CHAPTER 1

# Six Questions about Islam

> Islām, submission, total surrender (to God) *maṣdar* [verbal noun] of the IVth form of the root *S L M*. The "one who submits to God" is the *Muslim*.
>
> —***Encyclopaedia of Islam***[1]

> After their Prophet, the people disagreed about many things; some of them led others astray, while some dissociated themselves from others.Thus, they became distinct groups and disparate parties—except that Islam gathers them together and encompasses them all.
>
> —**Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī (874–936 A.D.)**[2]

I AM SEEKING TO SAY THE WORD "Islam" in a manner that expresses the *historical and human phenomenon* that is Islam in its plenitude and complexity of meaning. In conceptualizing Islam as a human and historical phenomenon, I am precisely *not* seeking to tell the reader what Islam is as a matter of Divine Command, and thus am *not* seeking to prescribe how Islam should be followed as the means to existential salvation. Rather, I seek to tell the reader what Islam has actually been as a matter of human fact in history, and thus am suggesting how Islam should be *conceptualized* as a means to a more meaningful understanding both of Islam in the human experience,

[1] L. Gardet, "Islām i. Definition and Theories of Meaning," in E. van Donzel, B. Lewis, and Ch. Pellat (editors), *Encylopaedia of Islam* (New Edition), Volume IV, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978, 171–174, at 171.

[2] *ikhtalafa al-nās baʿda nabiyyi-him fī ashyāʾ kathīrah ḍallala baʿḍu-hum baʿḍan wa barraa baʿḍu-hum ʿan baʿḍin fa-ṣārū firaqan mutabayyinīn wa aḥzāban mutashattitīn illā anna al-islām yajmaʿu-hum wa yashtamil ʿalay-him*; Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ismāʿīl al-Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn wa ikhtilāf al-muṣallīn* (edited by Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd), Beirut: al-Maktabah al-ʿAṣriyyah, 1995, 34.

and thus of the human experience at large.[3] If I hold out a salvific prospect, it is the altogether more modest but, perhaps, no less elusive one, of analytical clarity.

This book stems from a certain dissatisfaction with the prevailing conceptualizations of "Islam" as object, and of "Islam" as category, which, in my view, critically impair our ability to recognize central and crucial aspects of the historical reality of the very object-phenomenon "Islam" that our conceptualizations seek to denote, but fall short of so doing.[4] By "conceptualization," I mean a general idea by which the "object" Islam may be identified and classified, such that the connection to "Islam" of all those things purportedly encompassed by, consequent upon or otherwise related to the concept—what is to be expressed by the word "Islamic"—may coherently be known, characterized and valorized. Any act of conceptualizing any object is necessarily an attempt to identify a general theory or rule to which all phenomena affiliated with that object somehow cohere as a category for meaningful analysis—whether we locate that general rule in idea, practice, substance, relation, or process. A meaningful conceptualization of "Islam" as *theoretical object* and *analytical category* must come to terms with—indeed, be *coherent* with—the capaciousness, complexity, and, often, *outright contradiction* that obtains within the historical phenomenon that has proceeded from the human engagement with the idea and reality of Divine Communication to Muḥammad, the Messenger of God. It is precisely this correspondence and coherence between *Islam as theoretical object or analytical category* and *Islam as real historical phenomenon* that is considerably and crucially lacking in the prevalent conceptualizations of the term "Islam/Islamic." It is just such a *coherent* conceptualization of Islam that I aim to put forward in this book.

The greatest challenge to a coherent conceptualization of Islam has been posed by the sheer diversity of—that is, range of differences between—those societies, persons, ideas and practices that identify themselves with "Islam." This analytical dilemma has regularly been presented in terms of how, when conceptualizing Islam, to reconcile the relationship between "universal" and "local," between "unity" and "diversity." Thus, the archdeacon of Islamic studies in the post–World War II United Kingdom, W. Montgomery Watt, asked in a 1968 work entitled, like the present one, *What is Islam?*: "In what sense can Islam or any other religion be said to remain a unity . . . when one consid-

[3] Straightforwardly: "The theoretical question 'What is Islam?' and the theological question 'What is Islam?' are not the same," Ronald A. Lukens-Bull, "Between Text and Practice: Considerations in the Anthropological Study of Islam," *Marburg Journal of Religion* 4.2 (1999) 1–21, at 17.

[4] Several of these conceptualizations of Islam have been conveniently collected in Andrew Rippin (editor), *Defining Islam (A Reader)*, London: Equinox, 2007.

ers the various sects and the variations in practice from region to region?"[5] One of the most important figures in the comparative study of religion, Wilfred Cantwell Smith, observed: " 'Islam' could perhaps fairly readily be understood if only it had not existed in such abundant actuality, at differing times and in differing areas, in the minds and hearts of differing persons, in the institutions and forms of differing societies, in the evolving of different stages."[6] In considering the scale and nature of the phenomenon of *variety* in Islam (in comparison to that of "any other religion"), it is well to bear in mind that, as the pioneer of the study of "Islamic history as world history"[7] Marshall G. S. Hodgson pointed out, "Islam is unique among the religious traditions for the diversity of peoples that have embraced it."[8] It is also helpful to bear in mind that, as a leading scholar of the concept of "civilization" has noted, "among the major civilizational worlds of premodern times, Islam was no doubt the most emphatically multi-societal."[9] As one political scientist computed, "There are at least three hundred ethnic groups in the world today whose populations are wholly or partly Muslim."[10] It is thus not surprising that, already in 1955, in a volume entitled *Unity and Variety in Muslim Civilization* comprising essays authored by the Orientalist luminaries of the age, Gustave E. von Grunebaum posited "The Problem: Unity in Diversity," asking, "What does, say, a North African Muslim have in common with a Muslim from Java?"[11]—the very question that the acclaimed anthropologist Clifford Geertz would in 1968 address in his *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia*.[12] Twenty-five years later, in a study entitled *Islam and the Heroic Image: Themes in Literature and the Visual Arts*, John Renard set out by underlining that "One must ask . . . in what sense one can apply the term

[5] W. Montgomery Watt, *What Is Islam?* London: Longman, 1968, 152–153.

[6] Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion*, San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1962, and Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991, 145.

[7] The phrase is that of Edmund Burke III, "Islamic History as World History: Marshall G. S. Hodgson and the *The Venture of Islam*," published as a "Conclusion" to Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *Rethinking World History: Essays on Europe, Islam, and World History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 301–328.

[8] Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974, 1:75.

[9] Johann P. Arnason, "Civilizational Patterns and Civilizing Processes," *International Sociology* 16 (2001) 387–405, at 395.

[10] Sharon Siddique, "Conceptualizing Contemporary Islam: Religion or Ideology?" *Annual Review of the Social Sciences of Religion* 5 (1981) 203–223, at 208.

[11] G. E. von Grunebaum, "The Problem: Unity in Diversity," in Gustave E. von Grunebaum (editor), *Unity and Variety in Muslim Civilization*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995, 17–37, at 18.

[12] Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968.

