

# The Practice of Sufism and the Safavid Order

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## INTRODUCTION

This book consists of two chapters. The Practice of Sufism and The Safavid order.

The first chapter discusses The Practice of Sufism (Mysticism) in Islam: This chapter introduces the theoretical aspects of the practice of mysticism in Islam. It examines the nature of mysticism, the mystic and his states, the goal of the mystic and the ethics of spiritual wayfaring. The author addresses major themes that are central concerns of mystical authors and describes their meaning. He describes and analyses mystical states drawing on the major practical and homiletic manuals of the 'Irfan tradition. The paper is both descriptive and prescriptive.

The second chapter discusses the Safavid order: The *Sheikh* Sayyed Safi al-Din Ardabili (1252–1334), through inspiration from the divine teachings of the doctrine of *thaqalain* which is the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the 14 infallibles, founded the Safavid *tariqah* (Safavid Sufi order) which has had an

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important constructive and continuous role in the history of Islamic civilisation and Shi'ism. Sheikh Safi al-Din is the spiritual father of the Safavid dynasty. The Safavid movement was a Sufi order, the centre of which was the *khaniqah* of Sheikh Safi al-Din. This Sufi order, gradually, after becoming widespread in society and gaining influence transformed into a social movement, which rose in *jihād* for justice, the realisation of the rights of the oppressed and the defence of Islam. The spiritual-social *jihād* of the Safavid movement resulted in the consolidation of Shi'a Islam and the revival of Iran as an independent country after the Islamic conquests, and in this way resulted in the renewal of the golden era of the Islamic-Iranian culture. This was a feat that no other Islamic or Iranian school of thought had been able to perform.

**CHAPTER ONE:**  
**Practice Sufism**



# The Practice of Mysticism (*'irfan-i 'amali*) in Islam

## Introduction

“In His name who taught the soul to think  
Who enlightened the heart by the soul’s insight.”<sup>1</sup>

In this research, we attempt to provide a brief introduction to the theory of mystical practice as expounded in classical Islamic mystical texts. A range of issues is considered from the very nature of mysticism to specific states and stages of the path of the mystic. The mystic’s path begins with self-reflection and a contemplation of creation that leads him to the One, his origin, and once the mystic embarks on his journey to the One to his origin he completes his circle of being. His origin is the One and his return is the One. First, he must start with creation.

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<sup>1</sup> 1-Mahmud Shabistari, *Gulshan-i raz*, ed. Muvahid, Tehran: Tahuri 1368 Shamsi, first stanza. On this theme in his thought, see L. Lewisohn, *Beyond faith and infidelity: The Sufi poetry and teachings of Mahmud Shabistari*, Richmond: Curzon Press 1995, pp. 217ff.

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### I: Purpose and design of creation

One of the most positive and decisive Islamic teachings is that the creation has a definitive purpose. Islam contends that the act of creation has not been aimless and in vain. It is for a purpose, as God says in the Holy Quran:

“Did you think that We had created you in vain and that you would never be recalled to Us?”<sup>1</sup>

One of the most important, positive and exalted objectives of God’s prophets, indeed the ultimate purpose of creation, is for man to realise and perfect his being as a true servant of God, gaining intuitive knowledge and bearing witness to the Lord. As He said:

“I was a hidden treasure but wished that they would know Me, therefore, I created humankind.”<sup>2</sup>

And in the holy verse:

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Qur’an, al-mu’minun (The Believers) 23: 115.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn ‘Arabi, *al-Futuhat al-Makkiyya*, Cairo: Bulaq 1911, vol. II, pp. 231-32, 310; Muhammad al-Khwarizmi, *Sharh Fusus al-hikam*, ed. S.J. Ashtiyani Tehran: Intisharat-i Hikmat 1364 Shamsi, pp. 285, 242; Qadi Sa’id al-Qummi, *Sharh Tawhid al-Saduq*, ed. N. Habibi, Tehran: vol. I, pp. 40; 54, 101, 507, 686, 703; Javadi Amuli, *Tahrir Tamhid al-qawa’id-i Sa’in al-Din ‘Ali Ibn Muhammad al-Turka*, Tehran: Intisharat-i al-Zahra’ 1372 Shamsi, p. 510. Cf. A. Schimmel, *Mystical dimensions of Islam*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 1975, pp. 139, 189, 268, 291, 382; W. Chittick, *The Sufi path of knowledge: Ibn ‘Arabi’s metaphysics of imagination*, Albany: State University of New York Press 1989, pp. 66, 126, 180, 204, 250.

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“I only created mankind and the jinn so that they might worship Me.”<sup>1</sup>

Indeed the divine phrase, "...that they would know Me" establishes the divine hadith. The truth, the inner reality and the ultimate in Islamic mysticism with respect to the infinite depth of meaning of the above Qur'anic verses amounts to divine service to, and intuitive witnessing of, God.

### **II: Forgetting oneself**

Usually when man enters this world, he becomes negligent of himself as a result of such tendencies as neglecting the Lord, seeking the world, pursuing power and status, and satisfying his carnal desires. As God has said:

...those who forgot Allah so He caused them to forget themselves.<sup>2</sup>

Man forgets the three essential questions of "Where have I come from?" "Where Am I going to?" and "Why am I here?" These are questions that establish the cause, the philosophy and the ultimate objective of the creation and set forth man's basic essence and his authentic self.

Yesterday came and passed I did in it no action.  
And today in it by me heat no any bazaar.

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Qur'an, al-Dharyat (The scattering winds) 51: 56.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Qur'an, al-Hashr (The resurrection) 59: 19.

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Tomorrow I will go without to know any secret.  
Not to be come was better for me than this coming.

### III: Awakening

“Say: I exhort you only to one thing, that rise up for Allah’s sake in tows and singly, then ponder: there is no madness in your fellow-citizen; he is only a warner to you before a severe chastisement.” (Qur’an, Surah Saba’, 46).

During a man’s lifetime often circumstances and certain conditions put an end to his negligence and awaken him to observe the blessings of God and make him realize his own sinfulness and how far he has strayed away from the exalted purpose of his own creation.

Under such conditions, one understands one’s own shortcomings and spiritual and mental states and stages like those of Ibrahim ibn Adham (d. 778), Bishr al-Hafi (d. d. 841), Al-Fuḍayl ibn 'Ayāḍ developing his character. As a result, he becomes aware of his real self, of what he is and of what he can be. By the light of guidance, the traveller seeks the path to the Beloved. Hafiz said:

In this city, my fortune, I have tried;

From this whirlpool, my chattels ‘tis necessary to draw.

### IV: What is man and what is he capable of being?

Man has two facets or aspects, namely, matter and mind, body and soul, earthly and celestial, and the bestial and angelic.

The Qur’anic verse “We created man from dry clay, from black moulded loam.”<sup>1</sup> points to the material aspect of man. The verse (15:29) “...and breathed of My spirit into him” is indicative of man’s moral or divine aspects.

Man’s creation is the loftiest and most exalted model of creation as we read: “Verily, We created man in the best form.”<sup>2</sup>, “In him both worlds have met now a devil, next a human set.”<sup>3</sup>

Man, this trustee of God,<sup>4</sup> this perfectionist and seeker of truth, this divinely trained<sup>5</sup> educated being,<sup>6</sup> and possessor of wonders is capable of being more ferocious and savage than any rabid animal and can sink deep in sins, in self love, in false pleasures and happiness. But man is capable of ascension to the highest levels of heaven and can fulfil the function of being God’s caliph on earth.

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Qur’an, al-Hijr (The Rock) 15: 26.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Qur’an, al-Tin (The Fig) 95:

<sup>3</sup> Shabistari, *Gulshan-i raz*, couplet 151.

<sup>4</sup> Qur’an, al-Ahzab (The Confederates) 33: 77.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Quran, al-Isra’ (The Night Journey) 17: 70.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Qur’an, al-Baqara (The Cow) 2: 31 and al-‘Alaq (The Clot) 96: 6.

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“And about face from the Hades of the lewd.  
All but prepares him to meet the highest good.”<sup>1</sup>

And reach such status that, in the words of Hazrat ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘A):

“If veils are removed from the face of the unknown, the secret, nothing new will be revealed to him.”<sup>2</sup>

Love, lover and beloved, reason and the reasonable shall be the same to him. According to Shabistari in *Golshan-i rāz*:

“No distinction left among the parts  
The knower and the known united  
And merged in all the charts.”<sup>3</sup>

“Naught but His knowledge  
Can contain the mystic’s heart  
Naught but the Absolute Being  
Can his intuition acknowledge.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Shabistari, *Gulshan-i raz*, couplet 329.

<sup>2</sup> Amidi, *Ghurur al-Hikam wa durar al-kalim*, ed. J. Urmawi, Tehran: Tehran University Press 1366 Shamsi, vol. V, p. 108, *hadith* # 7569; Maytham al-Bahrani, *Sharh mi’at kalima*, ed. J. Urmawi, Beirut: Mu’assasat al-A’lami li l-matbu‘at 1996, pp. 52ff; Haydar Amuli, *Tafsir al-Muhit al-A’zam wa l-bahr al-khidam*, ed. S.M. Musawi Tabrizi, Tehran: Vizarat-i farhang va irshad-i Islami 1374 Shamsi, vol. I, p. 249.

<sup>3</sup> Shabistari, *Gulshan-i raz*, couplet 411.

<sup>4</sup> Shabistari, *Gulshan-i raz*, couplet 395, referring to the *hadith*:

**My heavens and My earth embrace Me not, but the heart of My believing servant does embrace Me.**

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And, if the ‘seventy thousand veils of darkness and of light’<sup>1</sup> that bar the peripatetic mystic from the presence of the Lord be removed by rigorous religious practices and by purging the self, or soul, man becomes a theomorphic being and finds peace and tranquility through his nearness to God. He acquires the contented soul (*al-nafs al-mutma’inna*), which converts him into an entirely divine being. The prophetic tradition sets forth this status of light in the following terms:

“And when My faithful servant approaches Me through prayers and good deeds, I shall bestow upon him of My affection. Hence forth, I shall be his ears by which He hears; I shall be his eyes to see with and he shall use My tongue and hands by which to say and to hold.”<sup>2</sup>

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See Ghazali, *Ihya’ ‘ulum al-din*, Cairo: Bulaq 1908-09, vol. III, pp. 1, 12; Ibn ‘Arabi, *al-Futuhāt*, vol. I, p. 216 and vol. III, p. 250 *inter alia*; ‘Alljma Majlisi, *Bihhr al-anwar*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Beirut: Dār iḥyā’ al-turūth al-‘arab 1983, vol. LV, p. 39; Qumm, *Shar’ Tawīd*, vol. I, p. 414. Cf. Chittick, *The Sufi path of knowledge*, pp. 107, 276, 339-40, 348, 379; Schimmel, *Mystical dimensions*, p. 190.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn ‘Arabi, *Rasa’il*, ed. N.M. Hiravi, Tehran 1369 Shams, p. 70; eadem, *Futuhāt*, vol. II, p. 262; Qumm, *Sharh Tawīd*, vol. I, p. 491; Majlisi, *Bihar*, vol. LV, p. 44, *hadith* # 9-13. Cf. Schimmel, *Mystical dimensions*, p. 96; Chittick, *The Sufi path of knowledge*, pp. 217, 328, 364; al-Ghazali, *The niche of lights*, tr. W.H.T. Gairdner, New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan 1991, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn ‘Arab, *Rasa’il*, p. 29; eadem, *Futuhāt*, vol. II, p. 553; Kulayni, *al-Kaḥfi*, ed. ‘A. Ghaffari, Tehran: Tehran University Press 1957-60, vol. II, p. 352; Majlisi, *Bihar*, vol. LXVII, p. 22; Qumm, *Shar’ Tawīd*, vol. I, 29-30, 702. Cf. Chittick, *The Sufi path of knowledge*, pp. 176, 326-29; Schimmel, *Mystical dimensions*, pp. 43, 133, 144, 277.

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And if divine love sets fire to the heart of this gem of the world of creation, this most noble creature (man), he shall attain to such an exalted stage as the following divine edict purports:

“He who seeks Me finds Me  
He who finds Me knows Me  
He who knows Me befriend Me  
He who befriends Me loves Me  
He who loves Me shall be loved by Me  
And I shall destroy him who loves Me  
And he whom I destroy is entitled to revenge or  
‘blood money’ from Me  
And I shall stand ‘blood money’ and at the  
disposal of him whom I have destroyed.”<sup>1</sup>

However, attaining to such a superb position and to pure life and eternal serenity is possible only when:

“Dust and dirt are you entire  
Cast them away now  
Get dust off your heart  
Make room worth of the Beloved  
Make your exit to let Him in  
His face shall be manifest to you  
When you no more are  
In your heart no light shall shine  
Unless the snare are first removed  
Your prayers shall avail you naught  
Unless you give your-self up in full

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<sup>1</sup> Qumm, *Sharh Tawid*, vol. I, pp. 736-37; cf. Schimmel, *Mystical dimensions*, p. 136.

When your essence is purged at last  
Of things ugly and obscene  
Your prayers shall surely shine  
Well bright and all serene.”<sup>1</sup>

**V: Mysticism (*irfan*) as an agent for uniting human with God**

Of all the Islamic tenets and teachings, the one that is exclusively devoted to the basic issue of the manner and quality of man’s spiritual conduct, his fight against carnal desires, is attainment of union with the Lord. Man thus ceases to exist independently but continues his existence in Him. This is mysticism or *‘Irfan*.

Mystic knowledge, as a thorough cultural system that pertains to man’s spiritual life, has its theoretical base in an unimpeachable belief in the fact that the most perfect way to receive the essence and the truth of existence is through intuitive knowledge and perception, the unification of reason with the reasoned and the reasonable, love with lover and the beloved. From the practical point of view, it is based on the performance of lawful ascetic practices, purification of the ego or soul, vigilance, reckoning of the self, the saying of prayers and passing beyond the surface and the superfluities of worldly affair and in the utmost attachment to the truths of all matters relating to body and soul.

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<sup>1</sup> Shabistari, *Gulshan-i raz*, couplets 397-99, 402, 409, 410.

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*'Irfan* (mysticism) is both theoretical and practical. The theoretical undertakes the elaboration and interpretation of God, the world and the man from a mystical viewpoint. It provides mystical answers to the three essential questions of life, namely the whence, wherefore and whither.

Practical mysticism is also called wayfaring or peripatetic journeying and sets forth the realisations and duties of man with himself, with the world and with God.<sup>1</sup>

It denotes what a *salik* or walker, wayfarer, or peripatetic 'arif or mystic's initial conduct and its terminal points must be in order to become a Perfect Man (*insan-i kamil*) and successor of God on earth and reach the highest position that is possible for man to attain.

That exalted human status is the dissolution (*fana*) of his being in God and his subsistence (*baqa*) by His will to eternal life. It describes an 'arif's duties of conduct, his means, his states and the experience he goes through on his way to join with the Lord. Ways to purge the self, to combat the ego and purify the soul are also included among these practices. Thus 'irfan is described as an intuitive knowledge of God that leads man to His presence and to the ultimate which is to witness and be in presence with God (*liqa'Allah*).

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<sup>1</sup> Schimmel, *Mystical dimensions*, pp. 98-108.

### VI: The Law, the Way and the Truth (*shari'at, tariqat, haqiqat*)

In the clash of ideas among Islamic scholars and thinkers, some are exponents of pure fiqh or Islamic religious jurisprudence. They support the view that religion means the face value of what its laws and tenets signify. However, the *'urafa'* (plural for *'arif*, meaning mystics) believe that religious laws and decrees have implications and meanings other than what meets the eye.<sup>1</sup>

They hold that behind and beyond the surface and explicit meanings of religious edicts, there exist certain truths that are the real aims and objectives of religion. Therefore, the mystics have their own conclusions regarding the real import and significance of religious beliefs and precepts such as monotheism, prophethood, resurrection, daily prayers, the pilgrimage, fasting, and so on.

The real mystics, to be sure, adhere to a holistic conception of life that comprises the law, the way and the truth (*shara'at, tariqat, haqaqat*).<sup>2</sup> They maintain that attainment of truth is not possible except through religion. It has been said:

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<sup>1</sup> Lewisohn, *Faith and infidelity*, pp. 274-77, 304ff.

<sup>2</sup> See the classic work of Shi'i Sufism on this topic, *Asrj'r al-shar'a* of Sayyid Haydar amuli (d. after 1385), tr. A. Yate as *Inner secrets of the Path*, London: Element Books for the Zahra Trust 1991.

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“*Shari‘at* is the rind, Truth the kernel.  
Between the two lies the Way.”<sup>1</sup>

“Break up the shell  
Hold up the peal  
Cast off the rind  
Take up the sweet nut Word,  
With their rhetoric and syntax  
All have but a letter at the core  
No way to waste one’s life  
The dear life to circle and spin  
Green peels reveal the juicy nut  
Crack the skin and get at the dehiscent pod  
Unripe is the nut not covered in skin  
Face-sheet in for often yield  
Glorious data of faith in charming din.”<sup>2</sup>

The *‘arif* regards the *shari‘at* (face, appearance) and *tariqat* (the hidden, the concealed) as the guiding light and the way but his objective is his destination which is above these two and above all else.

This he calls God and the Truth, *al-Haqq* and *Haqiqat*, in which the realisation of all things and objects rest.

The mystic regards the attainment to such knowledge as the ultimate point in all creation. He <sup>3</sup>sees all things and objects (in the universe) as seeking Him and desiring

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<sup>1</sup> Shabistari, *Gulshan-i raz*, couplet 455.

<sup>2</sup> Shabistari, *Gulshan-i raz*, couplet 575-580.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Abdul husayn Zarrnkub, *The value of the Sufi heritage*, Tehran 1362 Shams, p. 101.

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His knowledge, the *tariqat* and the *shari‘at* are both preludes to such achievement.<sup>1</sup>

The ‘*urafa*’ believe that the heart, the core and the essence (*batin*) or the inner being of *shari‘at* is the way which they term *tariqat*.

This way or road ends in truth, which is monotheism and it occurs after the mystic has ceased to exist as an independent entity. Thus the ‘arif (mystic) believes in three things: the *shari‘at*, the *tariqat* and the *haqiqat*.<sup>2</sup>

Know that *shari‘at* is the word of the prophets, *tariqat* is the deed or action of the prophets and *haqiqat* is the vision or perception or insight of the prophets.

The *salik* or walker must first learn what he must of the *shari‘at*. Then he must perform of the actions of the *tariqat* as much as he should so that the lights of truth are revealed to him commensurate with his efforts. Nasafi in this regard said:

“O *Dervish*! He who accepts what his prophet has said is of the *shari‘at* and he who performs what his prophet

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<sup>1</sup> Murtada Mutahhari, *‘Ulum-i Islami*, Tehran: Intisharat-i Sadra 1366 Shams, vol. II, pp. 94-95.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the *hadth* in Mirza Husayn Nuri, *Mustadrak al-wasa‘il*, Qum: Ismai‘liyan n.d., vol. XI, p. 173; Amuli, *Tafsir*, vol. I, p. 195 and pp. 227-28 for discussion; Schimmel, *Mystical dimensions*, p. 99. 34.

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has performed is of the *tariqat* and he who sees what his prophet has seen is of *haqq* (truth).”<sup>1</sup>

And Rumi in *Mathnawi* said:

“*Shari‘at* is like a candle, it kindles the way, without acquiring a light, the path cannot be traversed. As you enter the way your wayfaring is *tariqat*. And, when you reach the destination that is the *haqq* (truth).”<sup>2</sup>

### VII: Who is a mystic (*‘arif*)?

An *‘arif* is a person who arrives at a knowledge of truth (as it is) through intuition and spiritual illumination and inspiration. He is submerged and deeply involved and engaged in divine affairs and matters. He is committed and dedicated to the commands and decrees of religion (*shari‘at*) and has merged *shari‘at* and *taqiqat*. A real mystic is one who has passed from the stage of certainty (*‘ilm al-yaqin*) and conviction of knowledge to the stage and level of conviction by perception and insight (*‘ayn al-yaqin*) and beyond to the certainty of truth (*haqq al-yaqin*).<sup>3</sup> He has passed from the stage of

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Azz-i Nasaf, *Kitab al-Insan al-Kamil*, ed. M. Molé, Tehran: Tahuri 1362 Shamsi, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Rumi, *Mathnav-yi Ma‘navi*, ed. R.A. Nicholson, London: Giib Memorial Trust 1925-40, preface to Book Five.

<sup>3</sup> On these concepts, see Martin Lings, *The book of certainty*, Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society 1992, pp. 1-11.

