in the organs of His servant, rather He assists the servant in obeying Him (*ṭāʿa*).[17] This conservative interpretation, which aims at mitigating the anthropomorphic and mythic elements inherent in the *nawāfil* tradition, is in line with al-Muḥāsibī's theological approach and ethico-psychological teachings. These teachings, which were to form the doctrinal basis for classical Sufi thought, focus on the religious duties imposed on man's heart (*qalb*), in addition to those incumbent upon his bodily organs (*jawāriḥ*).[18] The *nawāfil* tradition is also mentioned or referred to in the teachings attributed to Dhū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī (d. ca. 245/859f.) and Sahl al-Tustarī, who were likewise among those who laid the foundations of classical Sufism. In one saying attributed to Dhū l-Nūn, the *nawāfil* tradition serves to illustrate the pinnacle of the mystical path, when an individual, relinquishing her own will and resigning herself to the will of her Lord, begins to perceive, speak, and act by means of God;

15. See al-Kulaynī, *Uṣūl*, 1: 144–45, 2: 353; al-Muttaqī, *Kanz al-ʿummāl fī sunan al-aqwāl wa-l-afʿāl*, ed. B. Ḥayyānī and Ṣ. al-Saqā, 18 vols. (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1979), 12: 96–97. Cf. the well-known Ghadīr Khumm tradition, in which the Prophet declared that "those whose master (*mawlā*) I was, ʿAlī is their master; O Allah, befriend his [ʿAlī's] friends and treat his enemies with enmity (*wāli man wālāhu wa-ʿādi man ʿādāhu*)." The origins of this Shii tradition go back to the first half of the second/eighth century if not before; see W. F. Madelung, "The *Hāshimiyyāt* of al-Kumayt and Hāshimī Shiʿism," *Studia Islamica* 70 (1989): 5–26, at 8; Lalani, *Early Shīʿī Thought*, 70–73; M. Sharon, "Ahl al-Bayt—People of the House," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 8 (1986): 169–84, at 172.

16. See al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilya*, 10: 99.

17. Al-Muḥāsibī, *al-Masāʾil fī aʿmāl al-qulūb wa-l-jawāriḥ*, ed. Kh. ʿI. al-Manṣūr (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2000), 75.

18. See J. van Ess, *Die Gedankenwelt des Ḥāriṯ al-Muḥāsibī* (Bonn: Orientalische Seminar der Universität Bonn, 1961). The attempt to mitigate the anthropomorphic dimension of the *nawāfil* tradition is also discernible in the teachings of al-Tustarī (d. 283/896) and al-Kalābādhī (d. 380s/990s); see al-Tustarī, *Tafsīr al-Tustarī*, ed. M. ʿU. al-Sūd (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2002), 60, 137; al-Kalābādhī, *Baḥr al-fawāʾid al-mashhūr bi-Maʿānī l-akhbār*, ed. M. Ḥ. Ismāʿīl and A. F. al-Mazyadī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1999), 44–45, 379.

her perception, words, and actions are thus divine.[19] As we shall see, this would become a leitmotif in Sufi references to the *nawāfil* tradition.

A more radical interpretation of the *nawāfil* idea—albeit without an explicit reference to the hadith itself—is found in the sayings ascribed to Abū Yazīd Ṭayfūr b. ʿĪsā l-Bisṭāmī (d. 261/874f., or perhaps earlier, 234/848f.).[20] In one, al-Bisṭāmī states that when the believer

> wills (*fa-shāʾa*) by the will (*bi-mashīʾat*) of Allah and looks in agreement with Allah;[21] and his heart is raised high by the high rank of Allah and his soul is set in motion by the power (*qudra*) of Allah; and this servant is present wherever he wills by the will of Allah, may He be exalted, and alights in every place, wherever Allah wills, with his/His knowledge and power—then this servant is with Him in every place and no place is devoid of him.[22]

The mystic, whose will and actions have become divine, is granted superhuman powers. Like God Who is present everywhere, the mystic is able to travel with his mental-spiritual energy wherever he desires: "everything comes to him effortlessly while he remains still; the entire East and West come to him."[23] In an even more radical passage, al-Bisṭāmī is said to have gone through a mystical experience in which God

> transformed me from my own individuality into His being;[24] by His being He removed me from my own being and showed me His being as One; and I looked at Him by His being. And when I looked at the Truth (*ḥaqq*) by the Truth I saw the Truth by the Truth. I remained for a time in the Truth by the Truth, with neither a breath [or, soul, *nafas*/*nafs*] nor a tongue nor an ear nor knowledge. Then Allah created for me knowledge from His knowledge, a tongue from His speech,[25] and an eye from His light. I looked at Him by His light and received knowledge from His knowledge and secretly conversed with Him (*nājaytuhu*) by the tongue of His speech.[26]

Having had his organs transformed into divine luminous ones, al-Bisṭāmī obtained divine knowledge, came to know God, and even received a beatific vision of Him. He then describes how he was repeatedly lured into viewing himself as God, yet managed to resist. The reader thus understands that even at the height of the mystical experience, when the lines separating "I" from "Thou" are blurred, it is imperative to remember that one is nothing but a passive receptacle for God's activity. God is the source of each and every action and is its ultimate goal, both its subject and object; the believer serves only as an instrument, a channel through which the divine energy flows. At the same time, the monologue portrays the supreme mystic—al-Bisṭāmī himself, no doubt—as the substrate on which and through

19. Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-awliyāʾ*, ed. R. A. Nicholson, 2 vols. (London: Luzac, 1905), 1: 127–28. On Dhū l-Nūn, see M. Ebstein, "Ḏū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī and Early Islamic Mysticism," *Arabica* 61 (2014): 559–612. For al-Tustarī, see G. Böwering, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam: The Qurʾānic Hermeneutics of the Ṣūfī Sahl at-Tustarī (d. 283/896)* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1980), 169.

20. On al-Bisṭāmī, see *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Three, "al-Bisṭāmī, Abū Yazīd (Bāyazīd)" (J. Mojadeddi); A. T. Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 2007), 3–5, and refs. there. The largest group of sayings ascribed to al-Bisṭāmī was collected by Abū l-Faḍl Muḥammad b. ʿAlī l-Sahlajī (d. ca. 475/1083) (see n. 22 below).

21. *Bi-muwāfaqat Allāh*, viz., in agreement with His will and commandments.

22. Al-Sahlajī, *al-Nūr min kalimāt Abī Ṭayfūr*, ed. ʿA. al-R. Badawī as *Shaṭaḥāt al-ṣūfiyya* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍa l-Miṣriyya, 1949), 75.

23. Ibid. Also pp. 78, 112, 125.

24. Literally, from my I-ness (*anāʾiyyatī*) to His He-ness (*huwiyyatihi*). In philosophical parlance, *huwiyya* can also be translated as "individuality" or "identity, sameness"; see P. Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus: A Philosophical Study of the Theology of Aristotle* (London: Duckworth, 2002), 125–26.

25. I read *nuṭqihi* instead of *luṭfihi*; see n. 14 above.

26. Al-Sahlajī, *Nūr*, 138.

which God becomes known to mankind. Having replaced al-Bisṭāmī's attributes (*ṣifāt*) with divine ones, God commands him to

> go out among My created beings with My attributes, that I may show My being in yours; whoever will see you will see Me, and whoever will direct himself toward you will direct himself toward Me—O, light of Mine on My earth and ornament of Mine in My heaven [see Q 37:6].[27]

Although—or perhaps because—al-Bisṭāmī is reluctant to assume this tempting mission and is careful once again not to take himself for God, eventually, so we are told, "He eradicated me with His existence (*bi-kawnihi*), manifested Himself in me with His essence (*ẓahara fiyya bi-dhātihi*), and I was by Him"; also, "my attributes became the attributes of lordship (*rubūbiyya*), my tongue the tongue of unification (*lisān al-tawḥīd*), and my attributes He: He is He, there is no God but Him."[28] It is by way of this background that we better understand various sayings attributed to al-Bisṭāmī that present God's intimate friend—specifically al-Bisṭāmī himself, who stands above all fellow mystics—as the vehicle for divine revelation on earth, as the mediator through whom, on the one hand, man attains knowledge of God and reaches salvation (viz., paradise), and, on the other, Allah manages creation.[29]

Thus, contrary to al-Muḥāsibī's approach, the sayings ascribed to al-Bisṭāmī accentuate the mythic dimension inherent in the *nawāfil* tradition. The divine powers that flow through the mystic set him apart from the rest of mankind; they grant him miraculous abilities, and, what is more, they endow him with the role of intermediary between the Creator and the created. The teachings attributed to al-Bisṭāmī are thus close in spirit to the Shii vision delineated above: the *awliyāʾ* are the instruments by which God accomplishes His will in the world.