'Islam' and its adjectival form 'Islamic' to cultures so diverse as those of Morocco and Malaysia?"[13] while as recently as 2012, the Pew Research Forum of Religion and Public Life financed and published a massive global survey entitled *The World's Muslims: Unity and Diversity* that sought to determine "What beliefs and practices unite these diverse peoples into a single religious community, or ummah? And how do their religious convictions and observances vary?"[14]

The scholarly literature produced in sundry disciplines over the past half-century is rife with statements such as that of a representative art historian who wrote recently: "Academics and practitioners at the beginning of the twenty-first century remain at a loss to define with any clarity, let alone unity, what may be the best strategies for understanding the multiple phenomena that may be gathered under the aegis of an Islamic art and its history,"[15] and that of a representative anthropologist who expressed a problem especially vexatious to his tribe: "The main challenge for the study of Islam is to describe how its universalistic or abstract principles have been realized in various social and historical contexts without representing Islam as a seamless essence on the one hand or as a plastic congeries of beliefs and practices on the other."[16] As another put it, "The problem for anthropologists is to find a framework in which to analyze the relationship between this single, global entity, Islam, and the multiple entities that are the religious beliefs and practices of Muslims in specific communities at specific moments in history . . . to reconcile, analytically rather than theologically, the one universal Islam with the multiplicity of religious ideas and practices in the Muslim world."[17] In sum: "Anyone working on the anthropology of Islam will be aware that there is considerable diversity in the beliefs and practices of Muslims. The first problem is therefore one of organizing this diversity in terms of an adequate concept."[18]

[13] John Renard, *Islam and the Heroic Image: Themes in Literature and the Visual Arts*, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1993, xix.

[14] Pew Research Forum on Religion and Public Life, *The World's Muslims: Unity and Diversity*, Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2012, 5.

[15] Kishwar Rizvi, "Art," in Jamal J. Elias (editor), *Key Themes for the Study of Islam*, Oxford: Oneworld, 2010, 6–25, at 7.

[16] Dale F. Eickelman, "Changing Interpretations of Islamic Movements," in William R. Roff (editor), *Islam and the Political Economy of Meaning: Comparative Studies of Muslim Discourse*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987, 13–30, at 18 (reiterating his earlier statement in Dale F. Eickelman, "The Study of Islam in Local Contexts," *Contributions to Asian Studies* 17 (1982) 1–16, at 1).

[17] Robert Launay, *Beyond the Stream: Islam and Society in a West African Town*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992, 6–7 (in a chapter entitled, "The One and the Many").

[18] Talal Asad, *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam*, Washington, D.C.: Center for Contempo-

That this challenge has, unfortunately, not yet been met successfully—which is to say that the existing conceptualizations and uses of "Islam/Islamic" do *not* express a coherent object of meaning (or an object of coherent meaning)—is readily reflected in the fact that analysts, be they historians, anthropologists, sociologists, or scholars of art or religion, are often frankly unsure of what they mean when they use the terms "Islam/Islamic"—or whether, indeed, they should use the terms at all. As Ira M. Lapidus, the author of a panoramic *History of Islamic Societies*,[19] once said, "We write Islamic history but we cannot easily say what it is."[20] More recently, Chase F. Robinson, the author of a state-of-the-art monograph, *Islamic Historiography*,[21] lamented: "Surely I am not the only Islamic historian who, though recoiling at the use of 'essentializing' definitions, practices his craft without a clear understanding why the history made by Muslims is conventionally described in religious terms ('Islamic') while that of non-Muslims is described in political ones ('late Roman,' 'Byzantine,' 'Sasanian')."[22] Robinson's solution is to issue

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rary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 1986, 5. Without doubt, anthropologists who confront the vagaries of Muslims in the local field are particularly challenged by this question: "We must find some other way to deal with diversity in Islam . . . If we are to understand Islam as a somehow connected discursive tradition and not a myriad of discursive local traditions, we need to understand what links various local 'islams' together," Lukens-Bull, "Between Text and Practice," at 7, and 14; "Locality arguably looms larger as an issue for Muslims than for followers of any other religion . . . Muslims' dual pull—toward practical and doctrinal universalism, toward the historical particulars of an Arabian revelation—leads to two complementary types of practice: struggles to define the universal qualities of the 'religious,' and efforts to develop distinct identities, local by definition, with respect to these universal qualities," John R. Bowen, "What is 'Universal' and 'Local' in Islam?" *Ethos* 26 (1998) 258–261, at 258; "if Islam is a unitary phenomenon, how does one deal with the obvious diversity and complexity within and between Muslim societies?" Benjamin Soares, "Notes on the Anthropological Study of Islam and Muslim Societies in Africa," *Culture and Religion* 1 (2000) 277–285, at 280. "Anthropologists have sought to assess how and to what extent it is possible to generalize about Muslim societies and cultures across space (and, to some extent, through time). What is the relationship between the one and the many the universal and the particular, Islam and the empirical diversity of plural Islams?" Séan McLoughlin, "Islam(s) in Context: Orientalism and the Anthropology of Muslim Societies and Cultures," *Journal of Beliefs and Values* 28 (2007) 273–296, at 274. See also the political scientist Sharon Siddique: "There is a contradiction, so to speak, between two ideological perspectives: one universalistic, and the other particularistic . . . Islam as a universal ideology has a certain coherence, a certain unity . . . there is also much squabbling going on within Islam . . . this unity contains a great deal of diversity," Siddique, "Conceptualizing Contemporary Islam," 207, 211.

[19] Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

[20] Ira M. Lapidus, "Islam and the Historical Experience of Muslim Peoples," in Malcolm H. Kerr (editor), *Islamic Studies: A Tradition and Its Problems*, Malibu: Undena Publications, 1980, 89–101, at 89.

[21] Chase F. Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

[22] Chase F. Robinson, "Reconstructing Early Islam: Truth and Consequences," in Herbert Berg (editor), *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2003, 101–134, at 101–102.

the call "Let us abandon 'Islam' as a term of historical explanation"[23]—a view, as we will see in Chapter 2 of this book, that is shared by analysts from different fields, and with which I disagree.

This lack of coherence between the term "Islam" and the putative object-phenomenon to which it refers is seen in the continuing inability of the scholarly discourse to provide answers about the relationship to "Islam" of a range of basic historical phenomena. In what follows, I will summarily lay out the nature and extent of the conceptual problem by presenting six straightforward questions (though many more could be adduced at length).

First, there is the hoary question raised repeatedly by scholars: "What is Islamic about Islamic philosophy?" In a classic study entitled, "The Islamic Philosophers' Conception of Islam," Michael Marmura asked: "In what sense are we using the term 'Islamic' when referring to them? . . . the need for clarification becomes particularly pressing."[24] Some thirty years later, in his introduction to an *Encyclopaedia of Islamic Philosophy*, Oliver Leaman noted that "The obvious question . . . is why are the thinkers who are discussed here classified under the description of Islamic philosophy? Some of these thinkers are not Muslim, and some of them are not philosophers in a straightforward sense. What is Islamic philosophy?"[25] Marmura answered the question "in two senses": "'Islamic' refers normally to those philosophers who professed themselves adherents of Islam, the religion," and "in a general cultural (and chronological) sense" also for non-Muslim philosophers, "indicating that they belong to the civilization characterized as 'Islamic.'"[26] A recent authoritative volume, however, answers the question by deeming it "sensible to call the tradition 'Arabic' and not 'Islamic' philosophy" (and thus calls itself *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy* rather than *to Islamic Philosophy*) for which nomenclature two reasons are offered: "First, many of those involved were in fact Christians or Jews . . . second, many philosophers of the formative period . . . were interested primarily in coming to grips with the texts made available in the translation movement, rather than with putting for-

[23] Robinson, "Reconstructing Early Islam," 134.