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mental awakening and repentance. He has gained understanding to the stage of grace and awareness experienced in His Presence. He has undergone obliteration and found revival in the Lord. A true mystic is also one who performs prayers, purges his ego, and experiences religiously allowed rigorous ascetic exercises not from fear of hell, nor for love of paradise and not as extraordinary wondrous acts. Rather, he has God in mind in all this and nothing and no one else, as the Holy Qur'an says:

“My prayers and my devotions, my life and my death, are all for Allah.”<sup>1</sup>

The Lion of Truth Imam Ali in lecture 184(*Sifat al-Mottaqin*) of the *Nahj al-Balaghih* explains who is a true mystic (*'arif*):

“The God-fearing are people of distinction. Their speech is ‘to the point’, their dress is modest, and their gait is humble. They keep their eyes closed to what Allah has made unlawful for them, and they strain their ears to gain that knowledge which is beneficial for them. They remain in the time of trials, as they remain in comfort. If there had not been fixed periods of life ordained for each, their spirits would not have remained in their bodies even for the twinkling of an eye, because of their eagerness for the reward, and for fear of chastisement if they live a long life full of

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Qur'an, al-An'am (The Cattle) 6: 162.

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(possible) sins. The greatness of the Creator is always in their hearts, and everything else appears small in their eyes. Thus, they see, and are enjoying Paradise's favors. For them, they also see, and feel the punishment of Hell.

Their hearts grieve, they protect themselves against evil, their bodies are thin, their needs are scanty, and their souls are chaste. They endure hardship for a short while, and consequently, they secure comfort for a long time. It is a beneficial transaction that Allah made easy for them. The world aimed at them, but they did not aim at it. It captured them, but they freed themselves from it by paying a ransom.

During the night they are upstanding on their feet, reading portions of the Qur'an in a well-measured way, creating through it grief for themselves and seeking by it the cure of their ailments. If they come across a verse creating eagerness (for Paradise) they pursue it avidly, and their spirits turn towards it eagerly, and they feel as it is in front of them. And when they come across a verse which contains fear (of Hell) they bend the ears of their hearts towards it, and feel as though the sound of Hell and its cries are reaching their ears. They bend themselves from their backs, prostrate themselves on their foreheads, their palms, their knees, and their toes, and beseech Allah, the Sublime, for their deliverance. During the day they are enduring, learned, virtuous and God-fearing. Fear (of Allah) has made them thin like arrows. Of anyone looks at them he believes they are

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sick, although they are not sick, and he says that they have gone mad. In fact, great concern (i.e. fear) has made them mad.

They are not satisfied with their meager good acts, and do not regard their major acts as great. They always blame themselves and are afraid of their deeds. When anyone of them is spoken of highly, he says:

"I know myself better than others, and my Lord knows me better than I know. O' Allah do not deal with me according to what they say, and make me better than they think of me and forgive me (those shortcomings) which they do not know."

The character of anyone of them is that you will see that he has strength in religion, determination along with leniency, faith with conviction, eagerness in (seeking) knowledge in forbearance, moderation in riches, devotion in worship, gracefulness in starvation, endurance in hardship, desire for the lawful, pleasure in guidance and hatred from greed.

He performs virtuous deeds but still feels afraid. In the evening he is anxious to offer thanks (to Allah). In the morning his anxiety is to remember (Allah). He passes the night in fear and rises in the morning in joy – fear lest the night is passed in forgetfulness, and joy over the favor and mercy received by him. If his self refuses to endure a thing which it does not like he does not grant its request towards what he likes. The coolness of

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his eye lies in what is to last forever, while from the things (of this world) that will not last he keeps aloof. He transfuses knowledge with forbearance, and speech with action.

You will see his hopes simple, his shortcomings few, his heart fearing, his spirit contented, his meal small and simple, his religion safe, his desires dead and his anger suppressed. Good alone is expected from him. Evil from him is not to be feared. Even if he is found among those who forget (Allah) he is counted among those who remember (Him) but if he is among the rememberers he is not counted among the forgetful. He forgives him who is unjust to him, and he gives to him who deprives him. He behaves well with him who behaves ill with him.

Indecent speech is far from him, his utterance is lenient, his evils are non-existent, his virtues are ever present, his good is ahead and mischief has turned its face (from him). He is dignified during calamities, patient in distresses, and thankful during ease. He does not commit excess over him whom he hates, and does not commit sin for the sake of him whom he loves. He admits truth before evidence is brought against him. he does not misappropriate what is placed in his custody, and does not forget what he is required to remember. He does not call others bad names, he does not cause harm to his neighbor, he does not feel happy at others

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misfortunes, he does not enter into wrong and does not go out of right.

If he is silent his silence does not grieve him, if he laughs he does not raise his voice, and if he is wronged he endures till Allah takes revenge on his behalf.

His own self is in distress because of him, while the people are in ease with him. He puts himself in hardship for the sake of his next life, and makes people feel safe from himself.

His keeping away from others is by way of ascetism and punfication, and his nearness by way of deceit and cheating.

The term '*arif*' has been defined variously. It has been given different meanings from differing angles, view and attitudes.

Some have differentiated between '*arif*' and Sufi but we have ignored such distinctions in this study. However, the following definitions are commonplace in the literature.

1) Avicenna (d. 1037) says that an '*arif*' is one:

“Who has turned away his conscience, or heart and mind from all things except God and has opened up his inner being to the sacred and holy world so

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that the light of truth (God) may shine and become reflected in it.”<sup>1</sup>

2) Junayd (d. 910) says:

“Tasawwuf (mysticism) is picking and screening...and anyone who is cut off or separated from all that is not of God, is a Sufi.”<sup>2</sup>

3) Junayd also says:

“A Sufi is one whose heart, like that of Abraham, is safe from love of this world; who performs God’s commands as Abraham and submits himself to His Will as Abraham and Ishmael; whose grief is such as David’s, whose ‘poverty’ is like that of Christ, whose patience is that of Job; whose enthusiasm be like that of Moses and whose sincerity be as that of Mu’ammad.”<sup>3</sup>

‘*arif*’s often trace their spiritual and initiatic lineage back to the Prophet through his family, especially the first eight Shi‘i Imams.

The name of several active and live Sufi traditions (orders):

Qadiriya: ‘Abd al-Qadir Jilani (d. 1166 CE).

Rifa‘iyya: Ahmet Rifa‘i (d. 1182 CE).

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Sina, *al-Isharat wa l-tanbhat with commentaries*, ed. M. Shihabi, Qum: Nashr al-balagha 1375 Shams, vol. III, p. 369.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Attar, *Tadhkirat al-awliya*’, ed. R.A. Nicholson, London: Gibb Memorial Trust 1905-7, vol. II, p.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Attar, *Tadhkirat al-awliya*’, vol. II, p. 34.

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Kubrawiya: Najm al-Din Kubra (d. 618/1221).  
Chishtiya: Mu'in al-Din Chishti (1142–1236 CE).  
Shadhiliya : Abu al-Hasan al-Shadhili (d. 656 AH/1258 CE).  
Mevleviye: Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207 –1273 CE).  
Bektashiye: Haji Bektash Veli (1209 – 1271CE).  
Safavieh: Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili (1252–1334 CE).  
Naqshbandiya: Baha' al-Din Naqshband (d. 791/1389).  
Ni'matallahiya: Shah Ni'matallah Vali (d. 1431CE).  
Bayramiye: Haji Bayram Veli (d. 833 AH/ 1429-30 CE).  
Khalwatiya: 'Umar al-Khalwati (d. 800/1397).  
Tijaniya: Ahmad al-Tijani (1737-1815 CE).

### **VIII: The goal of mysticism as distinct from practical reason and philosophy**

1. The aims of an *'arif* or mystic are severance and separation from everything and all things that are not of God, purification, abstraction of the soul, dissolution in God (*Mawla*) and revival by Him (*baqa'*).

2. Mystic conduct is active whereas ethical conduct is static. In *'irfan* the various steps and stages and the beginning and ending of each 'journey' receives particular attention with respect to one's deeds and conduct.

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3. Ethical acts embellish one's soul without order or discipline, whereas in *'irfan* ethical factors assume a dialectic form.

4. The spiritual elements in ethics are limited to some meanings and practices of movement and conduct. Discussions are often held with respect to states and intuitional revelations that are the *salik*'s exclusively and of which others are unaware.

5. The objective of the philosopher is to turn the worldly man into an intellectual being, but the mystic wants to reach the core of truth, which is God and to witness His presence. The philosopher finds perfection in understanding. The *'arif* finds it in reaching (to the ultimate truth).

6. A philosopher's tools are reason, logic, argument and proof. An *'arif*'s tools are his heart, diligence, purification, inner effort and movement.<sup>1</sup>

Shabistari says:

“Arguments of reason may all be jewels and gems. Yet, the pleasures of the heart are surely something else.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Murtada Mutahhari, *Ulum-i Islami*, vol. II, pp. 87, 90-91.

<sup>2</sup> Shabistari, *Gulshan-i raz*, couplet 121; Muhammad Lahiji, *Mafatih al-I'jaz*, eds. M.R. Khaliqi & 'I. Karbasi, Tehran: Intisharat-i Zavvar 1371 Shamsi, pp. 66-72. Cf. Lewisohn, *Faith and infidelity*, pp. 228-37.

7. The mystic seeks God and prays and praises the Lord for no reason except that He is worthy of praise.<sup>1</sup>

### **IX: What is wayfaring (*suluk*)?**

*'irfan* is ever concerned with man's conscience, the core of his being and heart. *Suluk*, which means walking, has a particular meaning in mystical terminology. Physical walking with the legs is not what is intended. *Suluk* means entrance of the mind and the heart into the world within, into the world unknown, the invisible world.

*Suluk* indicates 'going' generally. The walker may make physical journeys or he may make trips to the realms of the mind or the heart. To the *'arif*'s or mystics, *suluk* means a special going:<sup>2</sup> moving or going towards God, and moving or traversing within the Divine Realm. Going to the Lord is finite but moving within Him is infinite.

*Sayr* or movement towards God implies that the itinerant, the mover, should continue in the path until he ceases to exist as he is and finds survival in God. In other words, he hears, sees, speaks and knows through the Lord.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Sina, *al-Isharat wa l-tanbhat*, vol. III, p. 375.

<sup>2</sup> Nasafi, *Insan-i Kamil*, pp. 12-3, 84.

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Thou art the Path, the Journeyer, and the Destination.

Sayr in God means that when the *salik* or the aspirant is to meet with the Lord, he finds new life, after submitting his being to Him. By His Will, he shall continue his *sayr*, or journey of discovery until the time that he can see and know all things in detail as they truly are and that nothing, whatever, on earth, in Heaven or elsewhere in the Almighty's Domain, remains unknown to him.<sup>1</sup> Know that by *suluk*, the mystics means moving from bad words to worthy argument; from bad deeds to good deeds; from bad conduct to good conduct and from one's own essence and being to that of the Lord.

### **X: The reality of wayfaring**

“Everyone on it must pass away, and there will endure for ever the person of your Lord, the Lord of glory and honor.”(Qur'an, 26:55). (*Fana wa Baqa*).

The reality of wayfaring is to overwhelm the body and the soul or self under the banner of faith through the decrees and commands of the *fiqh* (religious laws and edicts) as pertain to the body and the mind under the Almighty's divine banner. The entirety of the ups and

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<sup>1</sup> Nasafi, *Zubdat al-haqa'iq*, ed. Haqq-varidI Nasiri, Tehran: Tahuri 1985, p. 111.

## CHAPTER ONE: Practice Sufism | 33

downs of the path, its pursuits, crises and consequences are registered in these stages.<sup>1</sup>

“So when the night overshadowed him, he saw a star; said he: Is this my Lord? So when it set, he said: “I do not love the setting ones”. Then when he saw the moon rising, he said: Is this my Lord? So when it set, he said:

if my Lord had not guided me I should certainly be of the erring people. Then when he saw the sun rising, he said: is this my Lord? Is this the greatest? So when it set, he said: O my people! Surely I am clear of what you set up (with Allah). Surely I have turned myself, being upright, wholly to Him Who originated the heavens and the earth, and I am not of the polytheists.”(Qur’an, 76-79:6).

Hafiz says:

From the fire of my heart, my chest in grief fo the Beloved consumed.

In this house, was a fire, that the house consumed.

From the farness of the Heart-Ravisher (*Dilbar*), my body melted.

From the love’s fire of the Beloved’s face, my spirit consumed.

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<sup>1</sup> Sayyed Mahdi Bahr al-‘ulum, *Sayr va suluk*, ed. S.M. Husayni Tehrani, Tehran: Intisharat-i Hikmat 1981, p. 131.

### XI: Intention (*niyyat*) in *suluk*

“Actions are judged by their intention.”<sup>1</sup>

The declaration of intention, that is, a deliberate, conscious, and willful undertaking of *suluk* is extremely important. Fiqh has decreed the enunciation of the intention to ensure that religious rituals like daily prayers are correct and acceptable. However, in mystical knowledge, every act and deed of man whether the compulsory ones, or the recommended acts, should express as their intention nearness to God. The *s\_jlik*'s wish behind his declared intentions should not be a request for material well-being, it should not be a request for knowledge and gnosis; it should not be a request, a wish to be human and have all human values and grades developed in him. For, if this is realised, all the above wishes shall be granted, even things that the salikhas not dreamed of.<sup>2</sup>

### XII: Aspects of *suluk*

*Suluk* consists of the following qualities: silence (*samt*), abstinence (or hunger), seclusion (*khalvat*), wakefulness (*yaqzah*), nocturnal devotion or vigilance (*tahajjud*), *dhikr* (the remembrance of Allah) and

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<sup>1</sup> Bahr al-‘ulum, *Sayr va suluk*, p. 131.

<sup>2</sup> Jamal al-Din Khwansari, *Sharh ghurar al-hikam*, ed. J. Urmawi, Tehran: Tehran University Press 1366 Shamsi, vol. I, p. 260, *hadith* # 1040 and vol. IV, p. 191 *hadith* # 5792.

meditation (*muraqibah*). The elders or authorities of ‘Irfan, hold that *suluk* is based on four pillars: frugal consumption, saying little, sleeping little, and staying in seclusion from people.<sup>1</sup>

**Samt or silence** is of two types. General silence is keeping one’s tongue from all that is unnecessary and talking only when necessary and avoiding speech in excess of what is necessary. It is to avoid talk that is not of God. Such silence must be maintained at all times. The *ahadith* (traditions) and narratives indicate this type of silence. According to one *hadith*:

“Silence is the motto of the lovers. It pleases God. Silence is the practice of the prophets and the elite.”

Special silence safeguards one’s tongue in talking with people or with non-initiates in the absolute and, in this sense it is regarded as a necessary condition in all exclusively theological recitals.<sup>2</sup> This category is silence by the heart, that is, keeping silence for the sake of what is not of God.<sup>3</sup> Thus he who is silent by the tongue has lightened his burden. But he who keeps silent by word and heart, seek him for Almighty God has made His Will manifest in him.

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<sup>1</sup> Nasafi, *Insan-i Kamil*, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> Abu Hafs ‘Umar Suhrawardi, *‘Awarif al-ma‘arif*, tr. Q. Ansari, Tehran n.d., p.

<sup>3</sup> 104. Cf. *The ‘Awarif al-ma‘arif*, tr. H.W. Clarke, Lahore: Mohammad Ashraf 1979 repr., pp. 44-45, 72-73.

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He, whose tongue is not silent but is silent in his heart, is a speaker in terms of *hikmat* (wisdom). He, who will not keep silent in words or in his heart, is possessed by the devil. Silence by the tongue is only the goal of the masses. Silence of the heart is an attribute of those who are near to the Lord and they are men of perception, insight and vision.

“There is no worship like silence  
He remains safe who remains silent.”<sup>1</sup>

**Hunger** (or abstinence) is also of two types, deliberate and of constraint. Deliberate abstinence belongs to the peripatetics. Abstinence of constraint is that of the searchers. A *muhaqqiq* or seeker does not hold the soul in hunger but his food intake is little. Hunger in any condition and for any reason it may be, is the strength of a *salik*'s claim and reveals great things to the seekers (of truth). Abstinence has states and stages such as humility, respect, courtesy, mendacity absence of excess, quiescence of limbs and destruction or eradication of unworthy memories. Such are the states and stages of abstinence of the walkers of the Path.

But the abstinence or hunger of the *muhaqqiqin* or seekers is sympathy, serenity, fellowship, non-being and purification from human characteristics. It is divine seclusion from the veils of time, a most sublime status namely, *samadani*, an attribute of God meaning

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn 'Arab, *Rasa'il*, p. 11.

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absolute lack of want and need but wanted and needed by everything and everyone, a status that contains secrets and revelations.<sup>1</sup> It is better that abstinence be observed in such a way as not to weaken the ṣlik's conduct and upset the mind and heart. In this connection, Imam al-Sadiq ('A) has said:

“Abstinence insures the believer's constant progression, it is food for the soul and nourishment for the heart.”<sup>2</sup>

“Hunger is a great aid to refresh the soul and to break habits.”<sup>3</sup>

There are two types of **seclusion** (*khalvat*), general and private. General seclusion (also called withdrawal) is staying away from all that is not of God, especially from such people who are sinful and seekers of this world. Association with these groups or individuals is permissible only to the extent that it is absolutely necessary. Association with the chaste, the faithful does not negate such seclusion. The words of the Immaculate Shi'i Imams indicate that this is the type of seclusion that must be observed. As Imam Husayn ('A) has said:

“There never was a prophet, messenger or apostle who did not go into seclusion at one time or other, in the beginning, during or at the end of his life.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Khwansari, *Sharh ghurar al-hikam*, vol. VI, p. 3 *hadith* # 10471.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn 'Arab, *Rasa'il*, p. 15-6.

<sup>3</sup> Bahr al-'ulum, *Sayr va suluk*, p. 150.

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The occasional retiring of the Prophet to the Cave at Hira is an indication of this type of seclusion. At any rate, this is the preferred variety of seclusion. Private seclusion implies being alone and staying away from upsetting noises.

It calls for remembrance of God and saying prayers in isolation in an enclosure not much larger than the, *salik* himself. The place should be clean and lawfully occupied and it is better that it have no window. This type of seclusion is observed and recommended by certain elders, if not by all, who perform recital exercises in remembrance of God.<sup>2</sup>

Solitude is of two kinds. The solitude (*'uzlat*) of the devotees is observed by avoidance of physical association with others.

The solitude of the seekers (*muhaqqaqin*) is the exercise of the heart in avoiding all things and objects and keeping the heart free and open only to God and His Knowledge. This leads to awareness of the Lord and to the divine secrets of the oneness of God. Seclusion and solitude purge the *salik* of any non-divine trait or impediment. Seclusion and solitude afford the seekers (of the Lord) the highest standing

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<sup>1</sup> Amid, *Ghurur al-'ikam*, vol. VI, p. 163 and 166 *hadith* # 9918 and 9942.

<sup>2</sup> Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, vol. II, p. 225; Majlisi, *Bihar*, vol. XV, p. 140; cf. Bahr al'ulum, *Sayr va suluk*, p. 161.

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and opportunity for intuitive knowledge of God and for witnessing His Presence.<sup>1</sup>

**Wakefulness** (or sleeping a little) refers to the alertness of the mind and heart and it is either through the eyes staying open, or by the heart being on the alert. Alertness of the heart means putting an end to being negligent, remiss and heedless and to seek and ask for divine perception. Wakefulness of the eyes means remaining in the wakeful state with eyes open to beseech for the alertness and vigilance of the mind and heart. Know that action of the heart is void with eyes close (negligence of watchfulness). If the *salik* keeps a vigilant heart with his eyes closed, he shall witness the alertness and the watchfulness of his eyes.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, the fruit of wakefulness will be the perpetuation of the heart's action and ascension of the *salik* to exalted places that are reserved for the Lord. The state of wakefulness is to maintain and cherish those states that befall the *salikor* are bestowed upon him as he advances toward his goal. The searcher or seeker (*muhaqqiq*) enjoys divine qualities through the wakeful stage.

As for nocturnal devotion or vigilance (*tahajjud*), the holy Quran says:

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<sup>1</sup> Bahr al-'ulum, *Sayr va suluk*, p. 151-53.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn 'Arab, *Rasa'il*, p. 13-14; Amid, *Ghurur al-hikam*, vol. VI, p. 124 *hadith* # 9758.

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“Pray during the latter part of the night, an additional duty for which your Lord may exalt you to a position of praise and glory.”<sup>1</sup>

It is recommended that the *salik* spend half the night, or a third, or two thirds in prayers and devotion. The Quranic verse which is addressed to the Prophet confirms this as we read:

“O you who are wrapped up in your mantle, rise to pray by night except a little, half the night or little less or little more.”<sup>2</sup>

There have been eager *salik*'s who did not let up on their nocturnal devotions until daybreak and so were able to say the Morning Prayer with the ablution they had for evening prayers. Shaykh Abu Talib al-Makki (d. 996) has mentioned the names of forty such men, followers of the Prophet in the book named *Quwt al-qulub* (Nourishment of the hearts).<sup>3</sup> It is recommended that nocturnal devotions take no less than one-sixth of the night time. Know that staying up at night is by Divine Grace and not merely the act of a seeker going in search of his beloved.<sup>4</sup> The light of love for getting up at night shall not be kindled in a *salik*'s heart unless the real Beloved has first made itself manifest in the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn 'Arab, *Rasa'il*, p. 17-8.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Qur'an, al-Isra' (The Night Journey) 17: 79.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Qur'an, al-Muzammil (The Shrouded One) 73: 1-3. ==57-'Izz al-Dn Mahmud Kashani, *Misbah al-hidaya*, ed. J. Humai', Tehran: Majlis 1946, p. 314.