A similar radical outlook is reflected in the works of al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī (d. ca. 295/907).[30] Heralding Ibn al-ʿArabī, al-Tirmidhī ascribed great importance to the *nawāfil* tradition: not only did he refer to it in some of his treatises but he also dedicated a whole chapter to its explanation in his celebrated book on Prophetic traditions, *Nawādir al-uṣūl*.[31] Al-Tirmidhī adopts the ethico-psychological perspective of al-Muḥāsibī, centered on man's struggle against his lower self and ego (*nafs*). According to al-Tirmidhī, the mystic whom Allah has chosen to be His friend (*walī Allāh*, contrary to *walī ḥaqq Allāh*, i.e., one who is preoccupied with what is due to Allah rather than with Allah Himself) is in God's possession (*qabḍa*) and is therefore protected from his evil desires and from the machinations of his *nafs*. This state is illustrated in the *nawāfil* tradition: the *walī Allāh*, whose actions are divine, has reached a decisive victory in the battle against Satan and his agent, the lower self of man.[32] Al-Tirmidhī goes one step beyond al-Muḥāsibī's introverted perspective, however,

27. Ibid., 139 (cf. pp. 99, 116, 122–23); al-Sarrāj, *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ fī l-taṣawwuf*, ed. R. A. Nicholson (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1914), 381–82. Note that in explaining al-Bisṭāmī's saying, al-Sarrāj quotes the *nawāfil* tradition (pp. 383–84).

28. Al-Sahlajī, *Nūr*, 140–41.

29. See, for instance, ibid., 76, 99 (cf. al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilya*, 1: 9), 112, 125 (cf. p. 78); Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*, ed. ʿA. S. al-Manṣūb, 12 vols. (Tarim: Wizārat al-Thaqāfa, 2010), 8: 106 (chap. 336), 12: 341 (chap. 559, *wa-min dhālika l-tarāʾī*).

30. On al-Tirmidhī, see S. Sviri (Burg), "The Mystical Psychology of al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmiḏī" (PhD thesis, Tel Aviv Univ., 1979); B. Radtke, *Al-Ḥakīm at-Tirmiḏī: Ein islamischer Theosoph des 3./9. Jahrhunderts* (Freiburg: K. Schwarz, 1980).

31. Al-Tirmidhī, *Nawādir*, 1: 429–38 (*aṣl* 162). On the *nawāfil* tradition in al-Tirmidhī's writings, see also Sviri, "Mystical Psychology," 91, refs. on p. 285.

32. Al-Tirmidhī, *Kitāb Sīrat al-awliyāʾ*, in *Drei Schriften des Theosophen von Tirmiḏ*, ed. B. Radtke (Beirut: Franz Steiner, 1992), 34; see also idem, *Jawāb Kitāb min al-Rayy*, in *Drei Schriften*, ed. Radtke, 184.

and claims that the supreme mystic, who stands at the summit of the human spiritual hierarchy and is called "the chief of Allah's friends" (*sayyid al-awliyāʾ*) and "leader of His created beings" (*imām khalqihi*), hears, sees, knows, etc., by means of God. He is "employed" (*mustaʿmal*) by God so that

> he guarantees the safety of the inhabitants on earth and draws the looks of the inhabitants in heaven as well as those of Allah's chosen ones (*khāṣṣat Allāh*). He is the target at which Allah looks, he is His means of punishment (*sawṭuhu*, lit. His whip) among His created beings. Allah edifies by his speech and by his girdle He brings created beings back to His path; in his girdle He has placed a shackle for the hearts of the unifiers (*muwaḥḥidīn*) and a separation between truth and falsehood.[33]

The chief of Allah's friends, whose knowledge is of divine origin,[34] serves as a cosmic mediator between the Creator and creation: it is through him that both the physical wellbeing and spiritual salvation of created beings are attained,[35] and, as a result, God accomplishes His design in the world. This leader of mankind—perhaps al-Tirmidhī himself[36]—derives his authority from the divine will (*mashīʾa*) and is described as a *muḥaddath* (one to whom God or an angel speaks), two prerogatives that in Shii eyes are enjoyed by the Imams.[37] Hence, like al-Bisṭāmī, al-Tirmidhī portrays God's friends in colors reminiscent of the Shia: the supreme *walī* functions as a divine instrument on earth, as the means by which God implements His will in the world.

3. AL-JUNAYD AND HIS CIRCLE

The *nawāfil* tradition and the notions reflected therein figure prominently in the teachings of a Sunni contemporary, al-Junayd (d. 298/910), a central figure in the formative history of Sufism.[38] According to al-Junayd, the *nawāfil* tradition alludes to the sublime experience in which the mystic's awareness of self and of human attributes is annihilated (*fanāʾ*, *maḥw*) and only God remains in his consciousness as the one true existence (*wujūd*). In this situation, the mystic mentally returns to his state of non-existence before creation, when the primordial covenant with God (*mīthāq*) was concluded (see Q 7:172–73). The mystic's perception and knowledge become divine, given that it is in fact God Who now acts through him.[39] Abū

33. Al-Tirmidhī, *Sīrat al-awliyāʾ*, 94. For the epithet *imām khalqihi*, see idem, *Nawādir*, 1: 339 (*aṣl* 123).

34. Al-Tirmidhī, *Jawāb*, 184.

35. Al-Tirmidhī, *Nawādir*, 1: 242–43 (*aṣl* 72), 339 (*aṣl* 123); idem, *Sīrat al-awliyāʾ*, 44–46, 119, 125.

36. See Radtke, *Al-Ḥakīm at-Tirmiḏī*, 7, 10–11, 91, 93, 95; B. Radtke and J. O'Kane, *The Concept of Sainthood in Early Islamic Mysticism: Two Works by al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon, 1996), 10, 207 n. 1.

37. Al-Tirmidhī, *Sīrat al-awliyāʾ*, 94–95 and index, s.v. *ḥ-d-th*; idem, *Nawādir*, 1: 253 (*aṣl* 75). For Shii sources, see E. Kohlberg, "The Term *Muḥaddath* in Twelver Shīʿism," in *Studia Orientalia: Memoriae D. H. Baneth Dedicata* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1979), 39–47, repr. in idem, *Belief and Law in Imāmī Shīʿism* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1991), V; Amir-Moezzi, *Divine Guide*, 70–71. On the importance of divine will in Shii thought, see E. Krinis, *God's Chosen People: Judah Halevi's Kuzari and the Shīʿī Imām Doctrine* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 189–240. The concept of *muḥaddathūn* reappears in the oeuvre of Ibn al-ʿArabī; see, for instance, Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, 4: 301–3 (chap. 73, *al-muḥaddathūn*), 483–84 (ques. 54), 488–90 (ques. 57).

38. On al-Junayd, see A. H. Abdel-Kader, *The Life, Personality and Writings of al-Junayd* (London: Luzac, 1962); Karamustafa, *Sufism*, 15–18.

39. See al-Junayd, *Kitāb al-Fanāʾ*, in Abdel-Kader, *Life*, 32–34 (Arab.); (Pseudo) Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, *ʿIlm al-qulūb*, ed. ʿA. ʿAṭā (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qāhira, 1964), 95 (on this work see S. Yazaki, "A Pseudo-Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī? The Authenticity of *ʿIlm al-Qulūb*," *Arabica* 59 [2012]: 650–84); al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla l-qushayriyya* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Kutub al-Thaqāfiyya, 2000), 317–18 (*bāb al-maḥabba*); Karamustafa, *Sufism*, 16–17.

Saʿīd al-Kharrāz (d. ca. 286/899), who was affiliated with the Sufi circle in Baghdad,[40] similarly points to the divine origin of the mystic's knowledge. The limbs, joints, and organs of the mystic's body

> are filled with the light of Allah. He knows (*yaʿrifu*) naught but Allah; all his knowledge (*ʿilmuhu*) is from Allah; and so he is from Allah, by Allah, to Allah, and with Allah. [. . .] When he who possesses divine knowledge (*ʿārif*) returns to the true reality of faith (*ḥaqīqat al-īmān*), he realizes that he belongs to Allah, that his movements are by Allah, and that he remembers (*dhakara*) Allah by Allah's will when Allah wills (*arāda*); for his organs belong to Allah and he is unable to do anything save by Allah's permission.[41]

Significantly, al-Kharrāz stresses the firm link between obligatory and supererogatory works, on the one hand, and divine love, on the other. Love is total submission to the will of the beloved; hence, fulfilling the religious commandments is a true sign of man's love toward God.[42] The theme of love, rooted in the Quran (3:31) and reflected in the *nawāfil* tradition itself ("until I love him, and when I love him"), will resurface in the teachings of later mystics. The motif of divine light in al-Kharrāz's passage above echoes another hadith that, like the *nawāfil* tradition, is widespread in mystical literature.[43] The light motif is found as well in the sayings attributed to al-Bisṭāmī, in the teachings of al-Nūrī (d. 295/907f.), who also belonged to the Baghdadian circle of al-Junayd;[44] and it will reappear in later mystical writings.