[24] Michael F. Marmura, "The Islamic Philosophers' Conception of Islam," in Richard G. Hovanissian and Speros Vryonis, Jr. (editors), *Islam's Understanding of Itself*, Malibu: Undena Publications, 1983, 87–102, at 87–88.

[25] Oliver Leaman, "Introduction," in Seyyed Hossein Nasr (editor), *Encyclopaedia of Islamic Philosophy*, Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2002, 1–10, at 1.

[26] Marmura, "The Islamic Philosophers' Conception of Islam," 89.

ward a properly 'Islamic' philosophy."[27] The widespread recognition of the problem is summed up in the chapter title of a recent work by Rémi Brague: "Just How Is Islamic Philosophy Islamic?"[28]

The fulcral nature of the dilemma is readily evident in the question of whether, for example, it makes sense to call the philosopher, Ibn Sīnā/Avicenna (d. 1037)—undisputedly one of the most seminal sources of foundational and orientational ideas for the civilization and history we call Islamic[29]—an "Islamic" philosopher, when his Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic rationalism led him to the fundamental idea that there is a superior Divine Truth that is accessible only to the particularity of superior human intellects, and a lesser version of that Truth that communicates itself *via* Prophets, such as Muḥammad, and is *prescribed* by them to the commonality of lesser human intellects, and that, *as a logical consequence*, the text of the Qur'ān with its specific prescriptions and proscriptions is not a literal or direct expression of Divine Truth, but only what we might call a "Lowest Common Denominator" translation of that Truth into inferior figures of speech for the (limited) edification of the ignorant majority of humankind. As Ibn Sīnā said in a famous passage on the Real-Truth about God and existence:

> As for Divinely-Prescribed Law [*al-sharāʿ*], one general principle is to be admitted, which is that the Prescribed Law and doctrines [*al-milal*] that are brought forth upon the tongue of a Prophet are aimed at addressing

[27] Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor, "Introduction," in Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor (editors), *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, 1–9, at 3.

[28] Rémi Brague, *The Legend of the Middle Ages: Philosophical Explorations of Medieval Christianity, Judaism, and Islam*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009, 57–70.

[29] The long-term historical effects on societies of Muslims of Avicennan philosophy, including the continuing foundational presence of Avicennan texts and ideas in educational curricula, are increasingly well documented in the scholarship: see, representatively, Jean R. Michot, "La Pandémie Avicennienne au VIe/XIIe siècle: Presentation, edition princeps et traduction de l'introduction du Livre de l'advenue du monde (*Kitāb ḥudūth al-ʿālam*) d'Ibn Ghaylan al-Balkhī," *Arabica* 40 (1993) 288–344; Sonja Brentjes, "On the Location of the Ancient or 'Rational' Sciences in Muslim Educational Landscapes (AH 500–1100)," *Bulletin of the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies* 4.1 (2002) 47–71; Robert Wisnovsky, "The Nature and Scope of Arabic Philosophical Commentary in the Post-Classical (ca. 1100–1900 AD) Islamic Intellectual History: Some Preliminary Observations," in P. Adamson, H. Baltussen, and M. W. F. Stone (editors), *Philosophy, Science and Exegesis in Greek, Arabic and Latin Commentaries*, London: Institute of Classical Studies, 2004, 149–191; Gerhard Endress, "Reading Avicenna in the Madrasa: Intellectual Genealogies and Chains of Transmission of Philosophy and the Sciences in the Islamic East," in James E. Montgomery (editor), *Arabic Theology, Arabic Philosophy: From the Many to the One: Essays in Celebration of Richard M. Frank*, Leuven: Peeters, 2006, 371–422; and Robert Wisnovsky, "Avicenna's Islamic Reception," in Peter Adamson (editor), *Interpreting Avicenna: Critical Essays*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, 190–213.

> the masses as a whole. Now, it is obvious that the Realization-of-Truth [*al-taḥqīq*] . . . cannot be communicated to the multitude . . . Upon my life, if God the Exalted did charge a Messenger that he should communicate the Real-Truths [*al-ḥaqā'iq*] of these matters to the masses with their dull natures and with their perceptions tied down to pure sensibles, and then constrained him to pursue relentlessly and successfully the task of bringing faith and salvation to the multitude . . . then He has certainly laid upon him a duty incapable of fulfillment by any man! . . . Prescribed Laws [*al-sharā'iᶜ*] are intended to address the multitude in terms intelligible to them, seeking to bring home to them what transcends their intelligence by means of simile and symbol. Otherwise, Prescribed Laws would be of no use whatever . . . How can, then, the external form of Prescribed Law [*ẓāhir al-sharāᶜ*] be adduced as an argument in these matters?[30]

Ibn Sīnā (and just about all the philosophers with him) arrived hence at the "higher-truth" conclusions that the world is eternal, that God does not know the particulars of what we do and say, that there will be no bodily resurrection on a Day of Divine Judgement, that there is no Paradise or Hellfire, and that the specific prescriptions and proscriptions of Revealed law are not *intrinsically* true, but only *instrumentally* so (meaning that they are not necessarily any truer or more valid than other *forms* of truth).

These views of the nature of Divine Truth are in direct contradiction of the letter of the graphically and painfully reiterated theology and eschatology of the Qur'ān that is taken as constitutive of general Muslim creed, and were, as such, famously condemned as definitive Unbelief/Denial of Divine Truth (*kufr*) by the great "Proof of Islam" (*Ḥujjat al-Islām*) Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī

[30] *ammā amr al-sharᶜ fa-yanbaghī an yuᶜlama fī-hi qānūn wāḥid wa huwa anna al-sharᶜ wa al-milal al-ātiyah ᶜalā lisān nabī min al-anbiyā' yurām bi-hā al-jumhūr kāffatan thumma min al-maᶜlūm al-wāḍiḥ anna al-taḥqīq . . . mumtaniᶜ ilqā'u-hu ilā al-jumhūr . . . wa la-ᶜamr-ī law kallafa Allāh taᶜālā rasūlan min al-rusul an yulqiya ḥaqā'iq hādhihi al-umūr ilā al-jumhūr min al-ᶜāmmah al-ghalīẓah ṭibāᶜi-him al-mutaᶜalliqah bi-al-maḥsūsāt al-ṣarfah awhāmu-hum thumma sāma-hu an yakūna munjizan li-ᶜāmmati-him al-īmān wa al-ijābah . . . la-kallafa-hu shaṭṭaṭan wa an yafᶜal mā laysa fī quwwat al-bashar . . . fa-ẓāhir min hādhā kulli-hi anna al-sharā'iᶜ wāridah li-khiṭāb al-jumhūr bi-mā yafhamūnā muqarriban mā lā yafhamūna ilā afhāmi-him bi-al-tashbīh wa al-tamthīl . . . wa kayfa yakūn ẓāhir al-sharᶜ ḥujjatan fī hādhā al-bāb*; Ibn Sīnā, *Risālah aḍḥawiyyah fī amr al-maᶜād* (edited by Sulaymān Dunyā), Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-ᶜArabī, 1949, 44–45, and 49–50; I have benefited from the translation of Fazlur Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam: Philosophy and Orthodoxy*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1958, 42–43, but have changed his translation of *sharᶜ* from "religion" to Prescribed Law since what Ibn Sīnā means by *sharᶜ* is a truth apprehended, not by philosophical-rational means, but rather one that is *prescribed* by God "on the tongue of a prophet."