<sup>4</sup> Suhrawardi, *'Awarif al-ma'arif*, p. 147.

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heart of the believer. When the heart receives such inkling, the willing soul is awakened and in all honour and ecstasy stands in prayer before the Creator of all goodness and asks relief from the agony of separation of lovers and the Beloved.<sup>1</sup>

Shaykh's who achieved spiritual states, all observed nocturnal vigilance. One can find many references to the excellence of *tahajjud* or nocturnal devotion, in the rising at nights to spend time in prayers of supplication in numerous Quranic verses and traditions.<sup>2</sup> It is related that the most despicable men in the eyes of God are those who lie down like corpses all night and waste their days in loafing.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, *tahajjud* means wakefulness as the Holy Quran directs night prayers, prayers of supplication, repentance, remembrance of God, reckoning with the self and reprimanding it. These are some of the major rites and exercises of *'irfān*.

**Dhikr** also *Zikr*, *Zekr*, *Zikir* (ذِكْر): Allah said in Quran: Believers, remember Allah frequently.<sup>4</sup> So remember Me, I will remember you.<sup>5</sup> Remember your Lord much and glorify Him in the evening and the morning.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Suhraward, *'Awarif al-ma'arif*, p. 147.

<sup>2</sup> Javad Maliki Tabrizi, *Sayr ila Llah*, tr. M. Tahirchi, Tehran 1984, p. 106.

<sup>3</sup> Jav;d Malik Tabrz, *Asrar al-salat*, tr. R. Rajabzada, Tehran 1985, p. 457.

<sup>4</sup> Quran, al-Ahzab 33: 41.

<sup>5</sup> Quran, al-Baqarah 2: 152.

<sup>6</sup> Quran, al-Umran 3: 41.

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To Sufis, dhikr is seen as a way to gain spiritual enlightenment and achieve union (*visal*) or annihilation (*fana*) in God.<sup>1</sup>

There are several good names of Allah (*Asma al-Husna*) that are usually read when remembering Allah. Here are a few:

Allāh- الله is the Arabic word for God and mentioned in Quran most of the verses.

Allāhu 'akbar (Takbir) - الله أكبر means: God is the greatest.

Subhan Allah (Tasbih) - سبحان الله means: Exalted is Allah.

Alhamdulillah (Tahmid) - الحمد لله means: All praise be to Allah.

Lā 'ilāha 'illā llah (Tahlil) - لا إله إلا الله means: There is no god but Allah.

Lā ḥawla wa-lā quwwata 'illā bi-llāh (Hawqala) - لا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله means "There is no power or strength except with God.

La Ilaha Illa Hu. لا اله الا هو means: There is no god except He.

Allahu La Ilaha Illa Hu. اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ means: Allah! There is no god except He.

Al-Hay. الْحَيُّ means: The Living.

Al-Qayoum. الْقَيُّومُ means: the Everlasting.

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<sup>1</sup> See Sheikh Safi al-Din point of view on *dhikr*: Ibn Baza, *Safwat al-Safa*, edited by Gholmreza Tabatabaei, Tehran, Intesharat Zaryab, 1376 Shmasi, pp. 464-465.

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**Meditation** (*Muraqaba*): with meditation, *salik* takes care of his spiritual heart that there is nothing in his heart except God.

Degrees of meditation:

Mystic trance-ecstasy (*khalsih*) is the beginning level of meditation. A *salik* who starts meditation regularly arrives to Mystic trance state (*khalsih*). With the passage of time, the *salik* goes into a state between sleep and wakefulness. He can remember seeing something but not exactly what it is.

Perception(*idrak*): With continuous practice of meditation, the somnolence from meditation decreases. When the conscious mind is not suppressed by sleep and is able to focus, the *salik* can receive the spiritual knowledge. At this stage, the *salik* is unable to see or hear anything but is able to experience or perceive it.

Activating the spiritual eye: When *idrak* develops deep, it is revealed as sight. As soon as the mind is focused, the spiritual eye is activated. Progressively, the mind gets used to this kind of visions, and the mental focus is sustained. With practice, the visions/experience becomes so deep that the *salik* starts seeing himself a part of the experience rather than considering himself an observer.

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Unveiling(*kashf*) is the step of beginning to get intelligence that non-saliks are unable to watch.

Spiritual vision (*Shuhud*): At this stage a salik Can see the whole world.

Revelations of the Unseen (*futuh al-Ghalb*): at this stage Closing eyes is no longer needed for meditation. The *salik* is freed from both space and time and can see/hear/taste/touch anything present anywhere in time and space, in present world or unseen world by idhn allah ta'ala. (with permission of Allah)

Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili divided Meditations into four degrees: *Mhhazirah* (presence of the heart), *mukashifah* (unveiling), *mushahidah* (spiritual vision) and *muaynah* (Divine examination).<sup>1</sup>

### XIII: The Four Journeys in Mysticism

Journeys are of various types in mysticism. There is the physical journey which the *salik* or walker along the Path undertakes. Then there are the inner journeys and journeys that imply a beginning and an end with superior destinations. These moral or spiritual journeys are divided into four journeys, each of which is endowed with very subtle points. The depth of '*irfan*

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Baza, *Safwat al-Safa*, edited by Gholmreza Tabatabaei, Tehran, Intesharat Zaryab, 1376 Shmasi, pp.519-520.

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and its *sayr* and *suluk* rest in these journeys. We shall not analyse them here in any detail but merely mention the most concise text concerning the four divine journeys:

“Know that four journeys exist for the seekers among the mystics and divine authorities. These are the journey from men towards God, journeying along with the Lord within Him. The third journey is the opposite of the first, it is from God to man with God and the fourth journey is in some respects opposite to the second for it is journeying with God among men.”<sup>1</sup>

The first journey is devoted to the removal of all curtains or veils of darkness and light and entering the world of matter, the Heavens and the Lord’s divine domain.

The second journey is passing through the world of spirit. However, the third journey, the journey from God to man is superior to the second journey because the latter is *sukr* or intoxication in reaching God and disappearing in Him, which when achieved, the salik finds new life in the Lord and by his eyes, and through every means. In this fourth journey, he sees and perceives the entire world of matter and Heaven and witnesses the grandeur of the Divine Domain of Power

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<sup>1</sup> Mulla Sadra Shirazi, *al-Asfar al-Arba’a*, ed. R. Lutf *et al*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Beirut: Dar ihya’ turath al-‘arabi 1981, vol. I, p. 13.

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and Majesty and imparts knowledge of actions, attributes and of essence.<sup>1</sup>

### XIV: ‘*Urafa*’s character and conduct

The most significant feature of the ‘*Urafa* or mystics is their behaviour or conduct which consists of patience, humility, advice, sympathy, kindness, moderation, devotion, service, fellowship, joy, generosity, compassion, friendliness, pardon, munificence, fidelity, decency, affection, cheerfulness, calmness, prayer, good temperament, soothed ego, respect for brothers, honouring the elders, mercy toward minors and adults, belittling the ego of himself and rating high all that comes unto him.<sup>2</sup> The Prophet said:

“I have been sent down to destroy bad habits and teach proper conduct to the servants (of God).”<sup>3</sup>

In his counsel to Mu‘adh ibn Jabal, the Prophet in fact compiled all good and proper conduct as he says and ruled out improper conduct:

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<sup>1</sup> Mulla Sadra Shirazi, *al-Asfar al-Arba‘a*, vol. I, p. 13, *scholia* of Muhammad Rida Qumshehi.

<sup>2</sup> Abu Najb Suhrawardi, *Adab al-muridin*, tr. M. Shirkhan, Tehran 1363 Shamsi, p. 72. Cf. *A Sufi rule for novices: Kitjb Adab al-muridin*, tr. M. Milson, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press 1975, p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> Tabarsi, *Majma‘ al-bayan*, Beirut: Mu’assasat al-‘lam 1995, vol. X, pp. 86-7.

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“O Mu‘adh! Practice chastity and virtue, be truthful in word and action, fulfil promises and return to the owner all that has been left with you in trust. Avoid treason and observe neighbourliness; have mercy and compassion for orphans”, talk softly and offer greetings, do good and do not seek plenty. Treat this world with disdain but cherish the next. Beware the Day of Reckoning. Try, O Mu‘adh, not to curse the patient and the meek. Make sure you commit no sin; repent immediately if you do and continue in a state of repentance. Know that Almighty God admits those of His servants to His Presence who are equipped with these qualities.”<sup>1</sup>

In regards to the characters of the ‘Arif, Imam Ali says in the *Nahj al-Balaghah*, (short speeches 325):

“A believer has a cheerful face, a sorrowful heart, a very broad chest (full of generosity), and a very humble heart. He hates high position and dislikes renown. His grief is long his courage is far reaching, his silence is much and, his time is occupied. He is grateful, enduring, buried in his thoughts, sparing in his friendship (with others), of bright demeanor and of soft temperament. He is stronger than stone but humbler than a slave.”

These are some of the qualities that an ‘*arif* must possess:

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<sup>1</sup> Bahrrani, Ibn Shu‘ba, *Tuhaf al-Uqul*, Qum: Nashr Islami 1363, Vol. I, pp. 25-26.

### 1. Humility

An 'arif's best quality is his humility. He who entertains humility in his heart can benefit by it all the time. He will be at ease in his association with others and others will be comfortable when dealing with him. The Prophet of God, in spite of his glorious status, set examples of humility by darning his own clothes and shoes with his own hands. He sat down and spoke with the poor, the orphaned and aided them. Bayazid Bistami (d. 875) said:

A man is humble who belittles his own ego and holds it at the lowest level and regards himself as the worse and lowliest living creature.<sup>1</sup>

### 2. Moderation and Leniency

Another characteristic of an 'arif is moderation and leniency, forbearance and toleration of others. The Prophet never said an unkind word to anyone. He never derided a food (put before him), nor did he punish a servant. It must be born in mind that the general moderation that people observe is a *'Irfani* characteristic. It is said that everything has an essence. Man's essence is reason and patience is reason's

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<sup>1</sup> Suhrawardi, Shahab al-Din Umar bin Muhammad, *Awarif al-ma'arif*, tr to Farsi: Esfahani, abuMansur, ed: Ansari, Qasem, Tehran: Intesharat Ilmi wa Farhangi 1364 Shmasi, p. 108.

essence. The proof of a man's reason is his tolerance of the pains and hardships inflicted on him by others and also courteous treatment of the people which purges the ego of impurities and palliates mulishness and quick anger. It is recorded in a *hadith* (tradition) that he who enjoys being lenient most shall reap more benefits.

### 3. Sacrifice

Another quality of the *'Urafa* is their readiness for sacrifice. Sacrifice generates from a powerful sense of compassion and mercy. It implies the strength of the soul to give away an only available object in sacrifice to others. It also implies patience and independence. Abu Hafs Suhrawardi (d. 1234) said:

Sacrifice means preferring brothers and friends to oneself in all affairs of this and of the other world, so that there is no distinction among blood brothers, relatives, and friends.<sup>1</sup>

### 4. Pardon or Forgiveness

Pardoning of others is another *'Irfani* trait. Mystics go to the extreme in overlooking the wrongs done to them by others. Sufyan al-Thawri (d. 778) said:

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<sup>1</sup> Suhrawardi, *Awarif al-ma'arif*, p. 109.

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If you do well to someone who has harmed you, then it can be said that you have done good, for returning good for good is the work of tradesmen.

The Prophet said:

“To do good means to pardon the cruelty of other’s to yourself and to make up with and join him who severs his ties with you and to be generous to him who withholds things from you.”<sup>1</sup>

### 5. Cheerfulness

Good-naturedness and cheerfulness are other *‘Irfani* characteristics. It warms the hearts and pleases others. Their joyfulness is a sign of the light of their hearts. As Almighty Allah says in Qur’an:

..There shall be beaming faces, smiling and cheerful.<sup>2</sup>

### 6. Indulgence

Another of the qualities of the mystic is that he is opposed to formalism and fastidiousness in his manner and conduct.

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<sup>1</sup> Suhrawardi, *Awarif al-ma‘arif*, p. 110.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Qur’an, ‘Abasa (He frowned) 80: 38.

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A condition for this is imitation of the Prophet in softness of speech and joviality. The prophet once said:

“I do not make jokes and do not utter anything except the truth.”

Taking things hard or being hard to please is bad in everything including dress, food, reception of guests, in asking questions, in speech and in all other things pertaining to this world.

### **7. Generosity (*Infaq*)**

*Infaq* is another specified characteristic of the ‘Urafa. Hoarding is abhorrent because the ‘arif sees himself as residing by the seaside.

He considers that divine blessings shall remain with him indefinitely, and if one who lives by the sea takes to hoarding water he will be open to ridicule and accused of ignorance.

The Prophet says:

“Each day two angels make the following declamation: "O Lord bless him with plenty who is busy performing charitable deeds and destroy the assets and holdings of him who is miserly and withholds things from the people.”

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### 8. Contentment

The Master of the Faithful and Preceptor of seekers, Imam ‘Ali (‘A) said:

“Contentment is a blade that never becomes blunt.”<sup>1</sup>

Dhu l-Nun al-Misri (d. 859) said:

He who exercises contentment shall be free of and at peace with the people and shall gain superiority and excellence over his peers.

### 9. Putting Off Enmity and Anger

An *‘arif* must purge himself of all feelings of anger and animosity.

There should be no such feelings in an *‘arif*’s heart toward anything or anyone. Such feelings should be replaced by spiritual qualities in an *‘arif*. The Messenger of God has said:

“Power and might do not consist in overwhelming someone by force. Mighty is he who controls his feelings of anger.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Majlisi, Bihar al-anwar, Vol. 71, p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> Payandeh, Abulqasim, *Nahj al-fasaha*, Tehran: Javidan, 1362, p. 549.

### 10. Peacemaking

The *'arif* is able and willing to make peace, to agree with and befriend others and to give up a feud. The Lord has described His Messenger's Apostles in these words:

“Let them be hard on Our enemies but lenient and merciful to Our friends.”<sup>1</sup>

### 11. Proper Gratefulness

When a *salik* is first developed into a fountainhead for monotheism, he loses all beings in Almighty God. He sees the Lord as the source of all generosity and prohibitions. As he proceeds and develops farther and reaches monotheism in its pure and absolute form, he finds the proof and reason for divine bestowals and withholdings. He sees the cause first and next the effect and such awareness and knowledge are gained by insight. The *salik* will then offer thanks first to the Benefactor, the Absolute Donor and then to the Cause that has acted as intermediate. It is recorded in a *hadith* that the first and foremost group of people to be invited to Heaven shall be the thankful ones, those who are grateful in prosperity in hardship, in sorrow and in joy.

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Quran, al-Hujurat, 48: 29.

### 12. Status and Dignity

Whenever a *salik* has knowledge and is aware of the blights of ego it maybe that he confers of what he has to assist friends and uses his status and wealth to improve and reform relations. A man's integrity comes to a test in four things: interdiction, charity, honour and lowliness.<sup>1</sup>

### XV: Love

“O believers, whoever from among you turns back from his religion, then Allah will bring a people [instead of you] whom He loves them, and they love Him.” (Qur'an, 54: 5).

Love is the main gate to the city of God for many Islamic mystical orders specially Safavid and Mawlawi orders (See on Shaykh Safi al-Din Ardebili point of view on love: Ibn Bazaz, *Safat al- Safa*, p.515, 543-549, Rumi, *Divane Shams, Mathnawi*).

The basis and cause of love is beauty. Allah is absolute beauty. He is beautiful and he loves beauty.

Love is the engine for *souluk*/spiritual journey, without which the journey is impossible. By love the *salik* flies towards the Divine world; and the path of Love is better

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<sup>1</sup> Suhrawardi, *'Awarif al-ma'arif*, pp. 108-20.

than any other path. Love makes the heart of the *salik* clean and soft. Love helps the *salik* leave behind and overtake his egoism faster than other traditions. Love purifies and filters the heart. The world of the one who is drunken by divine wine is the world of love. When the '*arif*' reaches the world of love, the drunkenness of love becomes visible.

The spirit is the palace of love because it is from the Divine world. When the '*arif*' is familiarised with the Divine love, his heart files with him, hence there is no place for anything else. "When the '*arif*' enters the sea of love, his outside and inside becomes love, for when the '*ashiq*/lover sees himself, he sees love and also when he sees love itself, he sees the *ma'ashuq*/beloved."<sup>1</sup>. For the '*arif*' loves the Creator hence he loves both the creation and the universe. The '*arif*' reaches peace and tranquillity by love. Love is the physician for all illnesses and disorders. It is the cure for all of the soul's sicknesses such as selfishness, egoism, greed, jealousy, envy, pride, anger and lust. According to Rumi Love is the astrolabe of God's secretes. It means by love we reach certain type of knowledge which is not reachable by particular reason.

The signs of the love of Allah according to Ghazzali in *the Alchemy of Happiness-Fourth Rukn*, Ninth Principle:

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Bazzaz. Shaykh Safi al-Din Ardabili, p.546

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Know that love is a dear treasure, and the claim of love is easy, so that humans think that they are of the lovers. But there are signs and reasons to love, and humans must desire these of themselves, which are seven.

The first sign is that the lover of Allah does not hate death, for no friend hates meeting a friend. And the Prophet said “whoever loves meeting Allah, the exalted, Allah, also loves meeting him.”, and *Boyuti* said to one of the ascetics “Do you love death?” the ascetic paused in answering, he (*Boyuti*) said “if you were truthful you would have loved it.” But it is permissible for one to be a lover, and hate the hastening of death, not death itself. And the sign was that he was restless in making provisions.

The second sign is that the lover of Allah, sacrifices for his beloved, and should cleave to what he knows brings him closer to God, and should avoid what places him at a distance. The fact of a person sinning is not proof that he does not love God, but his love is not with all the heart. The great Sufi Fudhail said to a certain man, "If anyone asks you whether you love God, keep silent; for if you say, 'I do not love Him, 'you are an infidel; and if you say, 'I do' your deeds contradict you."

The third sign is that the remembrance and invocation of God should always remain fresh in one's heart without effort, for one abundantly remembers what one loves, and if one's love is complete he will never forget

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it. So if the heart is forced into remembrance, it is feared that his beloved is that which its remembrance is dominant in his heart. While the love of Allah is not dominant, however the love of his love is dominant that he wishes to love. And love is one thing and the love of love is another

The fourth sign is that he loves the Qur'an, which is His word, and the Prophet (Mohammad) and whatever is related to him. And when love gains strength, he will love all human beings, for all are God's servants, but his loves will embrace all beings, for they are created by Him. As whoever loves anyone, loves his compositions and his handwriting.

The fifth sign is that he will be covetous of spiritual retreat and supplication and will long for the approach of night and the obstacles are removed, so that he may supplicate with the Friend. If he loves conversation by day and sleep at night more than the spiritual retreat, then his love is weak.

A revelation came to David that, "O David, do not become intimate with any one; for except two kinds of people none are separated from me: those who are earnest in seeking reward and turns lazy when the reward comes late, and he who forgets Me and is content with himself. The sign of being separated from me is that I leave him on his own, and leave him amused in the material world" If love is complete all else is excluded

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In the children of Israel there was a worshipper who prayed at night, and did his prayer under a tree on which a bird sang beautifully. A revelation came to the Prophet to go and say to him, "Thou hast mingled the love of a melodious bird with the love of Me; thy rank among the saints is lowered." On the other hand, some have loved God with such intensity that, while they were engaged in devotion, their houses have caught fire and they have not noticed it.

The sixth sign is that worship becomes easy to him and its hardship is removed for him. One said, "During twenty years I performed my night prayers with great difficulty, then in twenty years I enjoyed them." When love is strong no joy is equal to the joy of worship, for how can it be hard?

The seventh sign is that he loves his servants who are obedient to him and is merciful and compassionate to them, and hates all the disbelievers and the disobedient, as it (the Qur'an) says: "They are strenuous against the unbelievers and merciful to each other." One of the prophets once asked. "O God, who are Thy saints and lovers?" and the answer came, "Those who as a child is infatuated by his mother, are infatuated by me, as a bird seeks refuge in its nest, take refuge in My remembrance, and as a leopard who fears naught becomes angry, they become angry when one sins."

These signs and the like of them are numerous and those whose love is complete have all these signs, and

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those who have some of these signs, their love is also to that extent.

Rumi says the following in regards to love:

“Choose the love of that Living One who is everlasting, who gives thee to drink of the wine that increases life.

Choose the love of Him from whose love all the prophets gained power and glory.

Do not say, “We have no admission to that king.” Dealings with the generous are not difficult.” (Mathnawi, book1, verses: 219-221).