4. SUFI COMPILATIONS AND MANUALS, TENTH TO ELEVENTH CENTURIES

References to the *nawāfil* tradition are found in virtually all of the Sufi works of the classical period: by, e.g., al-Sarrāj (d. 378/988), al-Kalābādhī (d. 380s/990s), Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 386/996), al-Khargūshī (d. ca. 407/1016), al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021), al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072), al-Jullābī l-Hujwīrī (d. ca. 469/1077), and al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111).[45] For the purposes of the current discussion, two main points should be emphasized. First, in their references to the *nawāfil* tradition, these authors adhere to the introverted, ethico-psychological perspective of al-Muḥāsibī or, following in the footsteps of al-Junayd and perhaps Dhū

40. See Karamustafa, *Sufism*, 7–10, and refs. there; P. Nwyia, *Exégèse coranique et langage mystique: Nouvel essai sur le lexique technique des mystiques musulmans* (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1970), 231–310.

41. Al-Kharrāz, *Kitāb al-Ṣafāʾ*, in *Rasāʾil al-Kharrāz*, ed. Q. al-Sāmarrāʾī (Baghdad: al-Majmaʿ al-ʿIlmī l-ʿIrāqī, 1967), 26–27.

42. Al-Kharrāz, *Kitāb al-Ṣidq*, ed. A. J. Arberry (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1937), 48–49; for the *nawāfil* tradition, pp. 7–8. Al-Tirmidhī (*Nawādir*, 1: 435 [*aṣl* 162]) likewise refers to divine love in his discussion of the *nawāfil* tradition.

43. See Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, ed. M. F. ʿAbd al-Bāqī, 5 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1983), 1: 526 (*kitāb ṣalāt al-musāfirīn*): "[The Prophet]'s prayer included: O Allah! Put light in my heart, light in my sense of sight and light in my sense of hearing, light on my right and light on my left, light above me and light beneath me, light in front of me and light behind me. . ."; cf. p. 529. For this tradition in Sufi sources, see, for instance, al-Sarrāj, *Lumaʿ*, 408; al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*, 1: 16–17 (*faṣl* 3); al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, 6 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Khayr; 1994), 3: 138–39 (*kitāb sharḥ ʿajāʾib al-qalb*).

44. See al-Nūrī, *Maqāmāt al-qulūb*, in *al-Taṣawwuf al-baghdādī wa-l-taṣawwuf al-khurāsānī: Thalāth rasāʾil*, ed. Q. al-Sāmarrāʾī (Baghdad: al-Warrāq, 2013), 30–31. For al-Nūrī, see Karamustafa, *Sufism*, 11–15, and refs. there; Nwyia, *Exégèse*, 316–48.

45. For these authors, see Karamustafa, *Sufism*, index. For al-Makkī, see also S. Yazaki, *Islamic Mysticism and Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī: The Role of the Heart* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2013). For al-Ghazālī, see also the extensive bibl. in F. Griffel, *al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2009); K. Garden, *The First Islamic Reviver: Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī and His Revival of the Religious Sciences* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2014).

l-Nūn, they employ the *nawāfil* tradition to illustrate the nature and personal outcome of the individual's mystical experience—a loss of self-consciousness and the obliteration of her human attributes, as a result of which God assumes control of her mind and body and her knowledge and actions become divine.[46] Second, akin to al-Kharrāz and al-Tirmidhī, they highlight the aspect of love inherent in the hadith, which is often quoted in their chapters on love.[47] The emphasis on love reflects inter alia the orthodox view of these writers as regards the Sharia and religious praxis: one cannot draw closer to God and attain His love without performing religious works; strictly adhering to God's law is thus a true sign of divine election and divine love.[48]

Given the intimate relationship between the mystic, whose perception, words, and actions are divine, and God, it would only be natural to view the mystic as a mediator between the Creator and created beings, as a divine instrument on earth through whom God manifests Himself to the world. However, such a view, typical of the Shia as well as al-Bisṭāmī and al-Tirmidhī, is rarely found in the references to the *nawāfil* tradition in Sufi compilations and manuals from the tenth and eleventh centuries. Al-Ghazālī, for instance, mentions a "hidden correspondence" (*munāsaba bāṭina*) between God and man that is one of the factors that produces divine love, but avoids any further discussion of the matter, explaining that such issues must never be put down in writing.[49] He briefly explains that this mysterious correspondence is alluded to in the Quranic description of man as a "vicegerent" (*khalīfa*) of Allah (e.g., 38:26) and in a few other verses and Prophetic traditions of an anthropomorphic nature. He adds that this similarity between God and man manifests itself when the believer assiduously performs supererogatory works—in accordance with the *nawāfil* tradition. Yet, clearly, al-Ghazālī felt uneasy with the anthropomorphic-mythic notion that man is somehow a manifestation of divinity, or might serve as a divine instrument on earth—a notion implicit in the *nawāfil* tradition that inevitably leads to questions of religio-political authority, as will become clear below. On the other hand, it was exactly such delicate problematic questions that appealed to the great Muḥyī l-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī.

5. *AL-SHAYKH AL-AKBAR*

As noted earlier, Ibn al-ʿArabī quotes or refers to the *nawāfil* tradition throughout his writings, more than any other author before him.[50] In fact, it forms one of the main axes

46. See al-Sarrāj, *Lumaʿ*, 383–84; al-Kalābādhī, *al-Taʿarruf li-madhhab ahl al-taṣawwuf*, ed. A. Shams al-Dīn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2001), 140 (chap. 57), 142–43 (chap. 59), 155 (chap. 62); al-Qushayrī, *Risāla*, 72 (*bāb fī tafsīr alfāẓ*); idem, *Tafsīr al-Qushayrī l-musammā Laṭāʾif al-ishārāt*, ed. S. Quṭayfa, 3 vols. (Cairo: al-Maktaba l-Tawfīqiyya, 1999), 3: 99, 6: 282; al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 1: 94 (*kitāb al-ʿilm*).

47. See al-Sarrāj, *Lumaʿ*, 59; al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*, 2: 108, 131 (both *faṣl* 32); al-Khargūshī, *Kitāb Tahdhīb al-asrār*, ed. B. M. Bārūd (Abu Dhabi: al-Majmaʿ al-Thaqāfī, 1999), 63, 76; al-Qushayrī, *Risāla*, 309–10, 317–18 (*bāb al-maḥabba*); al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, ed. V. Zhukovskii (Leningrad, 1926), 393, tr. R. A. Nicholson (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1911), 304–5; al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 5: 220–23 (*Kitāb al-maḥabba*).

48. Al-Kalābādhī, *Baḥr al-fawāʾid*, 377–84; al-Sulamī, *Ziyādāt ḥaqāʾiq al-tafsīr*, ed. G. Böwering (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1995), 176; al-Qushayrī, *Risāla*, 85 (*Bāb fī tafsīr alfāẓ*). For the *nawāfil* tradition in classical Sufi literature, see also M. Rustom, "Approaches to Proximity and Distance in Early Sufism," *Mystics Quarterly* 33,1–2 (2007): 1–25.

49. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 5: 195–96 (*kitāb al-maḥabba*). See also the mitigating explanations of *fanāʾ* in al-Kalābādhī, *Taʿarruf*, 142–51; al-Sarrāj, *Lumaʿ*, 427, 433; cf. al-Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif al-maʿārif*, ed. M. ʿA. al-ʿA. al-Khālidī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1999), 297 (chap. 61); for the *nawāfil* tradition, see also p. 58 (chap. 10).

50. For basic introductions to the thought of Ibn al-ʿArabī, see W. C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-ʿArabi's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1989); idem, *The Self-Disclosure*

around which Akbarian teachings revolve. These teachings focus on the reciprocal relationship between the Creator and the created and the indissoluble bond that unites them; at the same time, Ibn al-ʿArabī holds that the relationship between God and the world ultimately consists of two sides that are ontologically different from each other. This unity versus duality is reflected, at least in Ibn al-ʿArabī's eyes, in the *nawāfil* tradition.[51] Dividing Ibn al-ʿArabī's discussions of the hadith into two main categories—those in which he echoes themes familiar from classical Sufi literature and those in which he expresses his own novel and radical ideas—is rather artificial, as one finds classical Sufi themes intermingled with Akbarian ideas and vice versa; yet it is useful and will serve us well for the purposes of the current examination.