(d. 1111), in his landmark work *The Refutation of the Philosophers* (*Tahāfut al-falāsifah*)—a denunciation which, Michael Marmura notes, "was not uttered for sheer rhetorical effect" but "was an explicit charge made in terms of Islamic law."[31]

Are these definitive philosophical ideas Islamic or un-Islamic? Ibn Sīnā, who spoke of "the true *sharīʿah* [*al-sharīʿah al-ḥaqqah*] which was brought to us by our Prophet, our lord, and our master, Muḥammad—God's prayer be upon him and his family,"[32] himself clearly thought of the truths at which he arrived by philosophical-rational means as being *true to Islam*, and, in answer to those who thought otherwise, proclaimed of himself:

> It is not so easy and trifling to call me an Unbeliever;
> No faith is better founded than my faith.
> I am singular in my age; and if I am an Unbeliever—
> In that case, there is no single Muslim anywhere![33]

Robert Hall is thus quite correct when he says that the Muslim philosophers put forward philosophy as "the version of the Muslim faith that is best for the intellectually gifted believer."[34]

The relationship of philosophy to "Islam" is further complicated by the fact that Avicennan philosophy constituted—and was acknowledged by Muslims as constituting—the basis of post-Avicennan Islamic scholastic theology (*ʿilm al-kalām*). At the same time that some of Avicenna's most crucial philosophical conclusions were denounced by the practioners of Islamic theology, the *philosophical method* that led him to these conclusions was incorporated into the standard textbooks of scholastic theology that were taught in *madrasahs* down to the twentieth century. Thus, in the thirteenth century (seventh century of Islam), the great North African intellectual, Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1405), complained in his *Introduction to History* (*al-Muqaddimah*):

[31] Marmura, "The Islamic Philosophers' Conception of Islam," 88–89.

[32] Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of The Healing*, (a parallel English-Arabic text edited, annotated and translated by Michael E. Marmura), Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2005, 347–348.

[33] *kufr-i chu manī gazāf o āsān na-buvad / muḥkamtar az īmān-i man īmān na-buvad / dar dahr chu man yakī o ānham kāfir / pas dar hamah dahr yak musalmān na-buvad*; compare the translation by Syed Hasan Barani, "Ibn Sina and Alberuni: A Study in Similarities and Contrasts," 3–14, in *Avicenna Commemoration Volume*, Calcutta: Iran Society, 1956, 3–14, at 8; the Persian text is given by Saʿīd Nafīsī, "Chand nuktah-ʾi tāzah dar-bārah-i Ibn-i Sīnā," *Avicenna Commemoration Volume*, Calcutta: Iran Society, 1956, 21–45, at 45.

[34] Robert E. Hall, "Intellect, Soul and Body in Ibn Sīnā: Systematic Synthesis and Development of the Aristotelian, Neo-Platonic and Galenic Theories," in Jon McGinnis (editor), *Interpreting Avicenna: Science and Philosophy in Medieval Islam*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2004, 62–86, at 70.

> The problems of theology have been confused with those of philosophy. This has gone so far that the one discipline is no longer distinguishable from the other.[35]

Ibn Khaldūn's statement (and we should remember that he was a hostile witness to philosophy) confounds, several centuries in advance, what that most erudite historian of the natural sciences and philosophy in Islam, A. I. Sabra, has criticized as the "widely-held" but "downright false" "marginality thesis" put forward by modern students of Islamic philosophy, namely, the notion

> that scientific and philosophical activity in medieval Islam had no significant impact on the social, economic, educational and religious institutions . . . that those who kept the Greek legacy alive in Islamic lands constituted a small group of scholars who had little to do with the spiritual life of Muslims, who made no important contribution to the main currents of Islamic intellectual life, and whose work and interests were marginal to the central concerns of Islamic society.[36]

[35] *iltabasat masā'il al-kalām bi-masā'il al-falsafah bi-ḥaythu lā yatamayyaz aḥad al-fannayn ʿan al-ākhar*, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldūn*, Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Tijāriyyah al-Kubrā, n.d., 466; the translation is that of Franz Rosenthal; Ibn Khaldûn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History* (translated by Franz Rosenthal), Princeton: Bollingen, 1958, 3:53; the statement is highlighted in A. I. Sabra, "Science and Philosophy in Medieval Islamic Theology: The Evidence of the Fourteenth Century," *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenchaften* 9 (1994) 1–42.

[36] A. I. Sabra, "The Appropriation and Subsequent Naturalization of Greek Science in Medieval Islam: A Preliminary Statement," *History of Science* 25 (1987) 223–243, at 229. There is no shortage of "strong" examples of this thesis in the scholarly literature; but its pervasiveness is perhaps better illustrated through "soft" examples. S. Nomanul Haq, in writing about the intellectual relationship of philosophy and philosophers to the discourses of *kalām* theologians, Sufis, and legal scholars, writes that "in the formation of the normative Islamic tradition concerning the articulation of the notion of truth . . . we can disregard the *falāsifa* for they remained peripheral to a consciously cultivated Islamic religious outlook of the rest [of the Muslims]," S. Nomanul Haq, "The Taxonomy of Truth in the Islamic Religious Doctrine and Tradition," in Robert Cummings Neville (editor), *Religious Truth*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001, 127–144, at 137. Peter Heath insists that the philosophers' "hermeneutic approach remained a minority opinion . . . even among the intellectual elite," Peter Heath, "Creative Hermeneutics: A Comparative Analysis of Three Islamic Approaches," *Arabica* 36 (1989) 173–210, at 194. Louis Gardet classified philosophy and Sufism as "two marginal sciences," Louis Gardet, "Religion and Culture," in P. M. Holt, Ann K. S. Lambton, and Bernard Lewis (editors), *The Cambridge History of Islam, Volume 2B: Islamic Society and Civilization*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970, 569–603, at 597. It is thus hardly surprising that a non-expert such as Hans Küng, whose recent hefty monograph on Islam is based on a prodigious reading of secondary scholarship and thus, rather like a good undergraduate essay, expresses a synthesis of that literature, opines the well-grounded error "in Islam philosophy remained a marginal phenomenon and so for my paradigm analysis it will be enough to make a brief survey of the development by considering promi-

The "marginality thesis" has arisen, at least in part, from a failure to distinguish between the socially rarefied and intellectually specialized nature of the technical *practice* of philosophy as an undertaking in a society, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the broader intellectual and cultural *effects* of philosophy as diffused through and taken up in the endemic discourses of those societies in which philosophy is practiced. While philosophers *do* philosophy, many other people are affected by it. To this point, however, historians of Islam have yet to carry out Sabra's *desideratum*: "The falsity of the marginality thesis . . . can best be demonstrated by offering a description of an alternative picture—one which shows the connections with cultural factors and forces."[37] In a separate monograph, Nenad Filipovic and I attempt *inter alia* to demonstrate and depict the central place of Islamic philosophy in the larger discourses, practices and consciousness of one historically significant Muslim society—that of the Ottomans.[38] Some sporadic forays in that direction for historical societies of Muslims at large will also be made in the present book by means of major representative examples, beginning, in a few pages, with a consideration of the central and seminal role in the history of societies of Muslims of what one scholar of Islam has called "philosophic religion."