“Love is the All-subdeure, and I am sudeued by love: by Love’s bitterness I have been made sweet as suger.

O fierce Wind, before Thee I am (but) a straw: how can I know where I shall fall?

Whether I am (stout as) Bilal or (thin as) the new moon, I am runinning on and following the course of Thy sun.

What has the moon to do with stoutness and thinness? She runs at the heels of the sun, like a shadow.

The lovers have fallen into a fierce torrent: they see their hearts on the ordinance of love.

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Like the millstone turning, day and night, in  
revolution and maoning incessantly.

Its turning is evidence for those who seek the  
River; least any one should say that the River is  
montonless.

If you do not see the hidden River, see the turning  
of the celestial water-wheel.

Since the heavens have no rest from Him (Love),  
thou, O heart, like a star, seek no rest.

See the giddy wind howling; see the billows surging at  
His command.” (Mathnawi, book six, verses: 902-905,  
910-914 and 918).

Hafiz says:

“With the love’s eye one can behold the face of our  
Beloved.

The sea of love is a sea which there is no shore for  
it.

There the lover should be drowned; he should  
submit himself to Him.”

The assistance of the traveller on the path to God is by  
the love not by the reason; reason is not capable to lead  
the traveller to the unity of God.

Qushayri in chapter Love of *Al-Risala* said that the  
Messenger of God said:

“Whoever loves to meet God, God, too, will love to meet him; and whoever does not love to meet Him, God, too, will not love to meet him.”

### **XVI: The Stages and Journeys of *suluk***

We conclude this paper with a discussion of the stages of the Path. The *salik*(seeker) goes through numerous states, positions and waystations from the beginning to the end of his procession toward God.<sup>1</sup> There are various views regarding the number of such stages. Shaykh Mahmud Shabistari (d. 1337), says in his book, the *Gulshan-i raz* (The Rose garden of secrets):

“Two steps to a *salik*’s path  
But nine perils they contain  
Loss of identity comes first  
Next to cross the wilderness  
Known as life’s domain.”

However, prominent mystics contend these positions are seven. Abu Nasr al-Sarraj (d. 988), in his authoritative book *al-Luma‘*, discusses seven stages, namely, repentance, abstinence, asceticism, mendicancy, patience, trust, resignation or consent.<sup>2</sup> In

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. S.H. Nasr, "The spiritual states in Sufism," in *Sufi essays*, Albany: State University of New York Press 1991, pp. 68-83; Schimmel, *Mystical dimensions*, pp. 98-129.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Sarraj, *Kitab al-luma‘*, ed. R.A. Nicholson, Leiden: Gibb Memorial Trust 1914, p. 42. Cf. Nasr, "The spiritual states," p. 76.

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his *Manṣiq al-ṭayr* (Language of the birds), Farid al-din ‘Attar (d. ca. 1221) considers the following stages: begging, love, knowledge, independence, monotheism, mendicancy and annihilation (*fanj*) or ceasing to exist. The highest figure for a *salik*'s positions and stages provided in the books *Sad Maydan* (One hundred Fields)<sup>1</sup> and *Manazil Al-Sa'irin* (Stations of the wayfarers),<sup>2</sup> by Khwaja ‘Abd Allah Ansari (d. 1089) is one hundred as follow: *Al-Bidayat*/The Beginning, *Alabwab*/The Doors, *Al-Muamilat*/The Bargains, *Al-Akhlaq*/The Morals, *Al-Usul*/The Principles, *Al-Audiya*/The Valleys, *Al-Ahwal*/The States, *Al-Walaya*The Guardianships, *Al-Haqayeq*/The Realities, *Al-Nihaya*/The Extremities.<sup>3</sup> The main reason for this discrepancy lies in the mystics' elaborations or in their summarizing or in the differences of their statuses and points of destination. Or, they may each have posed the issue from a different view.

“From the expanse of oneness  
A word was heard, saying:  
"I am the Lord"  
Another went by distance covered

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<sup>1</sup> Khawja ‘Abdallah Ansari, *Sad maydan*, ed. Q. Ansari, Tehran: Tahuri 1360 Shams. Cf. *Chemins de Dieu, trois traités spirituels*, tr. S. de Laugier de Beaureceuil, Paris: Sindbad 1985.

<sup>2</sup> Khawja ‘Abdallah Ansari, *Manazil al-sa'irin*, ed. A. ‘Atwa, Cairo: Maktabat Ja‘far al-Haditha 1977; cf. French translation by S. de Laugier de Beaureceuil, Cairo: IFAO 1962.

<sup>3</sup> Ravan Farhadi, *Abdullah Ansari of Herat*, Richmond: Curzon Press 1995; S. de Laugier de Beaureceuil, *Khwajda ‘Abdulljh Anʿr, mystique hanbalite*, Beirut: Dar el-Machreq 1965.

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By boats near and far  
Yet another remarked  
Of the tress, the mole and line Of the Beloved by  
candle and wine  
When destination came to the fore  
Men of understanding reasoned no more.”<sup>1</sup>

Finally, we conclude our short paper and shorter excursus on mystic states with a summary of the states, stages and waystations that a *salik* must go through as given in Suhrawardi’s *Adab al-muridin*:

1-Awakening (*intibah*) from the torpor of neglect.

2-Repentance (*tawba*), which is returning from all that is not of God after having gone astray and to maintain a state of constant repentance.

3-*Inabat* is going back to the remembrance of God. Some have said that repentance is by fear and *inabat* is by desire and choice. A third group maintains that repentance is external and *inabat* is internal.

4-Wara‘a is foregoing something about which a doubt has risen. It means abstinence and self-restraint.

5-Taking stock of oneself and examining one’s soul (*muhasabat al-nafs*), reflecting upon one’s actions.

6-Sincerity implies tolerance of pain and forsaking comfort.

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<sup>1</sup> Shabistari, *Gulshan-i raz*, couplets 25-30.

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7-Renunciation (*zuhd*) is turning away from things that are permissible or religiously sanctioned and to guide or re-channel the desires and passions.

8-Mendacity (*faqr*) involves absence of self and property and removing from the heart all that leaves the hand.

9-Truthfulness (*sidq*), both external and internal.

10-*Tassabur*, or tolerance is forbearance of bitterness and these are the final positions or stages of the novitiates (*muridīn*).

11-Patience (*sabr*) that relinquishes complaints.

12-Submission is the enjoyment of mishap.

13-*Ikhlās* (sincerity) implies forcing men out of the Lord's business.

14-Resignation or trust (*tawakkul*) means relying upon Him, who destroys lust for all except Him.<sup>1</sup>

Wasalam.

First edition: Tehran, 1367 / 1988.

Second edition: London, 2001.

Third edition: London, 2018.

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<sup>11</sup> Suhraward, *Adab al-muridin*, pp. 775. Cf. *A Sufi rule*, p. 38.

**CHAPTER TWO:**  
**The Safavid order**



# **The Safavid order and the importance of Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili in Shi'a thought and modern history of Iran**

## **Introduction**

Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili was born in 650 After Hijra. He is considered as one of the greatest masters of 'Irfan (Islamic Spirituality) and civilisation builders of the Islamic world. Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili is the 19<sup>th</sup> descendant of the 7<sup>th</sup> Shi'a Imam, Imam Musa al-Kadhim(745 AD-799AD). He is the founder of the Safaviya Tariqah, which later established the Safavid dynasty in Iran. In *Mukatibat al-Rashidi* Sheikh Safi al-Din is referred to by titles such as “The revealer of the secrets of the Qur'an”, “the pole of the heaven of guardianship” and many other titles. Many *Kiramah* (miracles) have been attributed to Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili both in popular culture and literature. Amongst the important books, which details the life, teachings and miracles of Sheikh Safi al-Din we can refer to the *Safwat al-Safa* of Ibn Bazzaz Ardabili written in the 8<sup>th</sup> century After Hijra. Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili and

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Imam Khomeini are two great civilisation building mystics that have had a great role and influence in the formation of contemporary Shi'a culture and civilisation. In regards to the *Safaviya tariqah* and Sheikh Safi al-Din, Professor Nasr has written: "The Safaviya Tariqah is of considerable importance in regards to the recent centuries of Iranian history. In the sense, that not only did it completely transform the social and political history of Iran and for the first time after the collapse of the Sassanid's, gave political unity to Iran, but because from the beginning it was a *Shi'a Tariqah* and had a great role in converting Iran into a twelver Shi'a country. In all Islamic history, no other instance can be seen in which a Sufi Tariqah has had such a continuous political influence in a vast country such as Iran. The *Safaviyah Tariqah* established the Safavid Dynasty, directly by the Safavi family, unified Iran, and placed the Ja'fari sect as the official sect of one the largest Islamic countries."<sup>1</sup>

### **The intellectual importance of Sheikh Safi al-Din**

To discuss the intellectual importance of Sheikh Safi al-Din we can refer to his commentary on the Qur'an, commentary on the narrations of the Prophet and the Imams and commentary on Sufi literature. One of the important characteristics of the Sheikh is his

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<sup>1</sup> Safavi, Salman, '*Irfan-I Thaqaalain*, London, 2013, p26.

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commentary on the Sufi poetry of poets such as Attar Naishaburi, Sanai, Rumi, Kermani, Ruzbahan Baqli and Araqi, which portrays the continuation of the intellectual and spiritual tradition of Islamic spirituality.

The Sheikh, in a commentary of *Qazal* 1726 of the Kulliat of Shams Tabrizi of Rumi, which reads:

بیار باده که دیری است در خمار توام  
اگرچه دلق کشانم نه یار غار توام

*Bring the wine for I have been intoxicated by you for an eternity. Although I am wearing the cassock, I am not your companion of the cave.*

Says: because on that day we have drunk from the Divine wine of *“ألستُ برَبِّكُمُ”* “Am I not your Lord?”<sup>1</sup>, although we are in the cassock of of this existence, we are still intoxicated by that Divine wine. By cassock, it is meant the corporeal form, which now desires the Divine wine of life, and seeks that Divine wine which will purify the impurities of the body.<sup>2</sup>

In the commentary of a verse from ‘Attar Naishaburi which reads:

از بشری رسته بود باز برای بشر  
تا به کمال آورد خانه نقصان گرفت

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<sup>1</sup> A'raf 172

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Bazaz, Tawakkul ibn Ismail, *Safwat al-Safa*, Tehran, 1376, p535.

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*He was freed from humanity, but once more he returned for the sake of humanity. So that he can bring perfection, he came to the house of imperfection.*

The Sheikh says: the spiritual wayfarer is only freed from the human world when Divine attraction attracts him. Therefore, as long as he is in the world of humanity and intellect he is veiled from the Divine attractions.

He is at loss and is bound to the world of humanity and intellect. When he becomes attracted and becomes freed from the world of humanity through the Divine attractions, the fear of worldly interests is removed from him and though gaining wisdom he will gain knowledge of Divine secrets and will reach the station of Knowing Allah. However, If he stays in that world and they do not return him to the world of humanity, he will neither guide nor develop others, therefore, they send him back to the human world, which is the world of deficiency so that he may guide, educate and perfect other wayfarers and seekers.<sup>1</sup>

In a commentary of a verse from the *Divan* of Ohadi Maraqhei which reads:

مردم نشسته فارغ و من در بلای دل  
دل دردمند شد، ز که جویم دواى دل

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Bazaz, Tawakkul ibn Ismail, *Safwat al-Safa*, Tehran, 1376, p540.

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*The people are sitting disengaged and I am in the misery of the heart, My heart hurts, from whom should I find the cure of the heart.*

Says: “the people of appearance are forgetful, and this is the secret. The people of manifestation are the people of the heart and are in the world of Divine discovery, witnessing and examining. The people of the world of secrets, are forgetful and are not aware of the dealings of the people of manifestation. The Divine secrets become revealed to the People of divine discovery, although if a particle of these secrets is revealed to a mountain it will explode and disappear, for as the Qur’an says: *الرَّأْيِيَهُ خَاشِعًا مُتَصَدِّعًا مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ* / “If We had sent down this Qur'an upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbled and coming apart from fear of Allah .” (Hashr 21). **“My heart hurts, from whom should I find the cure of the heart.”** Shows that the people of appearance are not aware of this state and the creations of God are not able to cure that which reaches the heart from God, unless the cure of the heart is also given by God.”<sup>1</sup>

The other importance of the intellectual contributions of Sheikh Safi al-Din is his method of hermeneutical interpretation and commentary on the Qur’an. He has very deep sayings about the interpretation of some of the most important verses of the Qur’an. In his

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Bazaz, Tawakkul ibn Ismail, *Safwat al-Safa*, Tehran, 1376, p542-543.

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interpretation of the Qur'an the Sheikh uses the Qur'an by Qur'an method along with *Hermeneutic Ijtihad*, he makes reference to prophetic narrations, and has also made use of Divine inspiration, intellect, narrations, the heart and art for the interpretation of the Qur'an.

For example they asked the sheikh, do the following Qur'anic verse:

أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

*“Unquestionably, [for] the allies of Allah there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they be sad.”* (Yunus 62) and the prophetic narration *المخلصون على خطر عظيم* “the sincere are in great danger” contradict each other?

In answer the Sheikh says that the prophetic narration “The sincere are in a great danger” is about those who have overcome their carnal desires and are freed from them, however, they are still in danger of the trickery of the self, or their life time is not enough for them to reach the ultimate goal. For example one who intends to go to Hajj but worldly desires such as money, family and children prevent him from going, if he gives in to these desires he will not reach his destination, but if he overcomes these obstacles, and turns to the destination and takes the first step, he will be freed from these desires. However, until he reaches the Ka'ba in Mecca, he is danger from bandits, shortage of food, illness and death. It is by reaching the Ka'ba that he becomes safe from these dangers. This state of being in great danger

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that was mentioned in the hadith is about the beginner spiritual wayfarer and is an exoteric appearance. In the spiritual state, when the wayfarer becomes free from the chains of the self and the characteristics and desires of the self and becomes liberated from sensual and satanic desires, and walks on the straight path heeding to the Qur'anic command:

*"وَ أَنْ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ"*

**“This is My path, which is straight, so follow it”<sup>1</sup>**, he is in danger of other satanic paths, as the mentioned Qur'anic verse continues:

*"وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ."*

**“and do not follow [other] ways, for you will be separated from His way.”<sup>2</sup>**

As long as the spiritual wayfarer is travelling on the path he is in danger. However, by reaching the destination of union with the divine, and walking in the safety of this union the Qur'anic promise:

*"وَ أَنْ إِلَى رَبِّكَ الْمُنْتَهَى"*

**“And that to your Lord is the finality”<sup>1</sup>** becomes true, for by walking in the safety of the Ka'ba the hearts becomes safe, because as the Qur'anic verse states:

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<sup>1</sup> An'am 153

<sup>2</sup> An'am 153

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"وَمَنْ دَخَلَهُ كَانَ آمِنًا"

**“And whoever enters it shall be safe”<sup>2</sup>.** In this state the spiritual wayfarer becomes free from fear and the dangers of satanic paths, for as the Qur’an promises:

"أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ"

**“now surely for the friends of Allah there will be no fear and nor shall they grieve”<sup>3</sup>.** Although the fear and danger that leaves the spiritual wayfarer is specific to the world and what resides in it and the afterlife, but the fear of God becomes dominant in him and as his knowledge increases his fear also increases for as the prophetic hadith says ““I am the most knowing of Allah and the most fearful of Him among you” for if one does not fear the greatness of Allah he will become a wrongdoer, as the Qur’an says:

"قَلَّا يَأْمَنُ مَكْرَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ"

“What! Do they then feel secure from Allah's plan? But none feels secure from Allah's plan except the people who shall perish.”<sup>4</sup>

The other importance of Sheikh Safi al-Din is his spiritual commentary on narrations of the Prophet and

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<sup>1</sup> Najm 42

<sup>2</sup> Al-Imran 97

<sup>3</sup> Yunus:62

<sup>4</sup> A’raf 99, Ibn Bazaz, Tawakkul ibn Ismail, *Safwat al-Safa*, Tehran, 1376, p534-536.

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the Imams in which he has made remarkably deep and precise statements in regards to the stations of spiritual wayfaring. At times, from a short hadith of no more than six words he has extracted fundamental principles of spiritual wayfaring.

For example they asked him “Imam Ali says:

مَنْ عَرَفَ نَفْسَهُ فَقَدْ عَرَفَ رَبَّهُ

“He who knows himself knows his Lord” can we understand from these words that when we know ourselves we have come to know God through research?”

In answer the Sheikh replied: the phrase “He Who knows himself” means that the spiritual wayfarer gains knowledge of his self and after seeing the deficiencies of his self comes to reform them. To become purified from defects is *Tazkiyah* or purification. Whoever becomes purified from his self, by creating distance from the self, reaches salvation and safety from Divine torment. He becomes aware of Allah. After gaining knowledge of the self he comes to know himself, and by leaving the selfness of the self, his eyes become open to Allah. The knowledge of Allah is attained after knowledge of one’s self. The created is the evidence of

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the existence of the creator, therefore the purpose is nearness not research.”<sup>1</sup>

From this Hadith the Sheikh has derived a number of principles of Islamic spirituality such as: Yaqzeh (vigilance), desire and devotion, purification, abandonment, adornment, wisdom, certainty which is divided into knowledge of certainty, essence of certainty and truth of certainty, and nearness.<sup>2</sup>

### **The importance of the Practical aspect of spiritual wayfaring in the Safaviya Tariqah**

Sheikh Safi al-Din has placed great emphasis on *dhikr*, which is Divine invocation and remembrance, solitude and watchfulness by the heart.<sup>3</sup> He has placed *Shari'ah* or Islamic religious law as the foundation of Irfan. The Qur'an plays a central and important role in the theoretical and practical teachings of the *tariqah* of

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Bazaz, Tawakkul ibn Ismail, *Safwat al-Safa*, Tehran, 1376, p478.

<sup>2</sup> By comparing the commentary of the sheikh with the commentary offered in Qoro al-hikam wa doro al-kalam, for this hadith the intellectual superiority of the sheikh becomes evident. The author of the mentioned book Jamal al-Din Muhaqiq Khansari in his commentary on this hadith says: it is meant that whoever knows himself knows his lord. For by knowing one's self one comes to know the existence knowledge and power of God. For as they have mentioned in the books of the theologians, the existence of god is in a state of manifestation so that when one comes to know himself he also comes know god. God knows best.”

<sup>3</sup> Safavi, Salman, ' *Irfan-I Thaqalaqin*, London, 2013, p296-297.

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Sheikh Safi al-Din. Sheikh Safi al-Din contributed to the further development of spiritual self-knowledge and spiritual psychology. Some mystics such as the school of Baghdad were of the opinion that through severe mortification one can reach deep spiritual knowledge. However, sheikh Safi al-din placed emphasis on constant “watchfulness of the heart”- *muraqibah qalbi* (مراقبه قلبی) and believed that watchfulness of the heart is a better method for attaining the truth. The sheikh has stressed on two types of watchfulness, which are “behavioral” and of “the heart”.

From a theoretical and practical perspective he was able to establish the moderate path of constructive cooperation between Sufi tariqah and the establishment of religious scholars and political organs. This constructive cooperation resulted in the formation of the Safavid dynasty and the consolidation of Shi'ism in Iran, and also the independence and unification of Iran. He is one of the flag carriers of the theory of proximity of Islamic sects and both he and his successors took great steps in supporting and deepening this theory. Unfortunately, when the Ottomans became the enemies of the Safavids, through their propaganda they were able to destroy this aspect of the Safaviyah movement in the mind of Sunni masses, and falsely entered the killing of Sunnis by the command of Safavids in their history. However, in reality the Sheikh and his successors actively wanted proximity between the Islamic sects and in the Safavid government numerous

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high ranking Sunni military and political officials were present.

Moderation in ‘Irfan is one of the other important characteristics of the *tariqah* of Sheikh Safi al-Din. The sheikh says. “For us there is discovery, miracles, taking steps and effort. Discovery is that the wayfarer comes to know his defects and his talents. Miracles is that from within himself he overcomes and removes his desires and turn his heart to solitude. Taking steps, is that he goes on a journey outside of himself so that he may reach the destination. Effort is that he does not bow his head to anyone other than Allah.”<sup>1</sup>

In regards to open invocation and secret invocation which is the subject of debate between different mystical orders the Sheikh has a holistic approach. He says that “in the initial stages of spiritual wayfaring, when the illness of the self is severe and corporeal dependence is strong, open invocation is good. When the spiritual wayfarer comes closer to the heart, he is trained by secret invocation.”<sup>2</sup>

Qiyath al-Din Muhammad Vazir, asked the sheikh about the invocation “la ilaha illa Allah” (there Is no deity but Allah) said in a four percussion manner. The Sheikh answered “the beautiful invocation of “la ilaha

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Bazaz, Tawakkul ibn Ismail, Safwat al-Safa, Tehran, 1376, p484.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Bazaz, Tawakkul ibn Ismail, Safwat al-Safa, Tehran, 1376, p488.