5.1 Familiar Sufi Themes

Like the Sufi scholars who preceded him, Ibn al-ʿArabī repeatedly stresses that God is the ultimate agent of all activity within creation; man should acknowledge that God is the true author of human actions and that we are nothing but an "instrument compelled by the hand of the powerful Truth (*ḥaqq*)," as is evident from the *nawāfil* tradition.[52] The mystic who has realized this in all aspects of his life and being begins to see, hear, and know by means of God; God becomes his very organs and faculties. Consequently, the mystic is able to receive divine revelations (*tajallī*); his knowledge of all things (*maʿrifa*, *ʿilm*) is divine; and he acquires true knowledge of God Himself, since, in reality, it is God Who knows Himself through the mystic.[53] Moreover, the mystico-eschatological vision of God (*ruʾya*), in this world (for mystics) or in the next (for others), is interpreted by Ibn al-ʿArabī in reference to the *nawāfil* tradition: God becomes the eye or sight of man and thus can be seen. "[God] is He who sees, He is the means by which sight occurs, and He is the object of sight."[54]

Specifically, and following in the footsteps of al-Junayd and others, Ibn al-ʿArabī interprets the *nawāfil* tradition as relating to the experience of *fanāʾ*, self-annihilation. When the mystic or, rather, the perfect human being (*al-insān al-kāmil*) attaches himself to the Truth (*ittiṣāl bi-l-ḥaqq*),

> He is annihilated from himself through this attachment, and the Truth manifests Himself (*fa-yaẓharu*) once He becomes his hearing and sight. This is what is called "the science of tasting" (*ʿilm al-dhawq*). The truth does not become any of these [bodily] tools unless they are burned by His existence (*bi-wujūdihi*), and then it is He, not them. I have indeed tasted this once: I felt a sensory burning while recollecting (*dhikrī*) Allah by means of Allah, and it was He and I wasn't. I felt a burning in my tongue.

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of God: Principles of Ibn al-ʿArabī's Cosmology (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1998); M. Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints: Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn ʿArabī* (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1993); see also www.ibnarabisociety.org.

51. See, for instance, Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, 3: 493 (chap. 71, *waṣl fī faṣl ṣiyām yawm al-shakk*), 6: 79 (chap. 185), 10: 55–57 (chap. 389), 107–9 (chap. 399). On the *nawāfil* tradition in Ibn al-ʿArabī's thought, see also Chittick, *Sufi Path*, 325–31; M. Rustom, "Ibn ʿArabī on Proximity and Distance: Chapters 260 and 261 of the *Futūḥāt*," *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society* 41 (2007): 93–107 (www.ibnarabisociety.org/articles/proximity-and-distance.html).

52. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, 4: 330 (chap. 73, *al-sājidūn*), 5: 66–67 (ibid., *al-fāsiqūn*).

53. Ibid., 4: 457 (chap. 73, ques. 35), 5: 538–39 (chap. 177), 8: 358 (chap. 351, *waṣl al-ḥudūd al-dhātiyya*), 10: 219 (chap. 421), 306 (chap. 450).

54. Ibid., 3: 424 (chap. 71), 10: 236–38 (chap. 425).

The *nawāfil* tradition thus alludes to mystical "tasting" and the loss of self-awareness during *dhikr*: at the climax of this experience, God "burns" the physical organs of man and assumes control in their stead.[55]

The light motif, which we have encountered in the teachings of al-Bisṭāmī, al-Kharrāz, and al-Nūrī, and which is also found in the work of Ibn al-ʿArabī's predecessor and compatriot Ibn Barrajān (d. 536/1141),[56] resurfaces in his own writings alongside the *nawāfil* tradition. According to Ibn al-ʿArabī, the divine light with which the body and mind of the mystic are infused enables the realization of the unity (*ittiḥād*) between the Creator and the created, the reception of divine revelations, and the attainment of divine knowledge.[57] Finally, in line with his Sufi forerunners, Ibn al-ʿArabī highlights the theme of love reflected in the hadith. According to him, following the Prophet and adhering to the Sharia indicate man's love of God as well as God's love of man, given that success (*tawfīq*) in performing the divine commandments ultimately originates in the will and love of God. One may thus speak of both an eternal divine love, *ḥubb ʿināya* or *imtinān* ("love [issuing from divine] providence or [from divine] favor"), which enables the mystic to perform the *farāʾiḍ* and *nawāfil*, and of the divine love resulting from the *farāʾiḍ* and *nawāfil*, *ḥubb jazāʾ wa-karāma* ("love [as a divine] recompense and honor"). This second love, in turn, grants the mystic the right "to have her own way / to pass judgment as she wills in the world" (*al-taḥakkum fī l-ʿālam*), i.e., religio-political authority and magico-theurgical powers, as we shall see below.[58] The notion that our love of God results from God's primordial love of us is apparently derived from earlier mystical teachings.[59]

5.2 Akbarian Ideas

1. ẒUHŪR and TAJALLĪ. In the passage below, Ibn al-ʿArabī introduces two concepts that are central to his unique theosophy: *aʿyān thābita* ("permanent entities"), a term that signifies the pre-existent state of all created beings as eternal objects of the divine knowledge, and *ẓuhūr* (the "manifestation" of divinity within creation, equivalent to *tajallī*, "revelation," in its ontological sense).

> The third kind [of *fanāʾ*] is the annihilation of created beings' attributes, in accordance with His saying, may He be exalted, as related on His authority in the Prophetic report, "I become his hearing and sight" and thus it is with all his other attributes (*wa-kadhā jamīʿ ṣifātihi*). [. . .] The

55. Ibid., 8: 559 (chap. 361, *al-athar al-awwal*), 660; see also 5: 545–46 (chap. 177, *al-ʿilm al-awwal*), 6: 379 (chap. 201).

56. See Ibn Barrajān, *Sharḥ asmāʾ Allāh al-ḥusnā*, ed. A. F. al-Mazyadī, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2010), 1: 210–12, 303. On Ibn Barrajān, see G. Böwering and Y. Casewit, *A Qurʾān Commentary by Ibn Barrajān of Seville (d. 536/1411): Īḍāḥ al-ḥikma bi-aḥkām al-ʿibra (Wisdom Deciphered, the Unseen Discovered)* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 1–45; Y. Casewit, *The Mystics of al-Andalus: Ibn Barrajān and Islamic Thought in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2017).

57. Ibn al-ʿArabī quotes or refers to the aforementioned light tradition (see n. 43 above) in many passages, e.g., *Futūḥāt*, 2: 533–34 (chap. 69, *faṣl bal waṣl fī l-sujūd fī l-ṣalāt*), 3: 460 (chap. 71, *waṣl fī faṣl man jāmaʿa mutaʿammidan*), 555 (*waṣl fī faṣl mā yakūnu ʿalayhi al-muʿtakif*), 5: 185 (chap. 101), 261 (chap. 113), 265–66 (chap. 115), etc. On unity (*ittiḥād*) in this context, see 10: 107 (chap. 399).

58. Ibid., 1: 584–86 (chap. 31), 6: 9–10 (chap. 178, *waṣl nuʿūt al-muḥibbīn*), 10: 433–36 (chap. 471). On love and *nawāfil*, see also 6: 35 (chap. 178, *waṣl nakhtimu bihi hādhā l-bāb*), 7: 498–99 (chap. 316), 12: 425–27 (chap. 560, *waṣiyya wa-ʿalayka bi-mulāzama*); Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, ed. A. ʿAfīfī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, repr. of the 1946 ed.), 183.

59. See, for instance, al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *ʿIlm al-awliyāʾ*, ed. S. N. Luṭf (Cairo: Maktabat al-Ḥuriyya l-Ḥadītha, 1983), 162, 178; al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*, 2: 123–24 (*faṣl* 32); al-Khargūshī, *Tahdhīb*, 319; al-Sahlajī, *Nūr*, 96.