One important symptom that helps to dispel the notion of philosophy as a marginal foreign science in the discourses of Muslims, is the swift historical replacement in both the discipline of philosophy and in the discourses of Muslims at large of the Greek-derived term *falsafah* (philosophy) with the Qur'ānic-Arabic term *ḥikmah* (Persian, Ottoman, Urdu: *ḥikmat*): "He gives wisdom [*ḥikmah*] to whom He wills; and he who is given *ḥikmah* has been given an abundant good—but none are cognizant of this save those possessed of understanding."[39] Ibn Sīnā himself designated *ḥikmah* "a *real-true* philosophy [*falsafah bi-al-ḥaqīqah*]: a *first* philosophy which imparts validation to the principles of the rest of the sciences and that is Wisdom in Real-Truth

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nent philosophical personalities who are significant for the beginning, high point and end of Arabic philosophy," Hans Küng, *Islam: Past, Present and Future*, Oxford; Oneworld, 2004, 367.

[37] Sabra, "The Appropriation and Subsequent Naturalization of Greek Science in Medieval Islam," 229.

[38] See the chapter on "Philosophy" in the forthcoming book by Shahab Ahmed and Nenad Filipovic, *Neither Paradise nor Hellfire: Rethinking Islam through the Ottomans, Rethinking the Ottomans through Islam.* A recent work that argues that "Islamic intellectual life has been characterized by reason in the service of a non-rational revealed code of conduct . . . that the core intellectual tradition of Islam is deeply rational, though based on revelation," is John Walbridge, *God and Logic in Islam: The Caliphate of Reason*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, 3–4.

[39] *yu'tī al-ḥikmata ilā man yashā' wa man yu'tā al-ḥikmata faqad ūtiyā khayran kathīran wa mā yadhdhakkaru illā ūlū al-albāb*, Qur'ān 2:269 al-Baqarah.

[*al-ḥikmah bi-al-ḥaqīqah*]."[40] "*Ḥikmah* is the perfecting of the human soul by the conceptualization of things and by the verification of theoretical and practical real-truths to the extent of human capacity."[41] As such, *ḥikmah* is the knowing of the idea and reality of the Universal Truth of Divine Creation; that is to say, *ḥikmah* is the knowing of the Truth of God—as Ibn Sīnā wrote, it encompasses Divine Science (*al-ʿilm al-ilāhī*).[42] The swift historical reconstitution by Muslims of *falsafah* as *ḥikmah* is thus indicative of the thoroughgoing integration of the modes of thinking and speaking constitutive of philosophy *into* the larger modes of thinking and speaking constitutive of historical societies of Muslims. Conceived by Muslims as *ḥikmah*/wisdom from the Divine (or *ḥikmah*/wisdom of the Divine), philosophy became not only textually-tied, but also semantically- and cosmologically-tied to the Revelatory Truths of the Universally-Wise God (the *al-Ḥakīm* of the Qur'ān), and thus became conceived of in the vocabulary of Muslims as "universal wisdom." *Ḥikmah* is also semantically tied to the concept of "rule" (*ḥukm*; from the same trilateral Arabic root, *ḥ-k-m*)—thus, *ḥikmah*/philosophy is both the identification of the *theoretical rules* or values operative in the universe, as well as the enactment and application of *practical rules* or values consonant with those theoretical rules.

The historical mobilization of the word *ḥikmah* as *falsafah* expresses the conceptual recognition and operationalization in societies of Muslims of the claim of philosophy to know universal truth, and thus of the value of those truths as a basis for personal and social action. Practitioners of philosophy came to be designated as *ḥukamā'* (singular: *ḥakīm*), those who have or who "do" *ḥikmah*. The same term was applied also to physicians, who (like philosophers) applied reason to identify universal truths practically applicable for individual and collective human well-being (Ibn Sīnā was, of course, the philosopher-physician *in excelsius*). The re-apprehension of *falsafah* as *ḥikmah* and its application in the life of a Muslim is expressed in the following introductory passage to the major work of the brilliant sixteenth-/seventeenth-century intellectual, Mullā Ṣadrā of Shīrāz (d. 1635):

[40] *ha-hunā falsafah bi-al-ḥaqīqah wa falsafah ūlā wa inna-hā tufīd taṣḥīḥ mabādi' sā'ir al-ʿulūm wa inna-hā al-ḥikmah bi-al-ḥaqīqah*; Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā), *al-Shifā*, 3 (compare the translation of Marmura, *The Metaphysics of the Healing*, 3).

[41] *al-ḥikmah istikmāl al-nafs al-insaniyyah bi-taṣawwur al-umūr wa al-taṣdīq bi-al-ḥaqā'iq al-naẓariyyah wa al-ʿilmiyyah ʿalā qadr al-ṭāqah al-insāniyyah*; Ibn Sīnā, *ʿUyūn al-ḥikmah* (edited by Muwaffaq Fawzī al-Jabr), Beirut: Dār al-Yanābīʿ, 1996 (cited by Hikmet Yaman, *Prophetic Niche in the Virtuous City: The Concept of* Ḥikmah *in Early Islamic Thought*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2011, 253—compare the translation).

[42] Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā), *al-Shifā*, 2.

> Philosophy [*falsafah*] is the perfecting of the human soul by cognition of the Real-Truths of existents as they actually are, and by judging their Existence by attaining truth through demonstrations—not taking from conjecture or from adherence to authority—to the extent of human capacity. You could say that philosophy organizes the world in a rational order to the measure of human capacity so that one might resemble himself to the Creator.
>
> And whereas the human emerges as a knead of two ingredients—a spiritual form (from the world) of Command, and a sensible matter (from the world) of Creation—and thereupon possesses in his soul both the aspect of attachment (to the body) and the aspect of abstraction (from it)—it is certainly the case that *ḥikmah* is made more capacious in measure of building up the two potentials by cultivating the two capacities towards two skills: theoretical abstraction, and practical attachment.
>
> The goal of the theoretical art is the colouring of the soul in the image of Existence as it is ordered in its Perfection and its Completion—and its becoming a rational world resembling the Source-World-Itself . . . This art of *ḥikmah* is that sought and requested by the Master of the Messengers—preservation and peace be upon him and his family—in his supplication "O My Lord, show us things as they are!"[43]

This passage highlights the philosophers' conception of their project as directly related to Prophethood and to knowledge of God: the Prophet himself seeks from God precisely the art of *ḥikmah*. The philosophers conceive of a