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illa Allah” is the word of sincerity and as such must be said with sincerity.”<sup>1</sup>

In the opinion of Sheikh Safi al-Din true Irfan is the Irfan which results in the manifestation of good states and behavior and not simply behavior which is correct in appearance even if it is sitting in the *mosque*.

The spiritual *Tariqah* of Sheikh Safi al-Din which is referred to as the Safaviyah tariqah is the collection of *Shariah* (religious law), *tariqah* (spiritual wayfaring) and *haqiqah* (reaching the truth), with the purpose of reaching Allah. In his commentary on the Qur’anic verse:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

“And those who strive for Us - We will surely guide them to Our ways. And indeed, Allah is with the doers of good.”<sup>2</sup> The sheikh says: "by ‘ways’ Allah means *shariah*, *tariqah* and *haqiqah*. He means that when an individual strives for My pleasure I will show him all three ways. The path of *shari’ah* can be journeyed by appearance and that is the path of Hajj, holy war, esoteric and exoteric devotion and traveling in order to gain rightful living. The path of *tariqah* can be journeyed by reaching an attribute. When the self follows the *shari’ah*, the attribute of selfhood is

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Bazaz, Tawakkul ibn Ismail, Safwat al-Safa, Tehran, 1376, p489.

<sup>2</sup> Ankabut 69

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removed from it, and replaced by divine attributes, through these attributes the path of *tariqat* is journeyed. The path of *haqiqat* can be travelled by the heart, and it is a path from the heart to Allah, when the desires of the self are overcome this road becomes open to the heart.”<sup>1</sup>

In the opinion of Sheikh Safi al-Din the best path of spiritual wayfaring is the path of love, which is the path of Prophet Abraham. The sources of the teachings of the spiritual tariqah of safaviyah are the Qur’an, the Sunnah of the 14 infallibles and the spiritual experience and tradition of اولياء الله the Friends of Allah. Spiritual wayfaring without absolute obedience to religious law is impossible, and the spiritual wayfarer must unconditionally follow Islamic religious law until the end of his life.

Wisdom, servitude to Allah, kindness, trust in Allah, the greater jihad, propagating and honoring the teachings and sayings of the fourteen infallible, awaiting for the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam, good behavior, social cooperation, chivalry, bravery, helping the innocent, the oppressed and the poor and serving the creations of God are the main principles of the Safaviyah tariqah.<sup>2</sup>

Another one of the most important contributions of Sheikh Safi al-Din was making Sufism socially active

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Bazaz, Tawakkul ibn Ismail, Safwat al-Safa, Tehran, 1376, p460.

<sup>2</sup> See Safavi, Salman, ‘*Irfan-I Thaqaalain*, London, 2013, p149-298.

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and responsible. Good behavior, generosity, forgiveness and chivalry are of the pillars of the social Sufism of Sheikh Safi al-Din. The sheikh was successful in bringing Sufism out of the *khaniqah* and into social life and by combining invocation, thought and action, combine individual spiritual life and social life and manifest them in society. Expanding the station and function of the *khaniqah* was one the other important contributions of the Sheikh. Over time, The *khaniqah* of Sheikh Safi al-Din became the aggregation of spirituality, art and politics.

From an architectural perspective, the shrine of Sheikh Safi al-Din is the most beautiful *khaniqah* in the world. It is the perfect manifestation of the philosophy of Islamic art and its inscriptions are comprised of Qur'anic verses prophetic narrations.<sup>1</sup> Its courtyard is the burial place of the martyrs of the battle of Chaldoran who for the love of Imam Hussain in defense of the capital of the Shi'a government of Safavids against the attack of the Ottomans on Tabriz, became martyred and connected the Karbala of Iraq to the Karbala of Iran. From the perspective of identity the shrine of Sheikh Safi al-Din is the symbol of the spirituality and resistance of Shi'ism and the source and beginning of the independence of the political geography of twelver Shi'ism.

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<sup>1</sup> See Safavi, Hasti, *A Hermeneutic Approach to the Tomb Tower of Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili's Shrine Ensemble and Khānqāh*, Transcendent Philosophy Journal, Vol14, 2013, London, p7-32.

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The grave of Sheikh Safi al-Din who is the spiritual father of modern Iran and Shah Isma'il the architect of Shi'a Iran are located in the shrine complex of Sheikh Safi al-Din, which is until today visited by the lovers of the household of Prophet Muhammad from all over the world. The *Khaniqah* and shrine complex of Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili has been [registered](#) as a world heritage site by UNESCO.

### *The Dhikr<sup>1</sup> ذِكْر in Safavid order:*

Quran: “So remember Me, I will remember you.”<sup>2</sup>

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكَرْكُمْ وَأَشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونَ

So remember Me I will remember you; and be thankful to Me and be not ungrateful toward Me. Remembrance is the immersion of the one who is remembering in the witnessing shuhūd of that which is remembered and then [it is] being consumed in the existence wujūd of that which is being remembered until no trace athar remains of the remembering so that it is said “so and so” once was. So remember me I will remember you that is “be consumed in Our existence wujūd and We will remember you after your annihilation from yourself.” God most high said “For indeed formerly they had been virtuous” [51:16]. They were here for a

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<sup>1</sup> also *Zikr, Zekr, Zikir*

<sup>2</sup> Quran, al-Baqarah 2: 152.

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time but they have become perpetually separate *bānū dālīman*: The world is a beautiful [passing] event so be a beautiful event for the one who is aware. The path of the people of literal expression *‘ibāra* is So remember me by acts of conformity *muwāfaqāt* [to the divine command] I will remember you with special gifts *karāmāt*. The path of the people of allusion *ishāra* is “So remember me in abandoning every worldly concern *ḥazz* I will remember you by raising you up in My reality *ḥaqq* after your annihilation from yourselves.” “So remember me by being content with Me instead of with My gifts and favors *afḌāl* and I will remember you by being pleased with you regardless of your actions *af ‘āl*.” “So remember me-and it is by My remembrance of you that you remember for without My prior remembrance your remembrance would not occur.” “So remember me by cutting off attachments *‘alāliq* and I will remember you by the attributes of realities *ḥaqāliq*.” It is said that “remember Me belongs to everyone you meet and I will remember you belongs to those whom I address.” Whoever remembers Me in a congregation I will remember him in a congregation better than theirs. It is said that “and be thankful to Me for the tremendous blessing to you [refers to when] I said to you 'So remember me I will remember you.'” It is said that gratitude is a kind of remembrance. In His words and be not ungrateful the prohibition against ingratitude *kufrān* is a command to be grateful. Gratitude is a remembrance so He repeated for you the command to remember.

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Three is the first term of multiplicity.

The command to remember much is a command to love for that is in the tradition “One who loves something remembers it often” so this is in truth a command to love that is “Love me I will love you.” So remember me I will remember you that is “Love me I will love you.” It is said “So remember me by being humble *tadhallul* I will remember you with favor.” “So remember me by being broken *inkisār* I will remember you in acts of beneficence *mabārr*.” “So remember me with the tongue *lisān* I will remember you with the gardens. “So remember me with your hearts I will remember you by fulfilling what you seek.” “So remember me at the door with respect to service *khidma* I will remember you by responding on the carpet of nearness by completing the blessing *ni‘ma*.” “So remember me with the purification of the innermost self *bi-taṣfiyati al-sirr* I will remember you by giving kindness . “So remember me with effort and care I will remember you with generosity and giving “So remember me with the attribute of soundness *salāma* I will remember you on the Day of the Resurrection *yawm al-qiyāma* a day on which remorse *nadāma* will not benefit.” “So remember me with awe *rahba* I will remember you by making [your] wish *raghba* come true.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Qushairi Tafsir.

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“Believers, remember Allah frequently.”<sup>1</sup>“Remember your Lord much and glorify Him in the evening and the morning.”<sup>2</sup>

To Sufis, *dhikr* is seen as a way to gain spiritual enlightenment and achieve union (*visal*) or annihilation (*fana*) in God.<sup>3</sup>

There are several good names of Allah (*Asma al-Husna*) that are usually read when remembering Allah, specially last 3 verses of Sura al-Hashr (59:22-24):

*“Hu wallahu ladhila illaha illa hu  
alim al ghaib wa shahadati  
Hu ar rahman ar rahim  
Huwallahu ladhila illaha illa hu  
al malik ul quddus as salaam  
ul mutmin ul muhaiymin al aziz  
ul jabbar ut mutakabbir  
Subhanallah hi amma yusrikun  
Hu wallahu al khaliq ul bari ul mussawir  
La hul asma ul husna  
yusabuhu lahuma fi semaawaati wal ard  
wa huwal aziz al hakim.”*

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<sup>1</sup> Quran, al-Ahzab 33: 41.

<sup>2</sup> Quran, al-Umran 3: 41.

<sup>3</sup> See Sheikh Safi al-Din point of view on *dhikr*: Ibn Baza, Safwat al-Safa, edited by Gholmreza Tabatabaei, Tehran, Intesharat Zaryab, 1376 Shmasi, pp. 464-465.

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“He is Allah besides Whom there is no god; the Knower of the unseen and the seen; He is the Beneficent, the Merciful.

He is Allah, besides Whom there is no god; the King, the Holy, the Giver of peace, the Granter of security, Guardian over all, the Mighty, the Supreme, the Possessor of every greatness Glory be to Allah from what they set up (with Him).

He is Allah the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner; His are the most excellent names; whatever is in the heavens and the earth declares His glory; and He is the Mighty, the Wise.”(59: 22-24)

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ (٢٢)

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيْمِنُ الْعَزِيزُ  
الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ (٢٣)

هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي  
السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ (٢٤)

Here are a few Beautiful names of Allah for dhikr:

*Allāh*- الله is the Arabic word for God and mentioned in the most verses of Quran.

*Allāhu ʿakbar* (*Takbir*) - الله أكبر : God is the greatest.

*Subhan Allah* (*Tasbih*) - سبحان الله : Exalted is Allah.

*Alhamdulillah* (*Tahmid*) - الحمد لله : All praise be to Allah.

*Lā ʾilāha ʾillā llah (Tahlil)* - لا إله إلا الله: There is no god but Allah.

*Lā ḥawla wa-lā quwwata ʾillā bi-llāh (Hawqala)* - لا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله means "There is no power or strength except with God.

*La Ilaha Illa Hu.* لا إله إلا هو: There is no god except He.

*Allahu La Ilaha Illa Hu.* اللهُ لا إله إلا هو الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ means: Allah! There is no god except He.

*Al-Hayy.* الْحَيُّ . means: The Living One.

*Al-Qayoum.* الْقَيُّومُ . means: the Everlasting.

*Hu.:* He. هو.

*Ya Allah* (O God). يا الله.

*Ya Hu* (O He). يا هو.

*Ya Haqq* (O The Truth). يا حق.

*Ya Hayy* (O The Living One). يا حي.

*Ya Qayyum* (O The Ever-Standing). يا قيوم.

*Ya Rab.* O The Lord. يا رب.

*Ya Allah ! Ya Hu.* يا الله يا هو.

*Ya Allah Ya Nur.* O Allah, O The Light. يا الله يا نور.

*Ya Fattah* (O The Opener). يا فتاح.

*Ya Wali ! Ya Ali.* يا ولي يا على. O The Patron O Ali.

*Ya Fatir ! Ya Fatimah.* يا فاطر يا فاطمه. O The Originator!

O Fatimah.

*Ya Hadi ! Ya Mahdi.* يا هادي يا مهدي.

*Ya Sahib al-zaman Aghithni.* يا صاحب الزمان اغثنني.

*Adrikni.* يا صاحب الزمان ادركني.

*Hu ya Ali Madad.* هو يا على مدد.

*.Ya Hu, Ya Man la Hu, illa Hu.* يا هو يا من لا هو إلا هو.

*Ya Hu Ya Man Hu, Ya Man Laisa illa Hu.* يا هو يا من هو.

يا من ليس إلا هو.

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Ya Huw al-Awal wa al-Akhir, Ya Huw a-Zahir wa al-Batin. O He is the First and the Last . O the Outward and the Inward. يا

هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ .

يا من هو حق مع الحق. Ya Man Huw Haqq Ma'a al-Haqq.

يا شافي. Ya Shafi. O The Healer.

يا كافي. Ya Kafi. O the Sufficient One.

يا انيس. Ya Anis. O The Intimate.

يا حبيب. Ya Habib. O The Love.

يا حسيب. Ya Hasib. O The Reckoner.

يا وكيل. Ya Wakil. O The Trustee.

يا لطيف. Ya Latif. O The Subtle.

*La ilaha illa anta subhanaka inni kuntu minaz zalimin.*  
(Quran. 21: 87)

“There is no god but Thou, glory be to Thee! Surely I am one of the wrongdoers.” (21: 87)

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ.

### **Meditation (*Muraqaba*) in Safavid order :**

With meditation, *salik* takes care of his spiritual heart that there is nothing in his heart except God. Attention to *Ayat al-Kursi* (Quran, 2: 255) is very essential for meditation:

Allah, there is no god except He, the Living, the Everlasting. Neither dozing, nor sleep overtakes Him.

To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth. Who is he that shall intercede with Him except by His permission! He knows what will be before their hands and what was behind them, and they do not comprehend anything of His Knowledge except what He willed. His Seat embraces the heavens and the earth, and the preserving of them does not weary Him. He is the High, the Great. (2:255)

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ.

“God, There is no god except Him, the Living, the Eternal Sustainer...He replied:This is the mightiest (a‘zām) verse in God’s Book, Exalted is He. Within it is God’s Greatest Name, and it is written across the sky in green light in one line from East to West. This is how I saw it written on the Night of Great Merit (Laylat al-Qadr) in ‘Abbādān: There is no god except Him, the Living, the Eternal Sustainer.The Living, the Eternal Sustainer is the One who oversees everything pertaining to His creatures: their life spans, their actions, and their provision. He is the One who requites goodness (iḥsān) with goodness, and misdeeds with forgiveness (ghufrān), but He requites hypocrisy, disbelief and innovation with punishment. Whoever pronounces the saying: ‘There is no god except God’ has made a pact with God, so it is unlawful for him,

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after making a pact with God, to disobey Him in any of His commandments or prohibitions, in secret or public, or to support His enemy, or to show enmity towards a friend of His....No slumber can seize Him, nor sleep... Slumber (sina) here means sleepiness.He [Sahl] also said:Slumber is when the heart (qalb) is mingled with sleep.”<sup>1</sup>

God is He who has divinity and lordhood, God is He who has unity and self-sufficiency. His fix- ity is unitary, His being self-sufficient, His subsistence beginningless, and His brilliance eternal.

God is the name of a lord whose essence is everlasting and whose attributes are eternal. His subsistence is beginningless and His splendor endless. His beauty is self-standing and His majesty constant. He is magnanimous and renowned, great in measure and deed, great in name and word, beyond intelligence and before when, and greater than any measure.

O majestic God who is the Enactor and the good sweetheart, the creator of the world and the guardian of the creatures, keeper of enemies and companion of friends, the hard cash of hopes and enough for assurances, the receiver of every plaintiff and the forgiver of every offense, the kiblah of the desirer and the remembrance of the recognizer's heart!

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<sup>1</sup> Tustari Tafsir.

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In remembrance of You I pass my days without You, in my eyes a picture of Your form.

God is the remembrance of the hearts of the friends, God is the witness of the heart of the recognizers, God is the joy of the secret core of the distracted, God is the healing of the hearts of the ill, God is the lamp of the breast of the tawḥīd-voicers, God is the light of the heart of the familiars and the balm of the pain of the burnt.

Passion for You in my heart is like the light of certainty, Your name upon my eyes like the seal on a ring. In my nature and aspiration until the day of resurrection. love for You will be like the spirit and loyalty to You like religion.

The Pir of the Tariqah Junayd said:

" If someone says God with his tongue when other than God is in his heart, God will be his adversary in the two abodes.<sup>1</sup>

### **Degrees of meditation:**

Mystic trance-ecstasy (*khalsih*) **خلسه** is the beginning level of meditation. A salik who starts meditation regularly arrives to Mystic trance state (*khalsih*). With the passage of time, the *salik* goes into a state between

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<sup>1</sup> Maibudi, tafsir Kashf al-Asrar.

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sleep and wakefulness. He can remember seeing something but not exactly what it is.

Perception(*idrak*): With continuous practice of meditation, the somnolence from meditation decreases. When the conscious mind is not suppressed by sleep and is able to focus, the salik can receive the spiritual knowledge. At this stage, the salik is unable to see or hear anything but is able to experience or perceive it.

Activating the spiritual eye: When *idrak* develops deep, it is revealed as sight. As soon as the mind is focused, the spiritual eye is activated. Progressively, the mind gets used to this kind of visions, and the mental focus is sustained. With practice, the visions/experience becomes so deep that the *salik* starts seeing himself a part of the experience rather than considering himself an observer.

Unveiling(*kashf*) is the step of beginning to get intelligence that non-saliks are unable to watch.

Spiritual vision (*Shuhud*): At this stage a *salik* Can see the whole world.

Revelations of the Unseen (*futuh al-Ghalb*): at this stage Closing eyes is no longer needed for meditation. The *salik* is freed from both space and time and can see/hear/taste/touch anything present anywhere in time and space, in present world or unseen world by idhn allah ta'ala. (with permission of Allah)

Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili divided Meditations into four degrees: *Mhhazirah* (presence of the heart), *mukashifah* (unveiling), *mushahidah* (spiritual vision) and *muaynah* (Divine examination).<sup>1</sup>

***Du'a:***

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي  
سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ

“And your Lord has said, ‘Call on Me and I will respond to you...’(Quran, 40: 60) He said:[It is a requirement of] chivalry (*muruwwa*), that supplication (*du‘ā*) should be answered, without doubt. It [supplication] is a quiver of arrows. A believer does not supplicate God, Exalted is He, without His either answering him by granting him exactly what he asked for, even though that servant may not be aware of it, or repelling thereby something evil from him, or recording for him a good deed because of it. He was asked, ‘What is the meaning of the saying: “Supplication is the best of deeds?”’ He replied: It is because it [supplication] is a way of humbly imploring [God] (*taḍarru‘*), taking refuge (*iltijā’*) [in Him], and showing one’s poverty (*faqr*) and neediness [for Him].<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Baza, *Safwat al-Safa*, edited by Gholmreza Tabatabaei, Tehran, Intesharat Zaryab, 1376 Shmasi, pp.519-520.

<sup>2</sup> Tafsir Tustari.

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وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ.

“When My worshipers ask you about Me, I am near. I answer the supplication of the suppliant when he calls to Me; therefore, let them respond to Me and let them believe in Me, in order that they will be righteous.”(Quran, 2: 186)

“And if My servants, the wayfarers, those oriented towards Me, should question you [concerning Me], about [spiritual] knowledge of Me, I am near, manifest, I answer the call [of the caller when he calls to Me], of the one who calls me by the tongue of his state and preparedness by granting him that which is commensurate with his state and preparedness; so let them respond to Me, by making pure their preparedness through renunciation and [acts of] worship [and let them believe in Me that they might go aright], for I summon them unto Me and apprise them of the way of wayfaring unto Me; and let them witness Me at the point of their purification [of their preparedness], for I disclose Myself to them in the mirrors of their hearts so that they might become rightly-guided through uprightness, in other words, so that they might become upright and righteous.”<sup>1</sup>

In Sufism terminology *du'a* is a dialogue with God, our Lord, our Originator, our Creator. In fact the

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<sup>1</sup> Kashani Tafsir.

## CHAPTER TWO: The Safavid order | 95

word is derived from the Arabic root meaning to call out or to summon. *Du'a* is uplifting, empowering, liberating and transforming and it is one of the most powerful and effective act of worship a human being can involve in. *Du'a* has been called the weapon of the believer.

There are many *du'a* in the Quran that Sufi recites such as following:

### ■ Verse 1)

منهم من يقول "ربنا آتنا في الدنيا حسنة و في الآخرة حسنة و قنا عذاب النار" (٢:٢٠١)

“And among them there are those who say, ‘Our Lord, give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and save us from the punishment of the Fire.’” (2:201)

Qatadah and Hassan cite Imam Sadiq as saying that *hassannah* refers to receiving provisions, and to enjoying a good life and a good temperament. In the afterlife it refers to Allah’s pleasure, and to Heaven.

The Prophet cites Allah as saying that whoever has been given a grateful heart, a tongue to make invocations, and a believing wife to help him in this life and the next has been given *hassanah*, in this life and in the next, and will be saved from the punishment of Fire.

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The Meaning of the Words:

1.1 “حسنة”:

1 ) According to Hassan and Qitadah, this term refers to worship and knowledge in this world, and to heaven in the afterlife 2) According to Ibn Zaid, this term refers to wealth in this world, and to heaven in the afterlife 3) According to Imam Ali, it refers to a virtuous wife in this world, and to heaven in the afterlife.