> Truth let know that His self (*nafsahu*), not His attribute, is their very attributes (*ʿayn ṣifātihim*). Hence, in terms of your attributes, you are the Truth Himself (*ʿayn al-ḥaqq*), not His attribute, and in terms of your essence (*dhātuka*), you are your permanent entity (*ʿaynuka l-thābita*) which Allah has taken as a locus for His manifestation (*maẓharan*); in this entity He has manifested Himself to Himself. That which sees Him from you is nothing but your sight, and He is your very act of looking (*ʿayn naẓarika*), and so, it is none but He who has seen Himself.[60]

According to Ibn al-ʿArabī, every created being exists eternally as an object of God's knowledge. When God wishes to bring this entity into the world, He grants it existence (*wujūd*) by manifesting Himself to it. Creation, which in Ibn al-ʿArabī's thought is an ongoing process that never ceases, amounts therefore to the manifestation of divinity in the "permanent entities"; every created being is a platform, a locus (*maẓhar*, *majlā*) for the revelation of God. Accordingly, Ibn al-ʿArabī interprets the *nawāfil* tradition both as a general ontological statement regarding the nature of all created beings—they, or rather their "permanent entities," are the loci in which divinity is manifested[61]—and as an epistemological explanation of the mystical experience: the true mystic who has attained *fanāʾ* sees God as God sees Himself, since his organs and attributes are merely a platform for God's self-disclosure. Ibn al-ʿArabī adds that in this sublime state the various faculties and senses of the mystic become unified in that they all produce the same mystical knowledge: "[The mystic] hears by that with which he sees, by that with which he speaks, by that with which he knows, runs, smells, tastes, and senses." The mystic's faculties thus correspond to the divine attributes, which, though manifold, all originate in and reflect the unified essence of God.[62]

As a "permanent entity," man is devoid of existence and lacks attributes of his own; God grants him existence and attributes by manifesting His very being (*huwiyya*) in lieu of man's organs and faculties.[63] The attributes of human beings do not really belong to them; they are rather God-given, divine.[64] The divine names *al-ẓāhir* ("the Manifest") and *al-bāṭin* ("the Hidden"; see Q 57:3) allude to this intricate relationship:

> In our view, the attribute of the servant is the Truth Himself (*ʿayn al-ḥaqq*), not His attribute. Hence, the manifest is the created being and the hidden is the Truth (*fa-l-ẓāhir khalq wa-l-bāṭin ḥaqq*). [. . .] He [God] is existence itself (*ʿayn al-wujūd*) and He is described as having attributes because existent beings have attributes. He has let [it] be known that in terms of Himself (*ʿaynuhu*), He is the very attributes (*ʿayn ṣifāt*) and limbs of the servant, saying "I become his hearing." He has thus ascribed hearing to the entity of the existent being (*ʿayn al-mawjūd*) that hears and has related it to Himself (*aḍāfahu ilayhi*); and since there is no existent being but He, He is both him who hears and the hearing. It is the same with all other faculties and perceptions—they are nothing but Him Himself (*ʿaynahu*).[65]

Created beings in general, and the mystic in particular—more precisely, "the perfect human being"—are the manifest forms (sg. *ṣūra*) of the hidden God, vehicles (*maẓāhir*, *majālin*) for the divine self-disclosure. "The manifest aspect of the servant is a created and limited form, whereas his hidden aspect is the being of the Truth, unlimited by the [created]

60. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, 6: 496 (chap. 220).

61. See also ibid., 3: 437–38 (chap. 71, *waṣl fī faṣl zamān al-imsāk*), 6: 100 (chap. 189), 8: 324 (chap. 350).

62. Ibid., vol. 6: 496. See also 1: 586–87 (chap. 31), 623–24 (chap. 35), 3: 162 (chap. 69, *waṣl fī l-tawqīt fī l-ghusl*), 7: 94 (chap. 279), 9: 146 (chap. 369); idem, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, 107, 169.

63. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt*, 3: 556 (chap. 71, *waṣl fī faṣl mā yakūnu ʿalayhi l-muʿtakif*), 9: 493 (chap. 379, *al-rakʿa l-khāmisa*), 10: 107 (chap. 399), 236–38 (chap. 425), 239 (chap. 426); idem, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, 107–8, 110, 112, 146.

64. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, 10: 42–43 (chap. 387).

65. Ibid., 6: 622–23 (chap. 263).

form" (*fa-ẓāhiruhu ṣūra khalqiyya maḥdūda wa-bāṭinuhu huwiyyat al-ḥaqq ghayr maḥdūda li-l-ṣūra*).[66] Although Ibn al-ʿArabī, like al-Muḥāsibī before him, insists that the *nawāfil* tradition does not imply *ḥulūl*, viz., the incarnation of God in a physical body,[67] his notion that God manifests Himself in the forms of created beings is quite radical from the perspective of Sunni orthodoxy. In fact, this notion can be traced back to the early Shii milieu, specifically to groups called *ghulāt* ("extremists") by medieval heresiographers. For example, the Mukhammisa ("Pentadists"), a Shii group that was active in Kufa around the mid-second/eighth century, believed that God had manifested Himself (*ẓahara*) throughout history in the different forms (*ṣuwar*) of various prophets and their heirs, namely, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and—in the age of Islam—the five members of the Prophet's family (*ahl al-bayt*): Muḥammad, Fāṭima, ʿAlī, al-Ḥasan, and al-Ḥusayn. Hence, according to the Mukhammisa, *imāma* "is the manifest aspect of Allah (*ẓāhir Allāh*), great and mighty is He, while His hidden aspect (*bāṭinuhu*) is Allah whose meaning (*maʿnāhu*) is Muḥammad."[68]

Various ideas that originated in the milieu of the Mukhammisa and similar groups, including those relating to the divinity of the Imams, resurfaced in later Ismaili movements of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, namely, the Druze religion and the Ṭayyibī Ismāʿīliyya.[69] It comes then as no surprise to find the following tradition attributed to Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq in the sixth/twelfth-century Yemeni Ṭayyibī work *Kanz al-walad* (The Treasure of the Child): "Our manifest aspect is *imāma*, while our hidden aspect is an unfathomable unknown reality" (*ẓāhirunā imāma wa-bāṭinunā ghayb lā yudraku*).[70] Similar statements are found in Ibn al-ʿArabī's oeuvre; in his eyes, created beings and particularly the perfect human being are comprised of a manifest created aspect (*ẓāhir*) and a hidden divine dimension (*bāṭin*, *ghayb*).[71]

2. DIVINE ORGANS OF MAN and HUMAN ORGANS OF GOD: As noted above, the *nawāfil* tradition presents God as the organs of the *awliyāʾ*, while, according to the Shia, the *awliyāʾ* (the Imams) are God's organs on earth. Ibn al-ʿArabī endorses both views: by carrying out supererogatory works, God becomes the organs of the mystic, but by meticulously performing the obligatory works (*farāʾiḍ*), man becomes the organs of God. The reason for this difference

66. Ibid., 11: 28 (chap. 503); also in relation to the *nawāfil* tradition, see 10: 306 (chap. 450), 11: 279 (chap. 558, *ḥaḍrat al-khafḍ*).

67. See ibid., 7: 106 (chap. 280).

68. Al-Qummī (d. 301/913f.), *Kitāb al-Maqālāt wa-l-firaq*, ed. M. J. Shakūr (Tehran: Ḥaydarī, 1963), 56. The term *maʿnā* here signifies the divine dimension of Muḥammad that is repeatedly manifested in the prophets and their heirs. See also H. Halm, *Kosmologie und Heilslehre der frühen Ismāʿīlīya: Eine Studie zur islamischen Gnosis* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1978), 157–62. On the problems related to the term *ghulāt*, see Amir-Moezzi, *Divine Guide*, 129–30.

69. On these and related matters, see F. Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2007), 85–86, 90, 92–95, 186, 189; Halm, *Kosmologie*, 139–68, 166; idem, *Die islamische Gnosis: Die extreme Schia und die ʿAlawiten* (Zurich: Artemis, 1982); D. de Smet, *Les Épîtres sacrées des Druzes:* Rasāʾil al-Ḥikma*, volumes 1 et 2* (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 17–18; idem, "Éléments chrétiens dans l'ismaélisme yéménite sous les derniers Fatimides: Le problème de la gnose Ṭayyibite," in *L'Égypte fatimide: Son art et son histoire. Actes du colloque organisé à Paris les 28, 29 et 30 mai 1998*, ed. M. Barrucand (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1999), 45–53. On the divinity of the Imams according to the early Imami tradition, see Amir-Moezzi, *Spirituality*, 103–31.

70. Al-Ḥāmidī, *Kitāb Kanz al-walad*, ed. M. Ghālib (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1971), 165; see also pp. 194–95; cf. al-Majlisī, *Biḥār*, 25: 171. Note also the poem by the Ismaili missionary al-Muʾayyad fī l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 470/1078), quoted in al-Ḥāmidī, *Kanz*, 198: "By [the Imams] our Lord has revealed Himself (*tajallā*) to His created beings." For other occurrences of *tajallī* and *ẓuhūr* in this context, see ibid., 24, 40, 173, 193, 200, 203.