[43] *inna al-falsafah istikmāl al-nafs al-insāniyyah bi-maʿrifat ḥaqāʾiq al-mawjūdāt ʿalā mā hiya ʿalay-hā wa al-ḥukm bi-wujūdi-hā taḥqīqan bi-al-barāhīn lā akhdhan bi-al-ẓann wa al-taqlīd bi-qadr al-wusʿ al-insānī wa in shiʾta qulta naẓama naẓman ʿaqliyyan ʿalā ḥasab al-ṭāqah al-bashariyyah li-yaḥsula al-tashabbuh bi-al-bāriʾ taʿālā wa lammā jāʾa al-insān ka-al-maʿjūn min khilṭayn ṣūrah maʿnawiyyah amriyyah wa māddah ḥissiyah khalqiyyah wa kānat li-nafsi-hi ayḍan jihatā taʿalluq wa tajarrud lā jurm iftannat al-ḥikmah bi-hasab ʿimārat al-nashʾatayn bi-iṣlāḥ al-quwwatayn ilā fannayn naẓariyyah tajarrudiyyah wa ʿamaliyyah taʿalluqiyyah. ammā al-naẓariyyah fa-ghāyatu-hā intiqāsh al-nafs bi-ṣūrat al-wujūd ʿalā niẓāmi-hi bi-kamāli-hi wa tamāmi-hi wa ṣayrūrati-hā ʿālaman ʿaqliyyan mushābihan li-al-ʿālam al-ʿaynī . . . wa hādhā al-fann min al-ḥikmah huwa al-maṭlūb li-sayyid al-rusul al-masʾūl fī duʿāʾ-hi ṣallā Allāh ʿalay-hi wa āli-hi wa sallama ilā rabbi-hi ḥaythu qāla rabb-ī arī-nā al-ashyāʾ ka-mā huwa*, Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikmah al-mutaʿāliyah fī al-asfār al-ʿaqliyyah al-arbaʿah*, Qum: al-Maktabah al-Muṣṭafavī, n.d., 1:20–21, (the Prophet's supplication is Qur'ān 26:82 al-Shuʿarā'). This passage is cited in Sajjad H. Rizvi, "Philosophy as a way of life in the world of Islam: Applying Hadot to the Study of Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (d. 1635)," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 75 (2012) 33–45, at 42 (compare the translation), where Rizvi correctly notes that "This definition makes it clear that philosophizing is more than a ratiocinative discourse but is, in fact, closely related with the practice of theosis (*taalluh*) . . . It also closely relates this practice to a prophetic inheritance and connects philosophizing to the Qur'ānic notion of wisdom."

prophet as a human being who possesses such extraordinarily developed capacities of reason (*ʿaql*), intellectual insight (*al-ḥads*) and imagination (*al-quwwah al-mutakhayyilah*)—faculties that are present in all persons to some less developed degree—that he is able thereby to attain direct conjunction (*ittiṣāl*) with, and to apprehend in an instant and as as a whole (that is to say: *all at once*) the pure, formless, universal Truth that issues from the Active (Rational) Intellect (God) through the celestial domains.[44] In other words, a prophet is an *über*-philosopher—which, in turn, implies that all philosophers are, for all conceptual and practical purposes, engaged in the *same* project as are prophets: that of *ḥikmah*, or seeking to know universal truth-as-it-Really-is through the perfection of pure reason (on these terms, one might almost say, upon beholding a great philosopher: "There, but for grace of God, goes a prophet!").

The historical centrality and foundationality to the history of Muslims of the philosophers' rational striving to know truth-as-it-Really-is can most economically be illustrated by way of the philosophers' definition of God. Ibn Sīnā conceptualized God as the sole Necessary Existent (*wājib al-wujūd*) upon W/which all other existents are necessarily contingent. It is this philosophers' conceptualization of God that became *the* operative concept of the Divinity taught in *madrasah*s to students of theology *via* the standard introductory textbook on logic, physics, and metaphysics which was taught to students in *madrasah*s in cities and towns throughout the vast region from the Balkans to Bengal in the rough period 1350–1850, and which was tellingly entitled *Hidāyat al-ḥikmah*, or *Guide to Ḥikmah*.[45] In the discourse of *madrasah* theol-

[44] Also, and crucially, the Prophet is able, by means of his imaginative faculty, to communicate knowledge of this prophetic revelation (*waḥy*) to us less intellectually and imaginatively developed souls in a form productive our salvific benefit. Further to Rahman's superb *Prophecy in Islam*, an accessible presentation is now that of Frank Griffel, "The Muslim Philosophers' (*falāsifa*) Rationalist Explanation of Muḥammad's Prophecy and Its Influence on Islamic Theology and Sufism," in Jonathan E. Brockopp (editor), *The Cambridge Companion to Muḥammad*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 158–179.

[45] The author is Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī (d. 1265); on the author and the work see Syed Ali Tawfik Al-Attas, *The* mashshā'ī *Philosophical System: A Commentary and Analysis of the* Hidāyat al-Ḥikmah *of Athīr al-Dīn al-Mufaḍḍal ibn ʿUmar al-Abharī al-Samarqandī*, Petaling Jaya: Pelanduk Publications, 2010 (the presentation of God conceived of as "Necessary Existent" appears in translation at 165–173). The importance of the work may be gauged not only by the fact that no less than twenty commentaries and super-commentaries on the work had been authored by the early seventeenth century (see Kātib Çelebī Ḥājjī Khalīfah, *Kashf al-ẓunūn `an asāmī al-kutub wa al-funūn*, (edited by Şerefettin Yaltkaya and Kilisli Rifat Bilge), Istanbul: Maarif Matbaası, 1941–1943, 2028–2029), but in that not less than eight hundred manuscript copies—a truly staggering number—of the *Hidāyat al-ḥikmah* and its commentaries and super-commentaries are extant today in the manuscript libraries of Turkey (see Abdullah Yormaz, "Muhalif bir metin nasıl okunur? Osmanlı medreselerinde *Hidâyetü'l-Hikme*," *Divan İlmi Arar-*

ogy, God is conceptually posited as and routinely referred to as "The Necessary Existent" (perhaps, as the ultimate symptom of the "confusion" of the sciences of theology and philosophy of which Ibn Khaldūn spoke). In other words, mainstream Islamic theology (Sunnī and Shīʿī) in the millennium-long age of the *madrasah* conceptualized God on a philosophical foundation whose logic and epistemology had led its acknowledged progenitor, the philosopher, Ibn Sina—whom we can legitimately call "the man who effectively defined God for Muslims"—to conclusions that were condemned as exemplary Unbelief. How is this Islamic?

The second question: when Sufis make their culminating assertion that virtuoso "friends of God" (*awliyāʾ Allāh*; singular: *walī*) who are at experiential one-ness with the Real-Truth, *al-ḥaqīqah*, are no longer bound by the specific forms and strictures of Islamic law and ritual practice, *al-sharīʿah*, that confine less spiritually and existentially developed souls, is this an Islamic or an un-Islamic truth-claim?