2) Tustari said:...Our Lord, give us good in this world...These words refer to knowledge and sincere devotion,...and good in the Hereafter..., refers to His good pleasure (*riḍā*), as He said: God is well-pleased with them and they are well-pleased with Him... [5:119].<sup>1</sup>

3) He means in [this verse] good *ḥasana* the existence of which is consistent with all good things. The good by which all good things are obtained in this world is the protection of their faith at the end [of their lives] for whoever leaves this world as a believer will not abide in the fire and the passing of this [world] will be of little consequence. The good which is consistent with the good things of the hereafter is forgiveness for when He forgives nothing but good follows. It is said that the good in this world is turning away from it and the good in the hereafter is being protected from becoming

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<sup>1</sup> Tafsīr al-Tustarī, trans. Annabel Keeler and Ali Keeler, 2017 Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, Amman, Jordan.

comfortable in it. The guarding is from the fire nār and the fires of separation furqa; because the [letter] lām in His saying al-nār is a generic lām so the seeking of refuge applies to both the fires of burning nīrān al-ḥurqa and the fires of separation nīrān al-furqa. It is said that the good in this world is witnessing shuhūd through the innermost selves bi-l-asrār and in the hereafter [it is] seeing ruḏya through the physical eyes bi-l-abṣār. It is said that the good of this world is that He annihilates you from yourself<sup>337</sup> while the good of the hereafter is that He returns you to yourself. It is said that the good of this world is the success granted [by God] in service tawfīq al-khidma and the good of the hereafter is the actualization of communion taḥqīq al-wuṣla.<sup>1</sup>

4) It is said that the beautiful thing of this world wanted by the faithful is knowledge and worship, and the beautiful thing of that world is paradise and vision. That of this world is witnessing the mysteries, and that of that world is seeing with the eyes. This world's is the success of service, and that world's the realization of union. This world's is self-purification through obedience, and that world's deliverance from burning and separation. This world's is the Sunnah and the community, and that world's the encounter and vision. This world's is the firm fixity of faith, and that world's the repose and ease [56:89]. This world's is the sweetness

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Qushairi Tafsir.

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of obedience, and that world's the pleasure of contemplation. For this world's, there must be deeds with obedience, and for that world's there must be pain with recognition. It is a long road from deeds to pain, and he who does not have this eyesight has an excuse. What is obtained from these deeds is houris and palaces, but the possessor of this pain is drowned in light in the ocean of face-to-face vision. O You the guide on whose road is pain! You are solitary and Your familiar solitary!

Among them is he who says, “Our Lord...”. There is a subtle point in this verse. When someone wants this world, inevitably he will be held back from the reward of the afterworld, for God says, “He has no share in the next world” [2:102]. Muṣṭafā said, “When someone loves this world of his, that will harm his next world; and when someone loves his next world, that will harm this world of his. So prefer that which subsists to that which undergoes annihilation!” When someone wants both this world and the afterworld, the Exalted Lord does not hold them back from him. He gives him what he wants. The report has come, “God is ashamed when a servant lifts up his hands to Him and He disappoints him.” It is also narrated, “God is ashamed when a person with gray hair who observes propriety and clings to the Sunnah asks Him for something and He does not give it.” There remains another group, who recognize the reality of approval and have surrendered to God's decree and approved of His determination.

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They do not turn away from lauding Him in order to ask from Him. They do not seek access to this world nor do they ask for the afterworld. Concerning them the Lord of the Worlds says, “When remembering Me busies someone from asking from Me, I bestow upon him the most excellent of what I bestow on the askers.”<sup>1</sup>

5) One must constantly ask Allah for good in this life and the next. This is one of the advantages of Islam: even in *du'a* (prayer), one of the most private moments in the life of a human being, the equilibrium and connectedness of this life and the next are taken into consideration.

6) This *du'a* is one of the most comprehensive Qur'anic *du'as*. It refers to the exclusive rank of Allah, it states the dominance and control of the Divine will in this world and in the afterlife, and it refers to the unity within diversity in this life and the afterlife. For, if there was no unity between the two lives, it would not be possible for one to be punished in the afterlife for a wrongful act committed in this life. Due to its comprehensiveness, this is one of the most famous *du'as* in the *qunut*<sup>2</sup> of Muslim prayer (*salat*).

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<sup>1</sup> Maibudi, Tafsir Jashf al-Asrar.

<sup>2</sup> *Qunut* is raising the hands during prayer to the level of the mouth and making a short dua.

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### ■ Verse 2)

قالا "ربنا ظلمنا أنفسنا و ان لم تغفر لنا و ترحمنا لنكونن من الخسرين  
(٧:٢٣)

“They said, ‘Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves! If You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers.’” (7:23)

The Meaning of the Words:

2.1 Injustice “ظلم” (*dhulm*): This refers to the failure to perform the recommended acts, which results in a lack of rewards. Others have said that it refers to the lesser sins, and to abstaining from the primary deeds.

7. If one does not follow the divine commandments, this does not damage Allah. Rather, it damages and harms the perfection and growth and development of the *nafs* (soul) of the human being.

8. Only Allah can forgive one who fails to follow the divine commandments, for Allah is the ruler of all existence.

9. The general divine rule that creation deserves forgiveness.

10. If one is forgetful and strays, one must ask for compassion and forgiveness from Allah, in full sincerity, and with full remorse and humility.

11. “O God, if we weep, weeping for You is sweet. If we lament over you, our lamenting is appropriate. O God, what comes from dust other than error? What is born from defect other than disloyalty? And what comes from the generous other than loyalty? O God, we have come back with two empty hands. What would happen if You placed balm on the wounded? O God, You are the treasure of the poor, the traveling supplies of the distressed, the resource of the fleeing, the handholder of the helpless. You created, so You saw the faulty jewel, but You selected it and bought it with all its faults. You lifted us up and no one said, 'Lift up!' Now that You have lifted up, don't put down! Keep us in the shadow of gentleness and entrust us to none but Your bounty!”

If You water, You Yourself planted.

If You flatten the foundation, You Yourself raised it.

I the servant am just what You fancied. Don't throw me down-You lifted me up.<sup>1</sup>

12. They said, 'Our Lord, we have wronged our souls: this is the realisation of the rational-speech soul of its deficiency with regard to physical nature and the extinguishing of its light, the breaking of its potency and the actualisation of motivation in it to seek perfection through disengagement; and if You do not forgive us, by dressing us with spiritual lights and

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<sup>1</sup> Maibudi, tafsir Kshf al-Asrar.

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effusing them so that they radiate upon us, and have mercy on us, by effusing [upon us] gnoses of realities, we shall surely be among, those who have destroyed [their] original preparedness, which is the substratum of felicity and subsistence, by expending it in the abode of annihilation, and [we shall be among] those who have been deprived of perfection through disengagement by [our] adherence to the deficiency of physical nature.<sup>1</sup>

### ■ Verse 3)

و ما تنقم منا الا أن ءامنا بايت ربنا لما جاءتنا "ربنا افرغ علينا صبيرا  
و توفنا مسلمين (٧:١٢٦)

“You are vindictive toward us only because we have believed in the signs of our Lord, when they came to us.’ ‘Our Lord! Pour patience upon us, and grant us to die as muslims.’” (7:126)

The Meaning of the words:

3.1 “صبر” (*sabr*) (patience): This means to abstain from complaining, and to have patience in regards to truth (*Haqq*), which leads to exaltation and victory.

3.2 “تنقم” (*tanaqum*): Anger.

3.3 “” (*muslimin*): In this context it refers to the sincere (*Mukhlisin*).

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<sup>1</sup> Kashani Tafsir.

It is said that this verse was revealed with reference to the story of Pharaoh and the magicians who asked Allah to bestow belief (*iman*) upon them. This verse describes how Allah bestowed them with His grace, which allowed them to remain courageous; sincere followers on Allah's path will not be discouraged by problems and difficulties. It is said that on the same day that the magicians received Allah's grace, they were hanged by the Pharaoh. In the beginning the magicians were disbelievers, but in the end they became exalted martyrs. Others have said that the Pharaoh did not hang them, and they were saved.

■ Verse 4)

... "أنت ولينا فأغفر لنا و أرحمنا و أنت خير الغافرين" (٧:١٥٥)

“Moses chose seventy men from his people for Our tryst, and when the earthquake seized them, he said, ‘My Lord, had You wished, You would have destroyed them and me before. Will You destroy us because of what the fools amongst us have done? It is only Your test by which You lead astray whomever You wish and guide whomever You wish. You are our master, so forgive us and have mercy on us, for You are the best of those who forgive.’ (7:155)

13. This verse states that during *du'a*, it is best to appeal to Divine attributes of *willayyah* (guardianship,

friendship) (*al-wali*), which is specific to Allah, and the Divine attribute of All-Forgiving (*al-ghaffar*).

14. [And Moses chose of his people] seventy men, from among their most honourable [men] and those of noble descent, the folk of preparedness, purity of soul and volition, as well as [the spiritual] pursuit and wayfaring, being those who succumbed to the thunderbolt where He says So the thunderbolt seized them [Q. 4:153]; but when the Trembling seized them, that is, the trembling of the mountain of the body, which [trembling] constitutes the incipience of the thunderbolt of annihilation when the flashes of the [divine] lights are hurled into flight and the risings of the self-disclosures of the attributes are manifested in the way of the shuddering of the body, and its being affected and made to tremble by these. That is why Moses at that instance said, 'My Lord, had You willed You would have destroyed them long before, and me [with them], since Moses would not be able to say anything at the moment of the thunderbolt, nor would they, because they will have been annihilated. As for his words, 'My Lord, had You willed', these are words of exasperation and loss of patience arising from the overwhelming feeling of yearning during the pain of separation [from God], as Muḥammad, peace be upon him, said [when he was] in a similar situation, 'Would that my mother had never borne me', and likewise, 'Would that the Lord of Muḥammad had never created Muḥammad', giving serious thought [as he did] to

throwing himself off [the side of] the mountain. The [particle] law here is optative. Will You destroy us, by prolonging [our] veiledness, and by means of the chastisement of privation and the pain of separation, for what the foolish ones among us have done, in the way of worshipping the calf of the vain desire of the soul and being veiled by its attributes, or by what has issued from us while we were fools, prior to our coming to our senses, perceiving and desiring to wayfare and [before] the manifestation of the light of insight and [our] taking heed, in the way of stopping with the soul and [undertake] to purify it. It is but Your trial, in other words, this testing [of us] with the attributes of the soul and the worship of vain desire is nothing but Your test, no one other than You having any part therein, [a trial], whereby You send astray whom You will, from among the folk of veils, wretchedness, ignorance and blindness, and guide whom You will, from among the folk of felicity, solicitude, knowledge and guidance - he [Moses] said this at the station of the self-disclosure of the acts - You, are the One who takes charge of our affairs, the One who manages them, so forgive us, the sins of our attributes and essences, just as You have forgiven us the sins of our acts, and have mercy on us, by effusing the lights of the vision of You and lifting the veil of whereness (ayniyya) with Your existence, for You are the Best of all who show forgiveness, since Your forgiveness is complete.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kashani Tafsir.

15. And Moses chose his people, seventy men, for Our appointed time, and when the earth-quake took them, he said ... “It is naught but Thy trial. Thou misguidest thereby whomsoever Thou wilt and Thou guidest whomsoever Thou wilt. Thou art our Friend, so forgive us and have mercy upon us, and Thou art the best of forgivers!”

There is a difference between the community of Moses and the community of MuḤammad. The community of Moses was chosen by Moses, for He says, “And Moses chose his people.” The community of MuḤammad was chosen by God, for He says, “We chose them, with a knowledge, above the worlds” [44:32]. Then He said about those chosen by Moses, “They said, 'Show us God openly,' and the thunderbolt took them because of their wrongdoing” [4:153]. Here He says, “The earthquake took them.” Concerning those He Himself chose He said, “Faces that day will be radiant, gazing upon their Lord” [75:22-23].

The want is the want of the Real, the choice the choice of the Real. God says, “And thy Lord creates what He wants and chooses. They have no choice” [28:68]. Moses was bold on the carpet of proximity in the station of whispered prayer. He had the attribute of realization in the state of brokenness and poverty because of anguish and bewilderment, and he showed this remorse: “It is naught but Thy trial.” Then he

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perceived himself and returned to the attribute of incapacity and brokenness, entering from the door of awe and veneration. He threw the decree entirely back to the Real: “Thou misguidest whom Thou wilt, and Thou guidest whom Thou wilt.” He was not content with this, so he loosed the tongue of laudation and connected it with pleading and weeping: “Thou art our Friend, so forgive us and have mercy upon us.” He displayed his need and lowliness to Him and asked for mercy and forgiveness. He said, “So forgive us and have mercy upon us, and Thou art the best of forgivers!”

It has come in the traditions that on the day of the whispered prayer, Moses reached the edge of Mount Sinai. With every step he took, he lauded God, called upon Him, and displayed a need.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “There is no rejecting the needy, there is no deception behind the door of need, and there is no means of approach to the Friend like need.

”When Moses reached the station of whispered prayer, the tree of his need gave fruit, and the instances of bounty came forth. The night of separation went down and the day of union rose up. Moses had yearning in the heart, remembrance on the tongue, love in the spirit, and staff in hand. The call came from the Compeller of all engendered beings, “O Moses, it is the moment of secret whispering, the time of joy, the day of access. O

Moses, ask and it will be given to you. What do you need? What gift do you want? O Moses, ask and I will bestow, speak so that I may listen.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “The servant who is wanted by the Real and worthy of His love is adorned with solicitude, given entrance by bounty, cloaked in a robe of honor by love, and caressed with generosity so that he may become bold. Then he is passed back and forth between jealousy and love. Sometimes jealousy shuts the door and the servant's tongue begins to beg, sometimes love opens the door and the servant is filled with the joy of face-to-face vision.”<sup>1</sup>

#### ■ Verse 5)

اكتب لنا في هذه الدنيا حسنه و في الآخرة إنا هدنا إليك قال عذابي  
أصيب به من أشاء و رحمتى وسعت كل شيء فسأكتبها للذين يتقون و  
يؤتون الزكوه و الذين هم بآيتنا يؤمنون (٧:١٥٦)

“And appoint goodness for us in this world and the Hereafter, for indeed we have come back to You.’ Said He, ‘I visit My punishment on whomever I wish, but My mercy embraces all things.[203] Soon I shall appoint it for those who are Godwary and give the zakāt and those who believe in Our signs” (7:156)

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<sup>1</sup> Maibudi, Tafsir Kashf al-Asrar.

The Meaning of the Words:

5.1 “حسنه” (*Hassanah*): Here, *hassanah* refers to blessings, even though, in another context, *hassanah* refers to obeying Allah. This is for two reasons: 1) Blessings are accepted by the *nafs* as obedience is accepted by the intellect 2) Blessings are the result of obeying Allah. Some have said that *hassanah* in this life is good praise, and in the afterlife it is exalted status. Others have said that it refers to the blessing of performing good deeds in this life, and to forgiveness and Heaven in the afterlife.

5.2 “هدنا”: Returning.

16. In this life the *rahmah* of Allah includes both those who are good and those who are bad, but in the afterlife it only encompasses those who are *Muttaqi* (God-conscious).

17. In this verse, Allah states that His *rahmah* will certainly be granted to those of his servants who refrain from *shirk* (association, polytheism) and the greater sins.

18. This verse is used to argue that if Allah punishes the sinners, it is not because of his Lordship for if it was so, he would have to punish everyone. This is not the case; only those are punished who have neglected

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and abused his blessings, and as such, punishment is a result of the action of the sinner.

19. It can be said that Divine *Rahmah* is all-encompassing واسعہ, and is not specific in terms of time, space, or the individual. bb Divine *Rahmah* always accompanies the Divine volition.

20. And write for us in this world the beautiful, and in the next world. We have turned to Thee.

In other words, “We have turned toward Thy religion and we have come home to Thee entirely, without leaving anything for ourselves.”

O Lord, we have come back to You entirely. We are quit of our own power and strength. We are content with whatever You have decreed. Do not turn us over to ourselves, and lift up our we- ness from before us. This is the same as what Muṣṭafā said: “Entrust me not to myself for the blink of an eye, or even less than that.” He also said, “Shield me as a son is shielded!”

Revelation came to David: “O David, what do My friends have to do with the sorrow of this world? This world's sorrow will take the sweetness of whispered prayer from their hearts. I love My friends to be spiritual, not to grieve for anything, to detach their hearts from this world, to throw all their work and business to Me, and to approve of My decree.”

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God's Messenger said, "Approval of the decree is God's greatest gate."

There was a worshiper among the Children of Israel who had spent long days in worship. It was shown to him in a dream that in paradise his close friend would be so-and-so. He set off in search of that person to see what his worship was.

He saw that he had neither prayer at night nor fasting by daytime, only the obligatory acts. He said, "Tell me what you do."

He replied, "I have never done much worship outside of what you have seen. But I do have one trait. When I am in trial or illness, I do not want to be well. If I am in the sun, I do not want to be in the shade. Whatever God decrees, I approve of that, and I do not add my want to God's want."

The worshiper said, "That is what has conveyed you to this way station."<sup>1</sup>

### ■ Verse 6)

قال رب اشرح لي صدري (٢٥:٢٠)

"He said, 'My Lord! Open my breast for me.'" (20:25)

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<sup>1</sup> Maibudi, Tafsir Kashf al-Asrar.

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The Context of the Revelation:

The Prophet Musa knew that, as Allah's messenger, he had a very great responsibility. For he was aware of the power of *Qubtiyan*, and of the weakness of Bani Israel, which was incarcerated and oppressed by the Pharaoh.

He was also aware of his own state; he knew that he was weak, and could bear little hardship. He also had a lisp, which prevented him from conveying his message in a sufficiently clear manner – for the tongue is the sole weapon of the one who propagates the message of Allah.

As such, he asked his lord to expand his heart so that he could bear the hardship he was faced with, and to ease his path in conveying the divine message.

21. To follow the path of Allah and to engage in the greater and the lesser *jihad* is to face a variety of trials and difficulties. As such, the believer must ask Allah for patience, and for the power to bear the burden of divine entrustment.

### ■ Verse 7)

ربنا اغفرلى و لولدى و لمؤمنين يوم يقوم الحساب (١٤:٤١)

“Our Lord! Forgive me and my parents, and all the faithful, on the day when the reckoning is held.”  
(14:41)

22. The Shi'a uses this verse to infer that the parents of Ibrahim were not disbelievers; for if they were, Ibrahim would not have supplicated for them, nor asked for forgiveness on their behalf.

23. This verse is used to infer that one can ask for forgiveness for one's parents, and for other believers.

24. This verse indicates that Ibrahim was not the son of the polytheist Azar, for in this verse he asks Allah for forgiveness on behalf of his father, while he himself was in the last years of his life.

25. Our Lord, forgive me, with the light of Your essence the sin of my existence so that I might not become veiled in insolence, and my parents, and the causes of my existence in the way of recipient entities and agents, such that I do not see anything other than You and that I might not turn my attention to anything besides You, lest I be afflicted with deviating vision, and [forgive also] the believers of the spiritual faculties, on the day when, the reckoning of luminous spiritual configurations and ego-centric dark ones - depending on which is the preponderant - shall come to pass'.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kahani Tafsir.

■ Verse 8)

ربنا اننا سمعنا مناديا ينادى للإيمان أن ءامنوا بربكم فأمنا ربنا فاغفر لنا  
ذنوبنا و كفر عنا سيئاتنا و توفنا مع الأبرار (٣: ١٩٣)

“Our Lord, we have indeed heard a summoner calling to faith, declaring, “Have faith in your Lord!” So we believed. Our Lord, forgive us our sins and absolve us of our misdeeds, and make us die with the pious.”  
(3:193)

26. The prophet made those who had become believers fearful at the thought of dying in a state of disbelief. He gave them glad tidings of the *rahmah* and forgiveness of Allah. When they came to believe, they asked Allah to forgive their sins, and to place them amongst the righteous.

27. “Our Lord we have heard a caller calling to belief saying 'Believe in your Lord!' And we believed. So our Lord forgive us our sins and absolve us of our evil deeds and take us [in death] with the pious. It means “We have answered the caller *dāī* but You are the guide *hādī* so do not leave us to ourselves and do not raise the shadow of your care from us.” Faith *īmān* is entering into that which brings security *amān* and one only has faith in the Real from the Real granting him security. The security of the Real for the servant which is His granting him protection brings about the faith of

the servant in the Real which is his affirmation taṣḍīq of Him and his deep recognition maʿrifa of Him. And take us [in death] with the pious: They are those chosen for the proper ways of declaring oneness ḥaḳāliq al-tawḥīd those who stand for God [according] to the conditions of utter devotion sharāliṭ al-tafrīd and stay with God by the special characteristics of disengaging [from anything other than Him] khaṣāliṣ al-tajrīd.<sup>1</sup>

■ Verse 9)

ربنا وءاتنا ما وعدتنا على رسلك و لا تخزنا يوم القيمة إنك لا تخلف  
الميعاد (٣:١٩٤)

“Our Lord, give us what You have promised us through Your apostles, and do not disgrace us on the Day of Resurrection. Indeed You do not break Your promise.”  
(3:194)

28. It is possible to ask Allah to be loyal to his covenant, even though His loyalty is already absolutely certain, for the following reasons: 1) According to Jabayi, to do so is to show one’s state of servitude 2) Although the sentence is in the form of a question, it is really a declaration to the effect that when the righteous die they go to heaven, according to the terms of the covenant 3) The verse is a supplication in which one asks to be placed amongst those who have been

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Qushairi Tafsir.

promised heaven 4) The sentence reflects a desire for Divine grace; one asks Allah to hasten to keep his promise regarding victory over the disbelievers, and the exaltation of the Word of *Haqq*.