71. In addition to the references in nn. 65, 66 above, see Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, 4: 563 (chap. 73, ques. 116), 5: 44 (chap. 73, after ques. 153), 265–66 (chap. 115), 8: 518–20 (chap. 360), 536–37, 555 (chap. 361), 10: 264 (chapter 436), 11: 16 (chap. 499), 344 (chap. 558, *ḥaḍrat al-karam*), 349 (*ḥaḍrat al-ijāba*), 497–99 (*ḥaḍrat al-buṭūn*); idem, *Fuṣūṣ*, 54, 55, 81, 172.

between the *farāʾiḍ* and the *nawāfil* is that the former reveal man's natural state—servanthood (*ʿubūda*, *ʿubūdiyya*) and submission to the will of the Lord—while the *nawāfil* reflect man's attempt to follow free will (*ikhtiyār*) by performing additional religious works that God did not, initially, impose.[72] The *nawāfil* are a sign of the human claim to lordship, which belongs solely to God. From this perspective, they occupy a lower rank than the obligatory *farāʾiḍ*, contrary to the opinion of earlier mystics.[73]

The idea of servanthood has a long history in Islam, particularly in Islamic mysticism, and the linkage between this idea and the *nawāfil* tradition is first drawn in the writings of Ibn Barrajān, who insists that the meaning of the hadith is not that the servant becomes the Lord, but rather the opposite: God protects His friend by eliminating from his personality all attributes of lordship and divinity, such as pride, and by establishing in their stead qualities of servanthood, like humility. The servant realizes that her very existence is dependent on God and that her actions and accomplishments in life are carried out by means of God, as stated in the *nawāfil* tradition.[74] However, in preferring the *farāʾiḍ* to the *nawāfil* and in viewing the mystic who adheres to the former as God's organs on earth, Ibn al-ʿArabī pursues a different, novel course.

> Know that if you apply yourself assiduously to performing obligatory works, you draw closer to Allah by the dearest thing that brings one close to Him. If you gain this attribute, you become the hearing of the Truth and His sight; He does not hear save by you nor does he look save by you. The hand of the Truth is your hand. [. . .] This is because in the obligatory work there is compulsory servanthood (*ʿubūdiyyat al-iḍṭirār*), which is the root, whereas in the branch—the supererogatory work—there is optional servanthood (*ʿubūdiyyat al-ikhtiyār*), in which the Truth is your hearing and sight.[75]

In reality, all attributes in creation—even anthropomorphic ones, or those that are typically ascribed to man—belong to God; created beings are essentially "naked," devoid of attributes. Hence the significance of the obligatory works: they symbolize the return of one's natural state of a "permanent entity" when both existence and attributes of one's own were lacking. Paradoxically, it is by acknowledging servanthood and obeying the Lord that the perfect human being becomes truly free and powerful.[76] Moreover, in his capacity as a perfect locus for the divine revelation, the perfect human being becomes the very organs of God, a vehicle for the implementation of the divine will within the world; he does not will by God's will (*nawāfil*), but God wills through his will (*farāʾiḍ*). Like the Prophet Muḥammad, who served as "the tongue (*lisān*) of the Truth, His hearing and sight" and was the interpreter

72. Cf. the Rabbinical dictum, "He who performs [religious works] when commanded is greater than one who performs [them] without being commanded" (*Gadōl ha-mmetsuvveh ve-ʿōseh yōter mi-shsheʾeynō metsuvveh ve-ʿōseh*), *Babylonian Talmud*, *ʿAvōdah zarah*, 3: 1.

73. See, for example, al-Tirmidhī, *Nawādir*, 1: 435 (*aṣl* 162), 2: 291–92 (*aṣl* 260); idem, *Manāzil al-qurba*, ed. ʿĀ. I. al-Kayyālī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2007), 63–66 (I thank Sara Sviri for this reference). Al-Muḥāsibī warns against performing the *nawāfil* in preference to the *farāʾiḍ*; see al-Muḥāsibī, *al-Riʿāya li-ḥuqūq Allāh*, ed. ʿA. ʿAṭā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, n.d.), 101, 113, 123, 126. Al-Muḥāsibī also draws attention to the danger of hypocrisy (*riyāʾ*) inherent in the *nawāfil* (pp. 219–20, 222). See also al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 4: 215–16, 218–19 (*kitāb dhamm al-ghurūr*); Massignon, *Essay* (n. 13, above), 157, 191.

74. Ibn Barrajān, *Sharḥ*, 1: 32–33, 60–62, 133–37, 2: 124–25. Note the idiosyncratic versions of the tradition found there and in Böwering and Casewit, *Qurʾān Commentary*, 381, 431, 464, 557; cf. Ibn Rajab, *Rawāʾiʿ al-tafsīr*, ed. Ṭ. b. Muḥammad, 2 vols. (Riyadh: Dār al-ʿĀṣima, 2001), 2: 271.

75. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, 12: 426 (chap. 560, *waṣiyya wa-ʿalayka bi-mulāzama*), and many other instances.

76. E.g., ibid., 6: 469–70 (chap. 214).

(*mutarjim*) of God among created beings, the supreme mystic, God's chosen one, assumes religio-political authority and acquires magical and theurgical powers.[77]

3. AUTHORITY AND POWER OF THE PERFECT HUMAN BEING: The high status of the mystic whose organs have become divine or the mystic who functions as God's organs on earth is reflected in the "protection" from sin (*ḥifẓ*) or "immunity" (*iṣma*) granted to him. Due to lack of space, I cannot delve deeply into Ibn al-ʿArabī's theory regarding law and sin and its possible origins in earlier Sufi teachings.[78] Suffice it to say that in his references to the *nawāfil* tradition, and despite the tremendous importance that he ascribes to the Sharia in general, Ibn al-ʿArabī espouses a radical apporach to sin (that is, the sins of the perfect human being), holding that the mystic, whose organs have become divine, may assist his lower soul—his *nafs*, the Sufi's worst enemy (!)—"in all its personal aims; for he is all light, and light has no darkness," i.e., no sin. The lower soul can only be reproved if it employs its own means in sinning; however, the organs of the true mystic are in reality those of God. Hence, "we have permitted him who has attained divine knowledge (*ʿārif*) to assist the soul, due to the state of *ʿiṣma* that he enjoys in his external aspect, that is, *ḥifẓ*."[79] Earlier mystics were by and large much more cautious. Al-Kalābādhī, for example, explains that the true meaning of the *nawāfil* tradition is that God protects the organs of His friend from committing transgressions against the Sharia; this constitutes *ḥifẓ* and *ʿiṣma*.[80]

The servant who functions as God's organs on earth enjoys a unique status with Ibn al-ʿArabī. Through him, "the world persists, for Allah does not look at the world save by the sight of this servant, and so, the world does not end, due to the correspondence (*munāsaba*) [between God and him]." The perfect servant serves as a veil (*ḥijāb*) that stands between the Creator and the created: he prevents the majesty of God's face (*subuḥāt al-wajh*) from "burning" the world, and, at the same time, functions as the sole means of access to the divine.[81] Viewing God's friend as a cosmic veil is characteristic of the early Shii perception of the Imam.[82] Similarly, according to Ibn al-ʿArabī, by swearing allegiance (*mubāyaʿa*) to the "pole" (*quṭb*)—the supreme mystic who stands at the head of the human spiritual hierarchy, "the master of the moment in every age"—created beings swear allegiance to the Creator Himself (see Q 48:10).[83] This vicegerent of God on earth, in whose being all the

77. Ibid., 6: 9–10 (chap. 178), 8: 121–22 (chap. 337), 10: 203 (chap. 417). Note that in Ibn al-ʿArabī's view, once a person commits to perform *nawāfil*, there is an obligation to complete them in accordance with the rules of obligatory works; in other words, at this point, optional servanthood turns into compulsory servanthood. See, for instance, ibid., 3: 76 (chap. 69).

78. See Chittick, *Sufi Path*, 170–89, 258–63; M. Chodkiewicz, *An Ocean without Shore: Ibn ʿArabī, the Book, and the Law* (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1993); D. Gril, "Hadith in the Work of Ibn ʿArabī: The Uninterrupted Chain of Prophecy," *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society* 50 (2011): 45–76 (www.ibnarabisociety.org/articles/ibn-arabi-and-hadith.html). Note that Ibn al-ʿArabī and various earlier mystics do not always distinguish *ḥifẓ* (granted to the mystics) from *ʿiṣma* (presumably granted only to prophets); rather, they often attribute *ʿiṣma* to the mystics, as the Shiis do with regard to the Imams. See, for instance, al-Tirmidhī, *Drei Schriften*, index, s.v. *ʿ-ṣ-m* (cf. *ḥ-r-ṣ* and *ḥ-f-ẓ*).

79. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, 5: 260–61 (chap. 113); see also 5: 475–78 (chap. 165), and more.

80. Al-Kalābādhī, *Taʿarruf*, 142–43; idem, *Baḥr al-fawā'id*, 44, 381–82.

81. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, 6: 39 (chap. 178). On the perfect human being as a veil, see also 6: 599–601 (chap. 255); cf. 6: 66 (chap. 181); as the divine "apple of the eye" (*insān al-ʿayn*) through which God looks at creation, see idem, *Fuṣūṣ*, 50; cf. *Futūḥāt*, 11: 397, 399 (chap. 558, *ḥaḍrat al-wudd*).

82. See, for example, Amir-Moezzi, *Spirituality*, 118; Jaʿfar b. Manṣūr al-Yaman, *Kitāb al-Kashf*, ed. R. Strothmann ([Cairo]: Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, 1952), 35.

83. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, 8: 106–7 (chap. 336). The epithets *ṣāḥib al-waqt fī kulli zamān*, *wāḥid al-zamān* ("the unique one of the age"), and *quṭb al-waqt* ("the pole of the moment"), which appear in this chapter, are reminiscent of Shii and Ismaili titles of the Prophet and mainly the Imam; see, for instance, E. Kohlberg, "Early

divine attributes are manifested in an all-encompassing way, is appointed by God to look after the world (*naẓar fī l-ʿālam*). He is "Allah's eye in each age; in that age the Truth does not look save at him." He receives his knowledge directly from God, he is protected from sin and error (*maʿṣūm*), and virtually all created beings that populate the various hierarchal levels of the universe, be they spiritual or physical, swear allegiance to him; consequently, they must obey him and are subject to his judgment (*taḥakkum*), which he carries out in accordance with Allah's command. At times, following the divine command, the "pole of the moment" "appears" or "manifests himself" (*ẓuhūr*) and is then identical to the political leader (*imām*) of the Islamic community, as was the case with the four rightly guided caliphs who ruled after the death of the Prophet. At other times, the pole may choose to act clandestinely (*khafāʾ*), in which case the political leader serves as "the external *khalīfa*" (*al-khalīfa l-ẓāhir*), as the deputy (*nāʾib*) of the pole who is the "hidden" *khalīfa* (*fī l-bāṭin*), though this might remain unknown to the political leader and to the vast majority of believers.[84] The idea according to which God's vicegerent or deputy (*nāʾib*) on earth, who serves as the locus for the manifestation of the divine names, may "have his own way" in the world or "judge as he wills" (*taḥakkum*) resurfaces in other passages of Ibn al-ʿArabī's oeuvre.[85] It is clear then that although the perfect human being in our age cannot enjoy legislative prophecy (*nubuwwat al-tashrīʿ*) or the power to deliver a new Sharia (*risāla*), he nevertheless maintains (at least potentially) a high degree of religio-political authority.

The office of *khilāfa* inevitably entails *takwīn*—the divine power to create and bring various objects into being, by uttering either the *basmala* ("in the name of God") formula or the fiat *kun* ("be!"; see, e.g., Q 16:40), or by simply concentrating the will (*irāda*) and spiritual-mental energy (*himma*) on the object that one wishes to create. The perfect human being is given the divine right to act freely (*taṣrīf*, *taṣarruf*) within nature, becoming the master (*sayyid*) of nature and gaining full might and power (*ʿizz wa-sulṭān*) over it. This is all made possible by the divinity of the mystic's organs and faculties: it is God Who acts through man, as is clear from the *nawāfil* tradition.[86] Ibn al-ʿArabī maintains that the true mystic may, and very often should, choose not to realize his magico-theurgical abilities, out of courtesy (*adab*, *taẓarruf*) vis-à-vis God, but this restraint only serves to illustrate the tremendous power that the mystic has at hand.[87] Recall the motif of *ijābat al-daʿwa* in the *nawāfil* tradition, which likewise points to the theurgical capability of God's servant; this motif was highlighted by certain forerunners of Ibn al-ʿArabī in their references to this tradition.[88] Still, the emphasis that Ibn al-ʿArabī places on this topic appears to be unprecedented.

Attestations of the Term 'Ithnā ʿAshariyya'," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 24 (2000): 343–57, at 346 and n. 21; Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ wa-khullān al-wafāʾ*, 4 vols. (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1957), 4: 125; al-Ḥāmidī, *Kanz*, 172, 191, 210, 216.

84. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, 6: 601 (chap. 255), 8: 108–14. On *imāma* and the *nawāfil* tradition, see also 2: 559–60 (chap. 69, *Faṣl bal waṣl fī-man awlā bi-l-imāma*). The recurrence of the terms "Allah's command" and "the divine command" in such passages brings to mind the Ismaili religio-political context of these concepts; see Ebstein, *Mysticism*, 33–76.

85. See, for instance, Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, 5: 556–58 (chap. 177, *al-nawʿ al-rābiʿ*; note, again, the terms "Allah's command" and "the divine command" in this passage). On *niyāba*, *khilāfa*, and *taḥakkum*, see 6: 599–600 (chap. 255); cf. idem, *al-Tadbīrāt al-ilāhiyya fī iṣlāḥ al-mamlaka l-insāniyya*, in *Kleinere Schriften des Ibn al-ʿArabī*, ed. H. S. Nyberg (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1919), 141.

86. E.g., Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, 5: 37 (chap. 73, ques. 147), 6: 148 (chap. 198, *faṣl* 4), 8: 550–60 (chap. 361; p. 557 for the link between *khilāfa* and *takwīn*). On *kun*, see S. Sviri, "*Kun*—the Existence-Bestowing Word in Islamic Mysticism: A Survey of Texts on the Creative Power of Language," in *The Poetics of Grammar and the Metaphysics of Sound and Sign*, ed. S. La Porta and D. Shulman (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 35–67.

87. For instance, Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, 6: 78–80 (chap. 185).

88. See, for example, Ibn Barrajān, *Sharḥ*, 2: 257–59.

4. UNIVERSALISM: In many passages, Ibn al-ʿArabī interprets the *nawāfil* tradition as referring to the perfect human being who is both the microcosm (*al-ʿālam al-ṣaghīr*) or compendium (*mukhtaṣar*) of the macrocosm (*al-ʿālam al-kabīr*, *al-insān al-kabīr*) and the locus for the manifestation of the divine names. It is through such a man or woman that God reveals Himself to the world and through whom the world is able to know God.[89] However, Ibn al-ʿArabī also expresses a more universal outlook, according to which all created beings—indeed, creation at large—are a platform for the divine manifestation.

> [God], glory be to Him, is the spirit (*rūḥ*) of the world, its hearing, its sight, its hand; by Him the world hears, by Him it sees, by Him it speaks, by Him it forcibly seizes, and by Him it runs, for there is neither power nor strength save by Allah the Supreme, the Great One.[90]

This universal perspective is considerably different from the sectarian Shii view, which focuses on the Imam, and from the elitist vision of Sunni mysticism, which centers mainly on the mystics rather than on humanity or created beings in general. Presumably then, the only advantage that the mystic enjoys in comparison with the rest of creation is awareness—that is, the mystical unveiling (*kashf*) brings with it the realization that all created beings serve as platforms for God's self-disclosure. The notion that both the perfect human being and creation at large are loci of the divine manifestation should be understood in light of Ibn al-ʿArabī's theory of parallel worlds, specifically the analogy or correspondence between the microcosm and macrocosm. Given that the world is "a big, perfect human being" (*insān kabīr kāmil*), it is only natural to assume that the inner aspect (*bāṭin*) of the world and its faculties (*qiwā*), like those of the perfect mystic, are the very being of the Truth (*huwiyya*) by which it lives and functions.[91]

It is possible that Akbarian universalism was formed to some extent in dialogue with a universalist-humanist tendency within the Shii tradition itself, namely, with the Neoplatonic mystical-philosophy of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ. These mysterious tenth-century intellectuals seem to have been affiliated in one way or another with the (Shii) Ismaili milieu, and, what is more, their epistles had a tremendous impact on the Andalusian scene from which Ibn al-ʿArabī emerged.[92] In their epistles the Ikhwān imploy various Shii and Ismaili symbols in a Neoplatonic framework:

> Whoever implements Allah's command and prohibition in the world as well as that which He desires from His servants, delivering to them His messages (*risālātihi*) and saying the truth on His behalf—[this individual] is [Allah]'s face, His tongue, His hand, and His eye in His earthly world and among His created human beings; for [Allah] is the one who supports him (*muʾayyid*) in doing so with His strength and will, as He, may Glory be to Him, said: "You did not hurl when you hurled but rather Allah was the one who hurled [Q 8:17]."[93]

Although at first sight this passage points to the figure of the Prophet and his heir, the Imam, it can be interpreted as simultaneously referring to the perfect human being in general,

89. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, 5: 32–34 (chap. 73, ques. 143), 8: 523–26 (chap. 360); idem, *Fuṣūs*, 55; and more.

90. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, 7: 507–8 (chap. 317).

91. Ibid. 11: 28 (chap. 503); see also 10: 87 (chap. 395), 196–97 (chap. 415), 11: 397–401 (chap. 558, *ḥaḍrat al-wudd*); idem, *Fuṣūṣ*, 112.

92. See G. de Callataÿ, "Magia en al-Andalus: Rasāʾil Ijwān al-Ṣafāʾ, Rutbat al-Ḥakīm y Gāyat al-Ḥakīm (Picatrix)," *Al-Qanṭara* 34,2 (2013): 297–343; idem, "Philosophy and Bāṭinism in al-Andalus: Ibn Masarra's *Risālat al-Iʿtibār* and the *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ*," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 41 (2014): 261–312; Ebstein, *Mysticism*, index, s.v. Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ; Böwering and Casewit, *Qurʾān Commentary*, 43; Casewit, *Mystic*, index, s.v. Brethren of Purity.

93. Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, *al-Risāla l-jāmiʿa*, ed. J. Ṣalībā, 2 vols. (Damascus: al-Majmaʿ al-ʿIlmī l-ʿArabī, 1949–51), 2: 383.

that is, to anyone who follows the Ikhwānian teachings and endeavors to attain their philosophical-mystical goal, even if not hailing from the Prophet's family. The Quranic verse quoted by the Ikhwān is much favored by Ibn al-ʿArabī, who employs it inter alia in reference to the *nawāfil* tradition.[94]

Moreover, in line with their cosmological Neoplatonic scheme, the Ikhwān reinterpret the mythic Shii idea according to which the Imams are God's names, by extending it to all of creation: the universe, from the universal intellect down to the sublunary world, is infused with divine attributes.[95] In fact, the Ikhwān describe the universal intellect, from which these attributes emanate, as Allah's face, in the same way that early Shii traditions view the Imam as the divine face on earth. Like Ibn al-ʿArabī, the Ikhwān were greatly fond of the microcosm-macrocosm analogy, perceiving Allah's face (the universal intellect) as corresponding to the physical-earthly face, that is, to the Prophet and his heir in every age, or perhaps also, as I have suggested above, to any perfect human being regardless of his genealogical descent.[96] Similarly, Ibn al-ʿArabī refers to the face of the perfect human being as God's face;[97] at the same time, he views every created being as the divine face "which does not perish" (Q 28:88) and as possessing a "unique face" or aspect that connects him to God (*wajh khāṣṣ*, *wajh al-ḥaqq*). The world in general is the face and external aspect (*ẓāhir*) of God, while its hidden aspect is the divine being itself (*huwiyya*).[98] Indeed, the Ikhwān and Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-shaykh al-akbar*, share the same universal positive outlook characteristic of Neoplatonism—although God is above and beyond creation, creation did ultimately emanate from the One, and is therefore essentially divine.

CONCLUSION

This study is by no means exhaustive.[99] Nonetheless, it suffices to demonstrate the importance of the *nawāfil* tradition for Muslim mystics and the different ways in which they employed this tradition in order to substantiate and legitimize their diverse teachings. Specifically, one discerns two main approaches. The first, represented mainly by al-Muḥāsibī, the Junaydian–Baghdadian circle, and many Sufi authors of the tenth to eleventh centuries, may be described as "individual-epistemological." It focuses on the personal sphere of the individual mystic, on the ethico-psychological aspects of his intimate relationship with God. The proponents of this approach are primarily interested in questions pertaining to the mystic's consciousness and inner world, viz., what are the transformations that occur in his

94. See, for instance, Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, 11: 330 (chap. 558, *ḥaḍrat al-ḥifẓ*); see also Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, *al-Risāla l-jāmiʿa*, 2: 42–43.

95. See n. 11 above; Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, *Rasāʾil*, 4: 206–11.

96. Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, *al-Risāla l-jāmiʿa*, 1: 13, 528–37, 636–37, 2: 59, 313; cf. 2: 27. On the microcosm–macrocosm analogy, see Ebstein, *Mysticism*, 189–229. The identification of the first created being with God's face seems to have been characteristic of Ismaili cosmology from an early stage and may have its roots in Gnostic traditions; see DeConick, "Becoming God's Body," 26; S. M. Stern, "The Earliest Cosmological Doctrines of Ismāʿīlism," in idem, *Studies in Early Ismāʿīlism* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1983), 12; al-Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-Yanābīʿ*, in *Trilogie ismaelienne*, ed. H. Corbin (Tehran: Departement d'Iranologie de l'Institut Franco-Iranien, 1961), 27; al-Ḥāmidī, *Kanz*, 159; al-Daylamī, *Qawāʿid ʿaqāʾid Āl Muḥammad fī l-radd ʿalā l-bāṭiniyya*, ed. M. Z. al-Kawtharī (Sanaa: Maktabat al-Yaman al-Kubrā, 1987), 55.

97. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, 2: 495 (chap. 69, *waṣl mutammim*), 7: 295 (chap. 297).

98. Ibid., 3: 262–63 (chap. 70, *waṣl fī wujūb al-zakāt*), 9: 165–66 (chap. 369, *waṣl* 4), etc. On Ibn al-ʿArabī's theory of *al-wajh al-khāṣṣ*, see Chittick, *Self-Disclosure*, 91–120, 135–55. In a similar vein, Ibn al-ʿArabī maintains that the perfect human being and all existent beings alike are the eyes of God; see Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, 8: 68 (chap. 332), 11: 329–31; and above n. 81.

99. In this context, the Persian Sufi tradition in particular merits a separate discussion.

perception of reality, in his behavior and conduct, when God assumes control of his mind and body? What kind of attitude should the mystic adopt toward the Sharia? Al-Muḥāsibī and his followers unanimously agree that even at the climax of man's mystical experience, when self-awareness is lost and God assumes control, the religious commandments must still be performed. This is the very meaning of divine love mentioned in the *nawāfil* tradition—total obedience to the will of the Beloved as revealed in His sacred law. The divinity of the servant's organs only means that she cannot but fulfill His demands.

The second approach can be termed "collective-ontological," as it centers less on the individual mystic than on the implications of his unique status for society, sacred human history, the universe at large, and even divinity itself. This approach is characteristic of the Shia and of certain Sunni mystics such as al-Bisṭāmī, al-Tirmidhī, perhaps al-Ḥallāj,[100] and, above all, Ibn al-ʿArabī. Certainly, the personal dimension of man is extremely important for these mystics; they have much to say about the mystical experience of the individual and the ethico-psycological aspects of his advancement toward God; and they repeatedly affirm the centrality and complete authority of the Sharia. Yet, in their references to the *nawāfil* tradition the mystics mentioned here, particularly Ibn al-ʿArabī, ventured to answer a series of questions from which others, like al-Muḥāsibī and al-Ghazālī, refrained or were wary of addressing: Can we speak of a divine manifestation (*tajallī*, *ẓuhūr*) in man, and if so, what are its broader implications, beyond the confines of the individual mystic? What is the significance of this manifestation in terms of ontology and the nature of both the divine and human? Does the mystic, through whom God reveals Himself to the world, enjoy special privileges (perhaps in his relation to the sacred law), and what unique status does the mystic hold in society, in history, in the universe as a whole?

The shift of emphasis from epistemology and individuality (the mystic's mind and consciousness) to ontology and collectivity (the manifestation of God's attributes in certain beings and their ensuing role in creation) naturally bears on the issue of religio-political authority: who, among human beings, is fit to serve as the ultimate mediator between the Creator and the created? The Shii answer, from a relatively early stage (the first half of the second/eighth century, if not before), was simple: the Imams, biological descendants of the Prophet through ʿAlī, are God's organs and attributes on earth. Conversely, it seems to have taken Sunni mystics some time to articulate their answer. Although the *nawāfil* tradition itself can perhaps be read as a Sunni response to the Shii position, it was only from the third/ninth century onward that Sunni mystics systematically developed their positions. In their eyes, any believer, regardless of genealogy, may function as the platform for God's self-revelation in the world—depending on personal virtues, spiritual-religious efforts, and election by God. Similarly to the Ikhwān, Ibn al-ʿArabī took this one step further, stating that, in a certain sense, every created being is a locus for the divine manifestation.

This universalist perspective, however, should not blind us to the hierarchical and elitist or sectarian perspective. Both for the Shia and for Sunni mystics like al-Bisṭāmī, al-Tirmidhī, and Ibn al-ʿArabī, God reveals Himself to the world by means of certain chosen individuals who belong to specific communities (whether Sunni or Shii) and stand above all other human beings. These individuals should occupy a unique rank in society, for not only do they possess divine organs, they are the very organs of God in creation.

100. For echoes of the *nawāfil* tradition in al-Ḥallāj's teachings, see *Akhbār al-Ḥallāj*, ed. L. Massignon and P. Kraus (Paris: Larose, 1936), 20–21, 38; al-Sulamī, *Kitāb al-Amthāl wa-l-istishhādāt*, in *Rasāʾil ṣūfiyya li-Abī ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī*, ed. G. Böwering and B. Orfali (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 2009), 89; Massignon, *Passion*, 3: 43, 332. On the relation between al-Ḥallāj's teachings and the Shīʿī tradition, see Massignon, *Passion*, 1: 200–204, 295–97, 3: 43, 193–97, index, s.v. Qarmathian; cf. Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy*, 102–10, 142–45; Karamustafa, *Sufism*, 25.