We have just noted the philosophers' concept of prophethood as an extraordinary kind of knowledge resulting from the presence within a given individual of an extraordinary degree of development of a human capacity—reason—otherwise inherent in every ordinary person. This is paralleled by the definitive Sufi idea: by rigorous developmental exercise of the *holistic* faculties of knowing common to all humans (as opposed to giving priority to the ratiocinative faculty alone), any individual can, potentially, develop his or her capacity to attain immediate personal revelatory experience (*kashf*) of some measure of the Higher truths of the Divine (even if that person does not attain the ultimate revelatory capacity of a prophet, who is, for the Sufis, effectively an *über*-Sufi—one might almost say, upon beholding a *walī*: "There, but for grace of God, goes a prophet!"). What we witness in the socially-prolific ritual

*ştırmaları* 18 (2005) 175–192, at 186. Its continuing importance in the curriculum of *madrasah*s from the Balkans-to-Bengal may be gauged by a sample of nineteenth- and early-twentieth century print editions from Istanbul, Tehran and Lucknow: Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī (with commentary by Qāḍī Mīr Ḥusayn al-Maybūdī, supercommentary by Muṣliḥ al-Dīn al-Lārī and super-supercommentary by Qarah-Khalīl), *al-Lārī ʿalā Qāḍī Mīr ʿalā al-Hidāyah min al-ḥikmah maʿa al-ḥāshiyah li-Qarah Khalīl*, Istanbul: Dār al-Ṭibāʿah al-ʿĀmirah, 1271 *h* [1855]; Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī (with commentary by Qāḍī Mīr Ḥusayn al-Maybūdī and supercommentary by Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn Fakhr al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī), *Sharḥ al-Hidāyah al-Athīriyyah maʿa ḥawāshī*, Tehran: al-Shaykh Aḥmad al-Shīrāzī, 1331 *h* [1913]; and Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī (with commentary by Ṣadr al-Dīn Mullā Ṣadrā Shirāzī, and supercommentary by Walī al-Dīn al-Faranjī), *Ḥāshiyat al-Ṣadrā*, (edited by Muḥammad Iḥsān Allāh al-Lakhnawī, Lucknow: Naval Kishōr, 1303 *h* [1885].

practices of Sufi *dhikr*—the rigorous developmental exercises for the development of physical, spiritual, and psychological human capacities for experiential knowing of God enacted down the centuries in cities and towns and villages across the Islamic world—is the performance of Sufis striving for the holistic perfection of *being* as the means to attain and access truth in the way of prophets.

Now, as every student of Islam knows, Sufism—the theory and practice of holistic, experiential knowing of Divine Truth—was, for over a millennium, a foundational, commonplace and institutionalized conceptual and social phenomenon in societies of Muslims. The omnipresence of Sufism is manifest in the proliferation over the centuries of the numerous Sufi "orders" or "brotherhoods" (*ṭarīqah*: literally, "path" or "way," plural: *ṭuruq*) with whose metaphysical ideas and activities the absolute majority of the population were affiliated either by formal, individual oath of pledge (*bayʿah*), or by attendance of rituals. The physical presence of Sufism was ubiquitously manifest in the brick and mortar of the built environment of every city in the form of the various centers of Sufi activity (*khānqāh*, *zāwiyah*, *tekkeh*, *merkez*, etc.), as well as in the *barakah* (spiritual-power)–charged saint-tombs that were loci of veneration, visitation (*mazār*, *dargāh*, *ziyāratgāh*, etc.) and of intercession with the Divine (*tawassul*, *istighāthah*).

The near-universal pre-modern practice of the visitation (*ziyārah*) of Sufi tomb-shrines to benefit from the blessing of the spiritual power of the deceased saint is expressive of the recognition on the part of its practitioners of an Unseen cosmos of Revealed Truth in which Sufi practitioners were active participants and of which they were active conveyors. God Himself tells us that He is "the Originator of the Heavens and Earth, who has knowledge of the Seen and the Unseen,"[46]— and the higher Real-Truth/*ḥaqīqah* to which the Sufis aspire is the uncorrupted pure Truth of the Unseen non-material Reality to which material reality and its truths stand in a figural or metaphorical relation. In Sufi thought, the Unseen Real World and Real-Truth is *ḥaqīqah*; this world and its truth is a *figural* or *metaphorical representation* (Arabic: *majāz*) of Real-Truth. The Visible, Witnessed material world in which we live, the Qur'ānic "World of Witnessing" (*ʿālam al-shahādah*) is the *ʿālam al-majāz*, the "World of the Figure/Metaphor," whereas the invisible, non-material world, the Qur'ānic "World of the Unseen" (*ʿālam al-ghayb*) whence the Muhammadan Revelation issues forth and proceeds to the Seen is the *ʿālam al-ḥaqīqah*, the "World of Real-Truth."

It was Sufism that came to provide the conceptual and praxial vocabulary in which the majority of Muslims experienced, by way of regular collective

[46] *fāṭir al-samawāt wa al-arḍ ʿālim al-ghayb wa al-shahādah*; Qur'ān 39:46 al-Zumar.

rituals carried out in institutionalized Sufi spaces—where "higher Sufi thought tied sources of immediate relief and hope in every village and *qasbah* to Muhammad's revelation"[47]—a most profound personal Real-Truth of their existence. Sufism provided the conceptual vocabulary not only for the experiential knowing of Real-Truth, but also for its expressive articulation. Thus, as a practical matter of Sufi instruction, ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (1366–1424), the elaborator from Muḥyi al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī (1165–1240), possibly the most influential Sufi in history, of the transfiguring Sufi concept of the "Perfect Human" (*al-insān al-kāmil*), "asserted that Ibn ʿArabi's ideas can save the novice the difficulty of classifying and formulating the elusive mystical experiences and symbolic visions that he encounters on the Sufi Path . . . because they give him a greater conceptual clarity."[48] The conceptual vocabulary of Sufism became an ingrained part of the idiom of the speech of Muslims, and especially of *poetry*—which was, quite simply, the most important and valued form of social communication among Muslims in the major languages of their historical self-expression, including Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Urdu.

The manifesto of the Sufi search for Truth is summed up by probably the most widely-read Sufi poet in history, known to countless Muslims as *Mawlānā Khudāvandigār* (Our Sovereign Master), and to historians as Jalāl-ud-Dīn Rūmī (d. 1273), in one of the most prolifically copied, recited, and performed poetical (or other) texts in Islamic history, the *Maṣnavī-yi maʿnavī* (Doublets of Meaning):

> The Law [*sharīʿat*] is like a candle that shows the way: Without the candle in hand, there is no setting forth on the road. And when you are on the road: that journey is the Way [*ṭarīqat*]; and when you have reached the destination, that is the Real-Truth [*ḥaqīqat*]. It is in this regard that they say "If the Real-Truths are manifest, the laws are nullified [*law ẓaharat al-ḥaqā'iq baṭalat al-sharā'iʿ*]," as when copper becomes gold, or was gold originally, it does not need the alchemy that is the Law . . .
>
> The Law [*sharīʿat*] is like learning the theory of alchemy from a teacher or a book, and the (Sufi) Path [*ṭarīqah*] is (like) the transmutation of the copper into gold. Those who know alchemy rejoice in their knowledge of it, saying, "We know the theory of this (science)"; and those who practice it rejoice in their practice of it, saying, "We perform such works"; and those who have experienced the Real-Truth [*ḥaqīqah*] rejoice in the

[47] Francis Robinson, "Perso-Islamic Culture in India from the Seventeenth to the Early Twentieth Century," in Robert L Canfield (editor), *Turco-Persia in Historical Perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 104–131, at 127.

[48] Alexander D. Knysh, *Ibn ʿArabi in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999, 250.