■ Verse 10)

لا يكلف الله نفسا إلا وسعها لها ما كسبت و عليها ما اكتسبت ربنا لا  
تؤخذنا إن نسينا أو أخطأنا ربنا و لا تحمل علينا أصرا كما حملته على  
الذين من قبلنا ربنا و لا تحملنا ما لا طاقة لنا به و اعف عنا و اغفر لنا و  
ارحمن أنت مولانا فانصرنا على القوم الكافرين (٢:٢٨٦)

“Allah does not task any soul beyond its capacity. Whatever [good] it earns is to its benefit, and whatever [evil] it incurs is to its harm. ‘Our Lord! Take us not to task if we forget or make mistakes! Our Lord! Place not upon us a burden as You placed on those who were before us! Our Lord! Lay not upon us what we have no strength to bear! Excuse us and forgive us, and be merciful to us! You are our Master, so help us against the faithless lot!’” (2:286)

29. This verse refutes the opinion of the fatalists who say that Allah might make something incumbent upon a human being without that person having the strength to complete the task.

30. The *du'a* “إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا” is stating one’s destitution and confirming one’s need of Allah. It is also to cut off from others and to pay attention to Allah. This is a good *du'a*, even though without this *du'a*, Allah does not punish a person for forgetfulness or making a mistake.

31. Allah requires each person to believe, and to practice religion, at a level that is appropriate for that person; each person is required to be as obedient as they are able, given their level of power and strength.

32. In these four *du'as*, the phrase *Rab* is repeated four times. The supplicant, by referring to their own servitude, invokes Allah’s *rahmah*; the name *rab* recalls the attributes of servitude.

33. Allah is the guardian of those who believe; disbelievers have no ally or guardian.

34. God charges no soul save to its capacity...[Sahl said]:That is, what it can bear; ...for it, is what it has merited..., that is, its reward for righteous deed[s], ...and against it, is what it has earned..., meaning, the burden of sins.’Then he said:Whoever is not concerned with his past sins will not be protected in the days that remain. Moreover, whoever is not protected in his remaining days will be among those who perish on their final return.He was asked, ‘When does a man know his own sins?’ He replied:When he preserves the

lights of his heart and does not allow anything to enter it or depart from it without [first] weighing it up, then he will know his own sins. Furthermore, whoever opens for himself a door to goodness, will find that God opens for him seventy doors to divinely-bestowed success (tawfīq). On the other hand, whoever opens for himself a door to evil, will find that God opens to him seventy doors to evil whence the servant will not know. Every heart that preoccupies itself with that which does not concern it will be punished immediately by missing out on that which is its [genuine] concern at that moment (fī'l-ḥāl). No one knows this except those who know God.<sup>1</sup>

35. God charges no soul save to its capacity; Because of the perfection of His mercy to [human beings] He takes them to the limit of their capacity and indeed far less than that. All of that is compassion and favor from Him. for it is what it is has merited in good deeds and against it is what it has earned. [That is] what it acquires in repentance saves the one who acquires it. Our Lord take us not to task if we forget or err; our Lord burden us not with a load such as You did lay upon those before us. Our Lord do not burden us beyond what we have the power to bear; When a need arose [the community of Moses] spoke through an inter- mediary saying “O Moses... pray to your lord for us” [2:61]. But [God] said to the community [of

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<sup>1</sup> Tafsiir Tustari.

Muḥammad] “Call on Me and I will respond to you” [40:60]. When earlier communities sinned time passed before their repentance was accepted while the Prophet ﷺ said about this community [of Muslims] “Remorse is repentance.” Among the earlier communities there were those who said “make for us a god just as they have gods” [7:138] while this community was selected through the illumination of the lights of their declaration of oneness. Their qualities are beyond explanation. and pardon us in the present *fī l-ḥāl*. and forgive us in the end *fī l-maʿāl* and have mercy on us; You are our Patron; so grant us assistance against the disbelieving folk. [That is] “in all circumstances for we have no one other than You. You are our Patron so give us assistance against anything that distracts us from You.” When they said “burden us not with a load such as You did lay upon those before us”: God caused their sins to disappear in contrast to those who came before whose disappearance He caused. He transformed their sins into good deeds in contrast to the metamorphosis maskh [of an earlier community] and He rained mercy down on them in contrast to the stones He rained down on those who came before. Praise be to God Lord of the worlds.<sup>1</sup>

■ Verse 11)

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Qushairi Tafsir.

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ربنا لا تزغ قلوبنا بعد إذ هديتنا و هب لنا من لدنك رحمه إنك أنت  
الوهاب (٣:٨)

“[They say,] ‘Our Lord! Do not make our hearts swerve after You have guided us, and bestow Your mercy on us. Indeed You are the All-munificent.’ (3:8)

36. Different interpretations have been given for the above verse: 1) This verse is a request for steadfast guidance and divine grace 2) Abu Ali Jaba’i says that this verse refers to believers asking Allah not to tighten their hearts through his rewards and *rahmah*. This is in accordance with what Allah says about the expansion of the heart. In reality, the راسخان does not take away the reward of an expanded heart, and does not result in a tightened heart or any punishment. 3) Believers ask Allah not to turn their hearts from certainty.

37. Our Lord, let not our hearts stray after Thou hast guided us, and give us mercy from Thee.

When they were truthful in the beauty of asking for help, He assisted them with the lights of suf- ficiency.

When the heart is limpid, the present moment empty, and the tongue flowing with the Real's remembrance, the arrow of supplication inevitably reaches the target of response. But the work is in this: When will this limpidness, loyalty, and supplication come together and how will they join with each other?

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The meaning of this supplication is this: “O God, keep our hearts far from confusion and straying and make us firm on the carpet of service with the stipulation of the Sunnah.”

And give us mercy from Thee: And give what you give, O Lord, as Your bounty and mercy, not as the recompense for our works or the compensation for our acts of obedience! Our acts of obedience are not worthy for the Presence of Your Majesty, so the only thing to do is to efface them and ignore them.

One of the pirs of the Tariqah said, “The gall-bladders of the travelers and the obedient servants burst in fear at the verse: 'We shall advance upon what deeds they have done and make them scattered dust' [25:23]. But, of all the Qur'an's verses, I find this the sweetest.”

He was asked, “What does it mean?”

He said, “We will finally be released from these displeasing deeds and unworthy acts of obedience and attach our hearts totally to His bounty and mercy.”<sup>1</sup>

### ■ Verse 12)

ربنا إنك جامع الناس ليوم لا ريب فيه إن الله لا يخلف الميعاد (٣:٩)

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<sup>1</sup> Maibudi, Tafsir Kashf al-Asrar.

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“Our Lord! You will indeed gather mankind on a day in which there is no doubt. Indeed Allah does not break His promise.” (3:9)

38. In this verse, Allah states that he will not break his promises.

39. راسخين در علم Those who are firm in acquiring knowledge: Because of their knowledge, ask for the *rahmah* of Allah. They do not specify what kind of compassion they require, so Allah bestows the *rahmah* upon them that is most beneficial to them.

40. The knowledge of something is not engraved in the heart unless one also has knowledge of its reason. Those who are firm in the pursuit of knowledge راسخين در علم do not doubt the occurrence of the day of resurrection because they know the reason for it: Allah has promised that it will occur.

41. “Our Lord You shall gather mankind for a day of which there is no doubt; verily God will not fail the trust. Today is the gathering of the lovers on the carpet of approach *iqtirāb* and tomorrow will be the gathering of all in the place of reward *thawāb* and punishment *‘iqāb*. Today is the gathering of innermost selves *asrār* for the unveiling of [divine] Majesty *jalāl* and Beauty *jamāl* and tomorrow will be the gathering of human

beings abshār to witness the terrors ahwāl and endure what has been told of these states aḥwāl.”<sup>1</sup>

■ Verse 13)

الذين يقولون ربنا اننا آمنة فاغفر لنا ذنوبنا وقنا عذاب النار (٣:١٦)

“Those who say, ‘Our Lord! Indeed we have faith. So forgive us our sins, and save us from the punishment of the Fire.’” (3:16)

42. Belief in Allah, and showing obedience towards Allah, does not make Allah indebted to the servant. For instance, Allah does not save a person from the punishment of fire, or give them the reward of Heaven, as repayment for obedience. For belief and obedience are blessings that Allah has given His servants; in reality, these are his greatest blessings.

43. In this verse, those who believe ask Allah to actualise the promise that he has made them, to forgive their sins and save them from the fire.

44. “Those who say: “O Our Lord we believe; so forgive us our sins and guard us from the chastisement of the fire” that is “they occupy themselves with Us entirely bi-l-kulliyya and plead for help before Us at the mention of severe trials and afflictions al-raziyya. Those obtain nearness and intimate friendship al-qurba

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Qushairi Tafsir.

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wa-l-khuṣūṣiyya with Us high degrees wa-l-darajāt al-‘uliyya and pleasing fates wa-l- qisam al-murḍiyya.”<sup>1</sup>

### ■ Verse 14)

ءامن الرسول بما أنزل إليه من ربه و المؤمنون كل ءامن بالله و  
ملنكته و كتبه و رسله لا نفرق بين أحد من رسله و قالوا سمعنا و  
أطعنا غفرانك ربنا و إليك المصير (٢:٢٨٥)

“The Apostle has faith in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and all the faithful. Each [of them] has faith in Allah, His angels, His scriptures and His apostles. [They declare,] ‘We make no distinction between any of His apostles.’ And they say, ‘We hear and obey. Our Lord, forgive us, and toward You is the return.’” (2:285)

### The Context of the Revelation

It is said that this verse was revealed in Medina. The migration of the Prophet to Medina, and his establishment there, was greeted with the whole-hearted and complete hospitality and welcome of the people of that city. The people of Medina were the aiders of the divine religion, and they aided the Prophet with their life and wealth. Further, the migration also meant the self-sacrifice of the people of Mecca who

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Qushairi Tafsir.

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joined the Prophet in the Median, and who, because of God, left their families, wealth and homes. Thus Allah thanks the two groups who accepted the invitation He delivered through His Prophet.

It is also said that Allah has issued many commands and prohibitions, which they have accepted; thus, Allah praised them. It is said that this praise occurred during the night of the Prophet's ascension to heaven.

“The Messenger believes in what was revealed to him from his Lord: he has confirmed it by receiving it and assuming the character traits mentioned in it - as ‘Ālisha said: 'His [the Prophet's] character was that of the Qur'ān' - and his [spiritual] elevation and realisation by means of its significations; and the believers; each one believes in God, each one alone in totality, and in His angels, and in His Books, and His messengers, each one along in differentiation upon becoming upright, witnessing His Oneness in the form of that multiplicity, ascribing a wisdom to each one of His self-disclosures in one of His loci; 'we make no distinction: in other words, they say, 'we do not distinguish between any of them [either] by rejecting some or accepting others. Nor do we doubt that they are upon the truth and [sent] with the truth on account of [their] witnessing of the Oneness and [our] witnessing of the truth in them through the truth. And they say, 'We hear: that is, we have responded to our Lord with respect to His books, messengers and the sending down of His angels and we

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are upright in our behaviour; Your forgiveness, our Lord: that is, forgive us our existences and attributes and efface them through Your existence and the existence of Your attributes, to You is the homecoming', through the annihilation in You.”<sup>1</sup>

### **The civilisation building importance of the Safaviyah Tariqah**

Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili is the spiritual founder of the Safavid dynasty and modern Iran as the center of Shi'ism in the world. From a civilisation building perspective the Safavid Tariqah has done a number of important things. Firstly it forever freed Iran from being a prisoner of the theory of Caliphate, and separated Iran's path from the Sunni theory of caliphate which manifested itself in the Umayyad, Abbasid and Ottoman caliphates.

Secondly it established an independent Iran. The Safavid era is considered the most important historical period of Islamic Iran. Because, for the first time, 900 years after the collapse of the Sassanids, a central government ruled over the entire Iran of that time. After Islam a number of Iranian governments such as the Saffarian, Samanian, Ale Buye and Sarbedaran were

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<sup>1</sup> Kashani Tafsir.

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formed, but none of them were able to take control of all of Iran, and create unity between the Iranian people.

Thirdly, it revived and consolidated twelver Shi'ism in Iran and created a focal point for Shi'as across the world, a focal point which had a vast land and a great power. After the Safavids, Twelver Shi'a's were not only freed from practicing *taqiyyah*, and being without a home and prosecuted, but gained an independent political and religious geography and achieved power. They gained a protector wherever they were in the world.

Fourthly the Safaviyah Tariqah was the most important Sufi order in the history of Islamic Iran, which had a constructive, unique and lasting influence. Other than resulting in the establishment of a Shi'a government and society in Iran, the Safaviyah Tariqah, resulted in a great Shi'a cultural and artistic movement the valuable works of which continue until today. For example, in the Safavid era Transcendental Philosophy was established by Mulla Sadra and Muhammad Taqi Mjlesi and Mulla Muhsin Feiz Kashani wrote *Bahar al-Anwar* and *Wafi* respectively, which are two important encyclopedia's of Shi'a hadith.

In the field of Islamic Art, The arts of the Safavid period called by many scholars like Sheila Canby "*The Golden Age of Persian Art*". The architecture and decoration of Shi'ism in mosques, Khaniqahs and

Hussainiyyah's became manifest. three prominent internationally recognized examples of this are the Shrine complex of Sheikh Safi al-Din in Ardabil and the Sheikh Lutfallah mosque and The Shah Mosque in Isfahan. The golden age of Islamic-Iranian art is comprehensive in covering not just architecture but also Persian miniature painting, ceramics, books and manuscripts, calligraphy, tiles, metalworking and textiles.<sup>1</sup>

In the field of literature, Shi'a poetry underwent an important evolution, the *Marthiyah* of Muhatasham Kashani and Saqi namih of Mir Razi Artimani are examples of this. The cultural movement of Shi'ism which the Safaviyah directed in Iran, continued even after the Safavid dynasty. The contemporary poetry of Shahriar, Musawi Garmarudi and Qazweh about the household of the Prophet is a continuation of the movement of literature of the Safavid era.

The Islamic revolution of contemporary Iran is a continuation of the path of the Safavids, and the respect of top officials of the Iranian government, such as Iran's leader, Ayatullah Khamenei to Sheikh Safi al-Din,<sup>2</sup> portrays the unique importance of the movement of Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili and the Safavi family who have given countless martyrs for the consolidation

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<sup>1</sup> See Canby, Sheila , *The Golden Age of Persian Art: 1501-1722*, London, British Museum Press, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Safavi, Salman, '*Irfan-I Thaqaalain*, London, 2013, p21-24.

and continuation of Shi'ism in Iran as the refuge of Shi'as across the world.

### **The comprehensive character of Sheikh Safi al-Din**

In *Safwat al-Safa* Sheikh Safi al-Din has been introduced as a mystic who had strict adherence to religious law, a man of moderation, a high-minded leader, compassionate, sociable, and with influence between different social groups and classes, including poor and wealthy, those in political power and citizens, men of knowledge and the masses.

Sheikh safi al-Din invited his followers to obey and follow the *Shair'ah* (religious law), *Tariqah* (spiritual path)<sup>1</sup>, sincerity, observance of good behavior, good work, respecting people and social cooperation. The great fame and popularity of the Sheikh which continued and expanded during the time of his successors, led to the establishment of the powerful Safavid dynasty and the independence of Iran based on the three principles of Shi'ism, 'Irfan and Iranian identity. No book written by Sheikh Safi al-Din himself has remained with us, but reading the fourth chapter of the **Safwat al-Safa**, which comprised of the sheikh's sayings on spiritual commentary of Qur'anic verses,

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Bazaz, Tawakkul ibn Ismail, *Safwat al-Safa*, Tehran, 1376, p887.

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narrations of the Prophet and Imams, sayings of masters Irfan and the sheikh's spiritual poetry, shows that other than being a spiritual guide and a political leader, the sheikh was a man of great miracles, a commentator of the Qur'an and the narrations of the Prophet and the Imams, a Jurist of the highest order and a poet. In his commentary on Qur'anic verses the Sheikh has made reference to the poetry of Sana'i, 'Attar, Rumi and 'Araqi.

### **Conclusion**

The movement of Sheikh Safi al-Din is a continuation of the movement of the Shi'a Imams, which has reached great successes. The movement of Sheikh Safi al-din has had a constructive and long lasting influence in Islamic mysticism, art, civilisation, political geography, and international relation of Shi'ism, which is not comparable to any of the other school of jurisprudence, theology and philosophy, or military, political or cultural figures.

The most important heritage of the spiritual movement of Sheikh Safi al-Din is the independence of the political geography of Shi'ism and creating a center of power in Iran for Shi'as across the world as a unified people. In Iran, it is famously said amongst the scholars of Islam that if it was not for the Safavids, today we would pray with our arms closed. Dhul Faqar the two

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headed sword of Imam Ali became manifest in the spirituality of sheikh Safi al-Din and in the sword of Shah Isma'il, and created a unique effect in the history, culture and civilisation of Shi'ism, the cultural and political effects of which continue until today in international relations.



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# PICTURES

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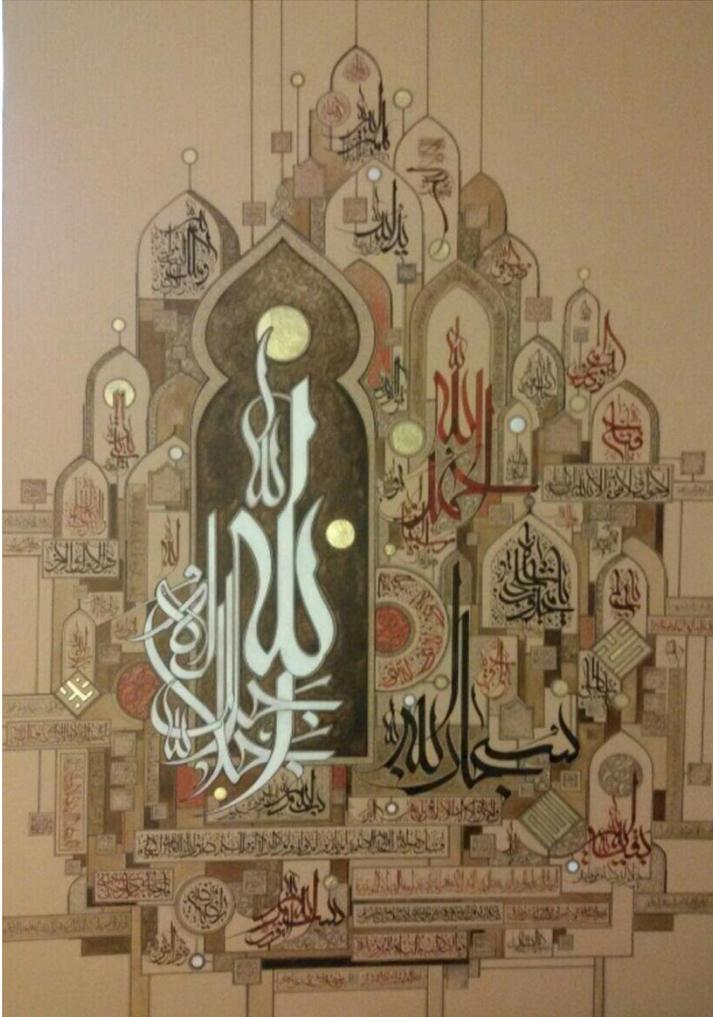
MANUSCRIPT (AYAT AL-KURSI)

Naskh Script, Illuminated, Written Gold, Scribed by  
Muhammad Hosein Al-Hoseini, 1256 AH  
MAHFOUZI-MUSEUM, Tehran



## 156 | The Practice of Sufism and the Safavid Order

Allah and His Beautiful Names by Saeed Naghashyan, Tehran, Iran.

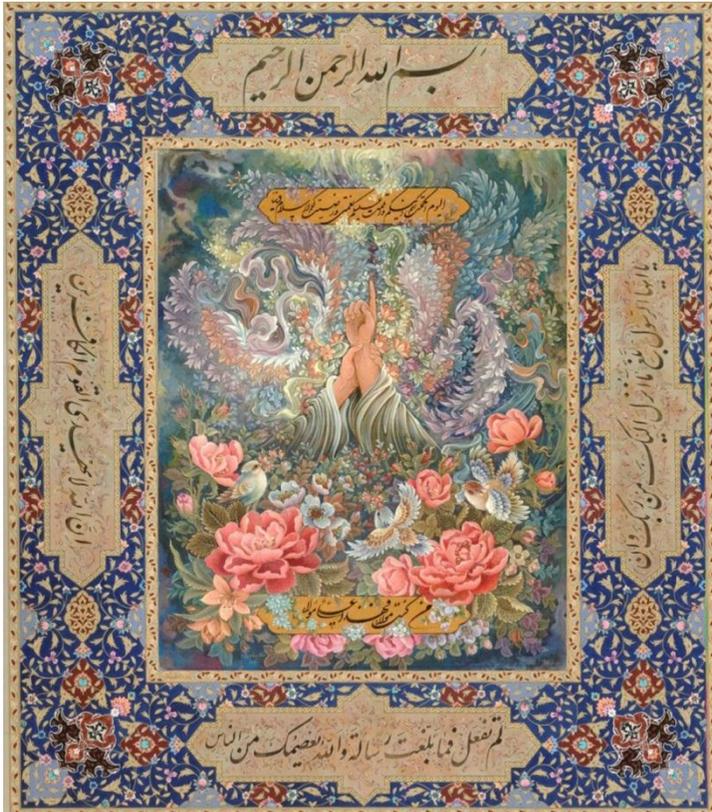


Return to Allah by Reza Badrossama, Isfahan, Iran.

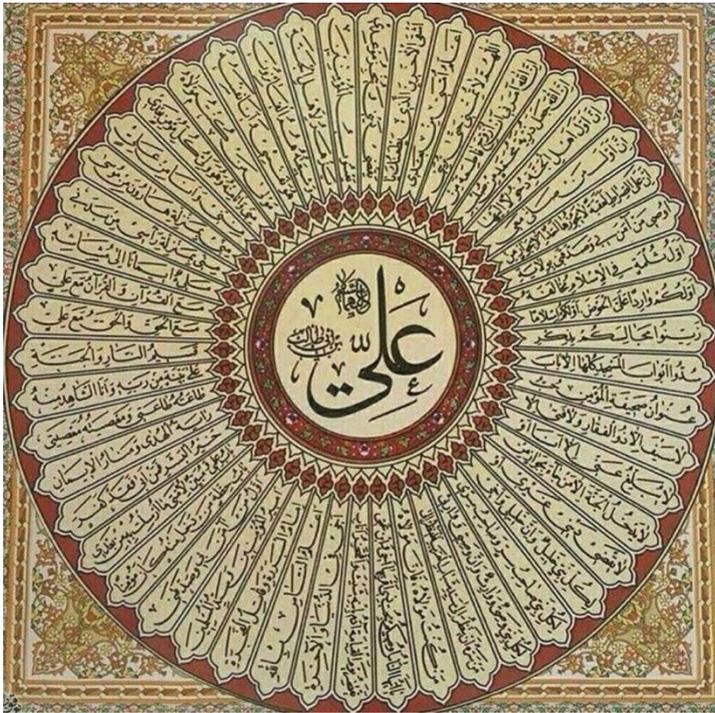


## 158 | The Practice of Sufism and the Safavid Order

Ghadir, Appointed Imam Ali as successor of Prophet Muhammad by Reza Badrossama, Isfahan, Iran.

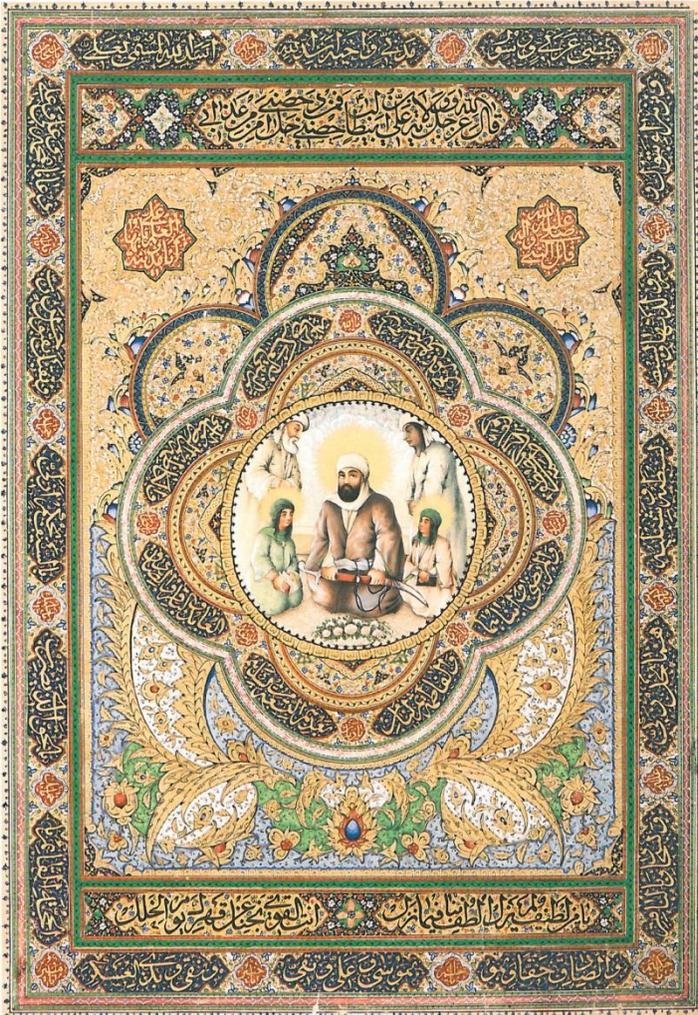


Imam Ali and his attributes





Imam ALI & HASAN & HOSEIN EFFIGIES (AS)  
Naskh Script, Created by Abu Al-Hasan Khan Qafari, Qajar  
Era, MAHFOUZI-MUSEUM, Tehran



## 162 | The Practice of Sufism and the Safavid Order

### EFFIGIES

Prophet Muhammad & Imam Ali & Fatimah Bint Muhammad  
Effigies, Marriage Ceremonies, Created By Ali Muhammad  
Isfahani, 13<sup>th</sup> Century AH, MAHFOUZI-MUSEUM, Tehran

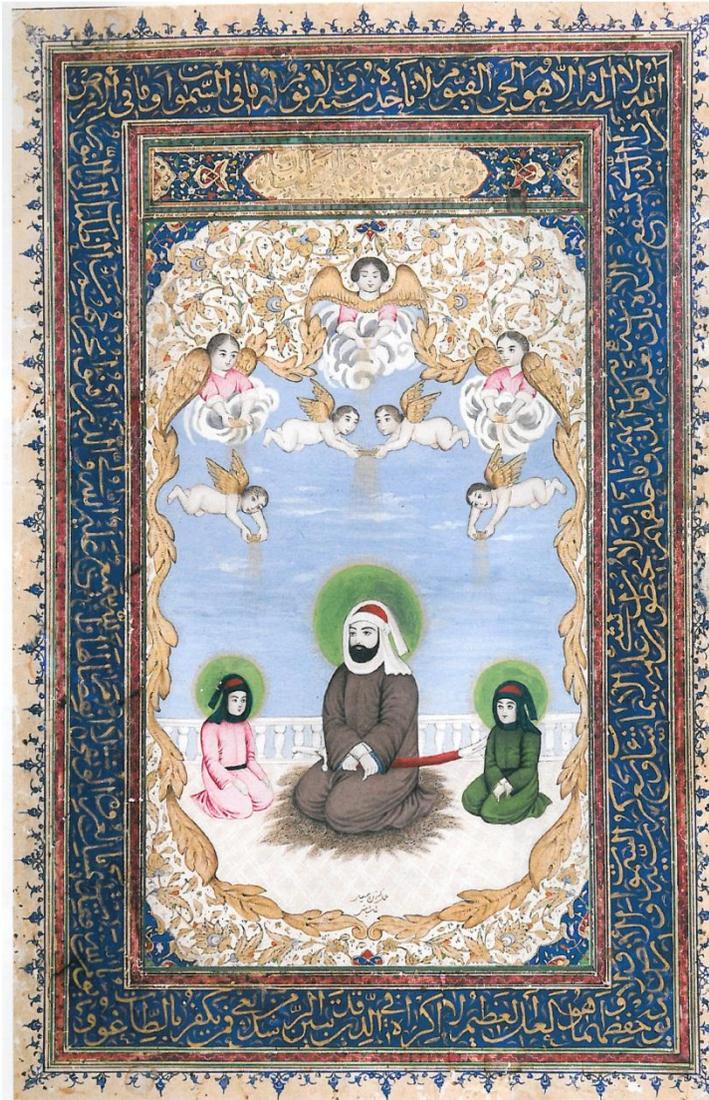


Imam ALI & HASAN & HOSEIN EFFIGIES (AS)  
Ascension of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), Created by Agha  
Mustafa, 1294 AH, MAHFOUZI-MUSEUM, Tehran

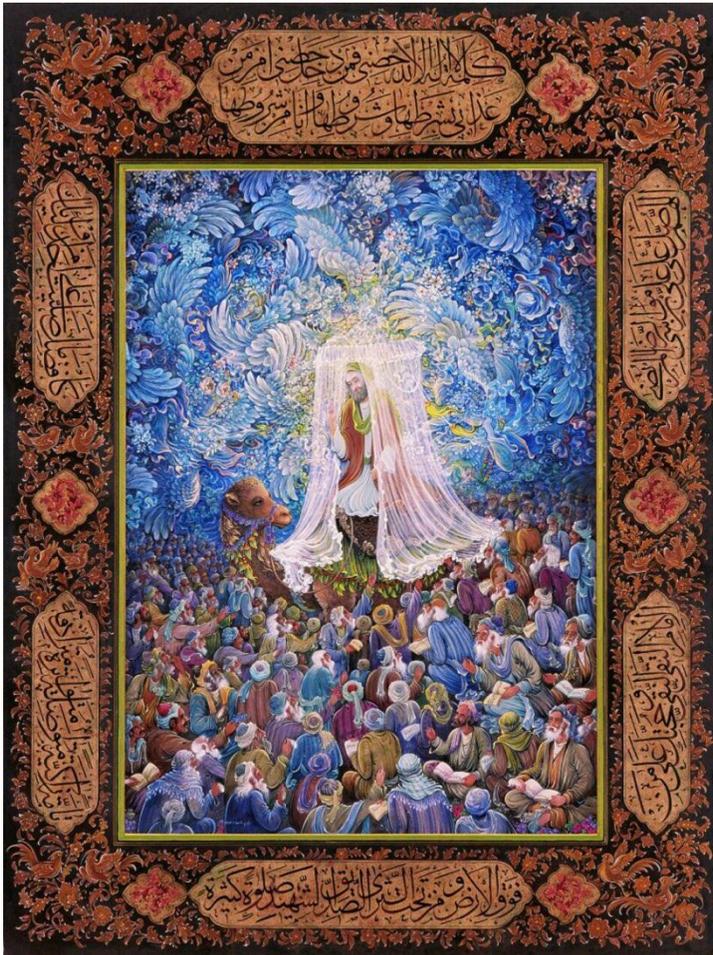


## 164 | The Practice of Sufism and the Safavid Order

Imam ALI & HASAN & HOSEIN Effigies (AS)  
Naskh script, Illuminated, Created by Ismaeil Naqash Bashi,  
Qajar Era, MAHFOUZI-MUSEUM, Tehran



Imam Reza, Reza Badrossama, Isfahan, Iran.

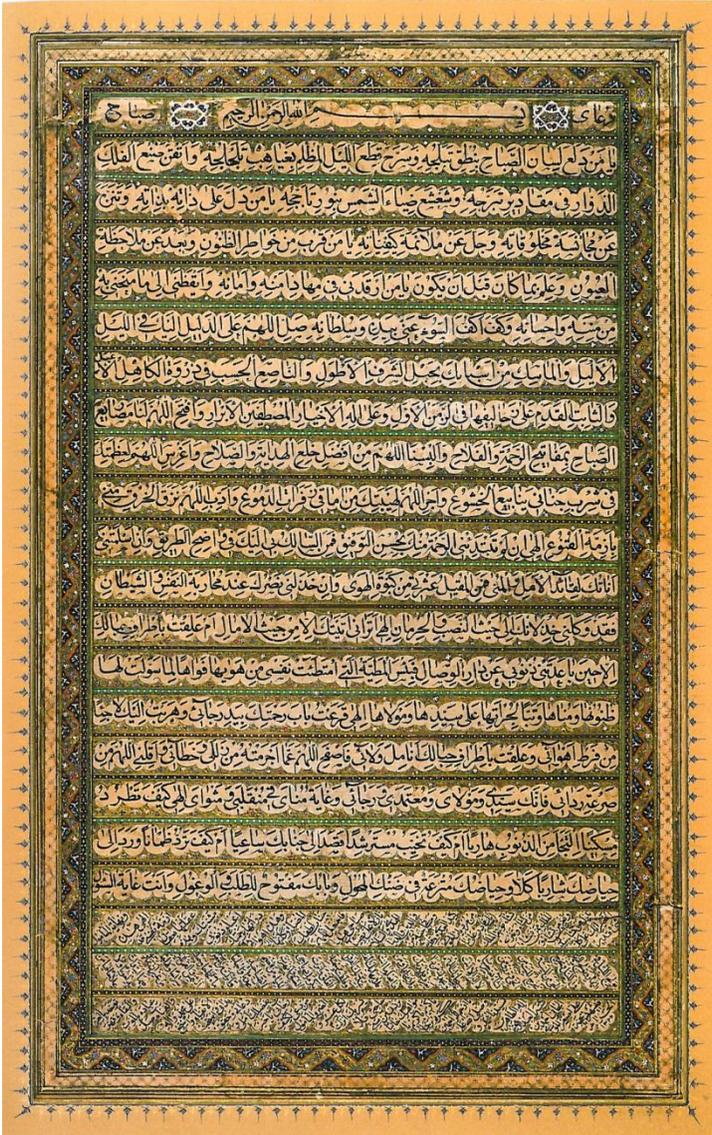


## 166 | The Practice of Sufism and the Safavid Order

Baqiyatallah present Perfect Human, Saeed Naghashyan, Tehran, Iran.



"Sabah" Prayer, Scribed by Ali Asqar Musavi, Qajar Era, MAHFOUZI MUSEUM, Tehran



## 168 | The Practice of Sufism and the Safavid Order

Sama, by Reza Badrossama, Isfahan, Iran.



Rumi Shrine, Konya, Turkey.

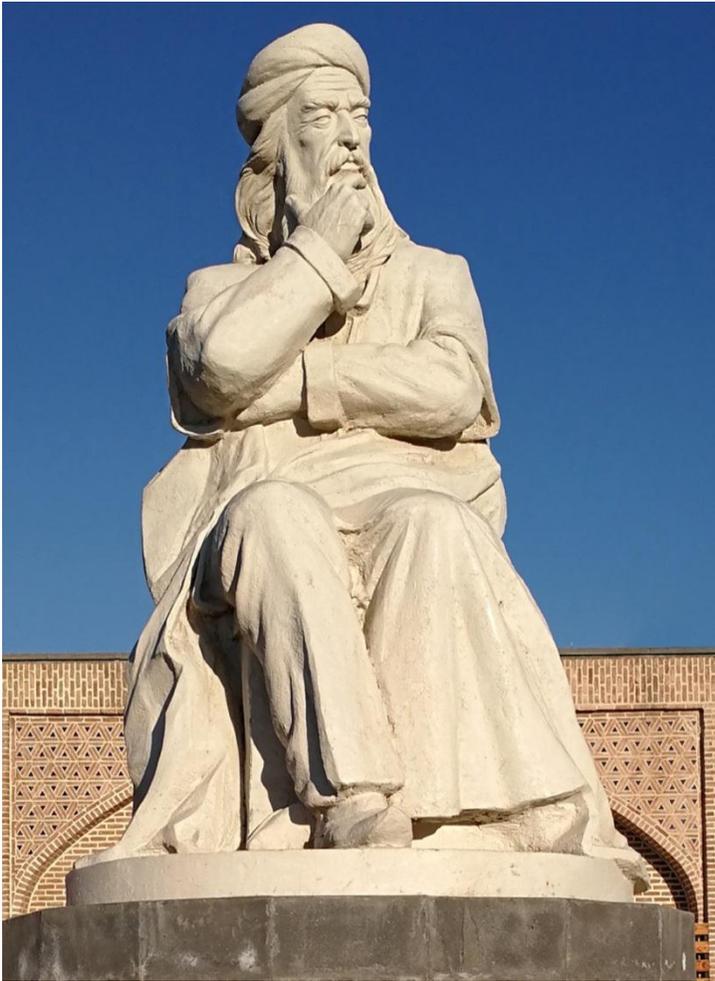


## 170 | The Practice of Sufism and the Safavid Order

Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili Shrine and Khanqah, Ardabil, Iran.



Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili's Statue, Ardabil, Iran.

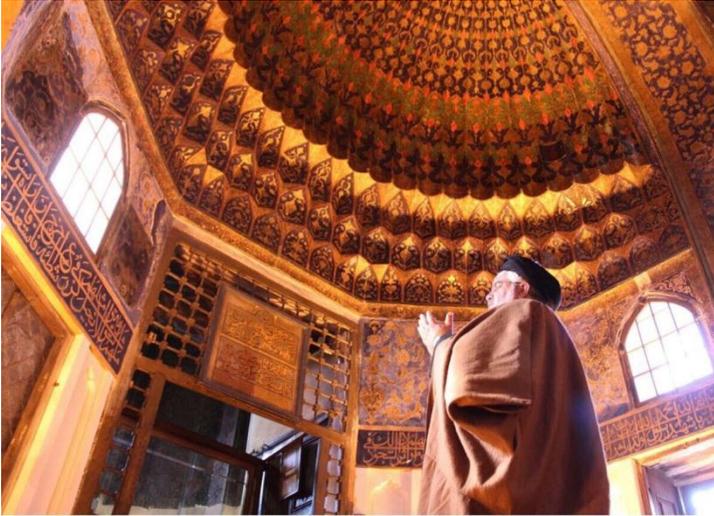


## 172 | The Practice of Sufism and the Safavid Order

Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili's Statue and his Descendant al-'Ashiq baba, Ardabil, Iran.

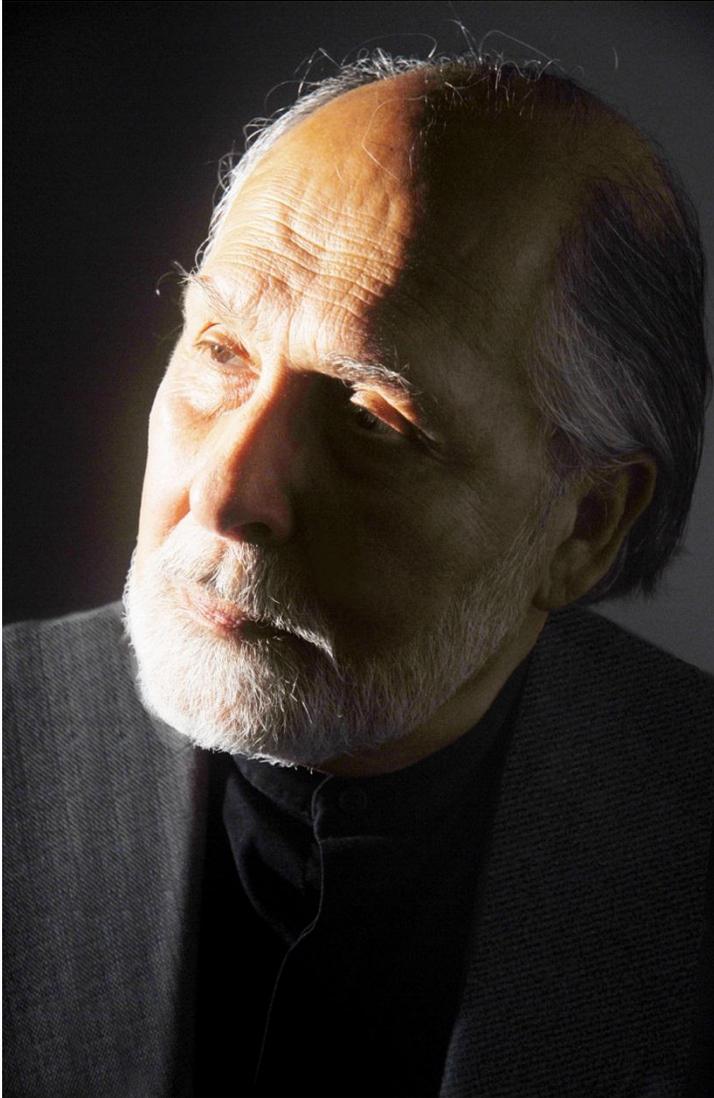


Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili's Khanqah and his Descendant al- 'Ashiq baba, Ardabil, Iran.



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The Greatest 'Aref in the West, Seyyed Hossein Shazeli al-Kashani



Ayatollah Naseri present great 'Arif in Isfahan and al-'Ashiq baba, 2018.





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