> Real-Truth, saying, "We have become gold and are delivered from the theory and practice of alchemy: we are God's freedmen." *Each party is rejoicing in what they have.*[49] Or the Law may be compared to learning the science of medicine, and the Path to regulating one's diet in accordance with (the science of) medicine and taking remedies, and the Real-Truth to gaining health everlasting and becoming independent of them both.[50]

The frankly-stated ultimate goal of the Sufi is to rise through the hierarchy of truth to the Real-Truth of God—in the process becoming freed from the prescriptions and proscriptions of the law which, upon arrival at the Real-Truth, are nullified. As Abū Sahl al-Tustarī (818–896), one of the first to author a recognizably Sufi commentary on the Qur'ān, once said: "The gnostics have a secret which, if manifested by God, would set the law at naught."[51]

The Sufi claim to knowledge of a *different register of Divine Truth* is well-expressed by the famous Sufi, Rūzbihān Baqlī (d. 1209), in the preamble to his exegetical commentary on the Qur'ān:

> God gave the exterior reins of the Qur'ān into the hands of the people of the Exteriority from among the scholars and philosophers, so that they legislate in its (exterior) rulings and limitations and forms and laws

[49] Qur'ān 23:53 al-Mu'minūn.

[50] *sharīʿat ham chu shamʿ ast rah mīnumāyad va bī-ān-kih shamaʿ bi-dast āvarī rāh raftah nashavad va chwun dar rah āmadī ān raftan-i tū ṭariqat ast va chwun rasīdī bi-maqṣūd ān ḥaqīqat-ast va jihat-i īn guftih ānd kih law ẓaharat al-ḥaqāʾiq baṭalat al-sharāʾiʿ hamchunān-kih mis zar shavad va yā khwud az aṣl zar buvad ū-rā nah ʿilm-i kīmīyā ḥajat ast kih ān sharīʿat ast . . . sharīʿat hamchwun ʿilm-i ḳimiyā āmūkhtanast az ustād yā az kitāb va ṭariqat istiʿmāl kardan-i dārū-hā va mis rā dar kīmīyā mālīdan ast va ḥaqīqat zar shudan-i mis kīmīyādānān bi-ʿilm-i kīmiyā shādand kih mā ʿilm-i īn mīdānīm va ʿamal-kunandagān bi-ʿamal-i kīmiyā shādand kih mā chunīn kārhā mīkunīm va ḥaqīqat-yāftagān bi-ḥaqīqat shādand kih mā zar shudīm va az ʿilm o ʿamal-i kīmiyā āzād shudīm o ʿutaqāʾ-Allah īm kullu ḥizbin bi-mā laday-him fariḥūna yā miṣāl-i sharīʿat hamchu ʿilm-i ṭibb āmūkhtanast va ṭarīqat parhīz kardan bi-mūjib-i ṭibb va dārū-hā khwurdan va ḥaqīqat ṣiḥḥat-yāftan-i abadī*, Jalāl-ud-Dīn Rūmī, *Maṯnavī-yi Maʿnavī*, published as *The Mathnawí of Jalálu'ddín Rúmí* (edited and translated by Reynold A. Nicholson), Cambridge: E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Trust, 1925–1940, 5:1–2 (I have slightly emended the translation of Nicholson, *The Mathnawí of Jalálu'ddín Rúmí*, 5:3).

[51] *li-al-ʿulamāʾ sirr law aẓhara-hu Allāh la-baṭalat al-aḥkām*, Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb fī muʿāmalāt al-maḥbūb wa waṣf ṭarīq al-murīd ilā maqām al-tawḥīd*, Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿah al-Maymaniyyah, 1899, 2:90. A discussion of variations of this text in its citations down the centuries is given in Gerhard Böwering, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam: The Qurʾānic Hermeneutics of the Ṣūfī Sahl al-Tustarī*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980, 196–197. It is translated and cited by Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1966, 142, from Louis Massignon, *Receuil de textes inédits concernants l'histoire de la mystique en pays d'Islam*, Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1929, 41.

[*sharā'iʿ*]. And He made the Unseen [*ghaybah*] of the Secrets [*asrār*] of His Discourse and the concealed subtleties of His Signs for His elect few, and made Himself manifest from His words to their hearts, spirits, intellects and secretmost-selves [*asrāri-him*], by means of revelation [*kashf*], direct vision [*ʿayān*] and clarification [*bayān*], and He taught them the sciences of His Real-Truths, and the rarenesses of His subtleties, and He purified the rungs of their intellects by revelations of the lights of His Beauty, and sanctified their faculties of comprehension for the brilliance of his Majesty, and He made these the repositories for the trusts of the concealed signs of His discourse and for the complex secrets which He has reposed in his Book, and for the subtle allusions in the ambiguities and difficulties of the Verses. And He Himself taught them the meanings of that which He hid in the Qur'ān so that they come to know by His making it known to them. And He lined their eyes with the light of closeness to Him and attainment to Him, and made them privy to the unseennesses of the virgin-brides of ruling [*ḥukm*] and of knowledges and revelations, and of the meanings of the understanding of the understanding, and of the secret of the secret, the Exteriority of which in the Qur'ān is Ruling [*ḥukm*], but within the Interiority of which is allusion and revelation which God-the-Truth set aside for the pure-for-Him and for His greatest friends, and for his far-come lovers from among the truth-full and those-drawn-near. And He veiled these secrets and marvels from others: the scholars of exteriority and the people of form, those whose ample portion is the abrogator and the abrogated, jurisprudence and science and knowledge of the permitted and the prohibited, of the statutory punishments and the rulings.[52]

[52] *aʿṭā azimmat al-ẓāhirah ilā yad ahl al-ẓāhir min al-ʿulamā' wa al-ḥukamā' ḥattā sharaʿū fī aḥkāmi-hā wa ḥudūdi-hā wa rusūmi-hā wa sharā'iʿi-hā wa jaʿala li-khāliṣat ahl ṣafwati-hi ghaybat asrār khiṭābi-hi wa laṭā'if maknūn āyāti-hi wa tajallin min kalāmi-hi bi-naʿt al-kashf wa al-ʿayān wa al-bayān li-qulūbi-him wa arwāḥi-him wa ʿuqūli-him wa asrāri-him wa aʿlama-hum ʿulūm ḥaqā'iqi-hi wa nawādir daqā'iqi-hi wa ṣaffā durūj ʿuqūli-him bi-kashf anwār jamāli-hi wa qaddasa fuhūma-hum li-sanā' jalāli-hi wa jaʿala-hā mawāḍiʿ wadaiʿ khafiyy rumūz khiṭābi-hi wa mā awdaʿa kitāba-hu min ghawāmiḍ asrāri-hi wa laṭīf ishārāti-hi min ʿulūm al-mutashābihāt wa mushkilāt al-āyāt wa ʿarrafa-hum maʿānī mā akhfā-hu fī al-qur'ān bi-nafsi-hi ḥattā ʿarifū bi-taʿrīfi-hi iyyā-hum wa kaḥḥala-hum bi-nūr qurbi-hi wa wiṣāli-hi wa iṭṭalaʿa-humʿalā ghaybiyyāt ʿarā'is al-ḥukm wa al-maʿārif wa al-kawāshif wa maʿānī fahm al-fahm wa sirr al-sirr alladhī ẓāhiru-hu fī al-qur'ān ḥukm wa fī bāṭini-hi ishārah wa kashf alladhī istathara-hu al-ḥaqq li-aṣfiyā'i-hi wa akābir awliyā'i-hi wa ghurabā'i aḥibbā'i-hi min al-ṣiddīqīn wa al-muqarrabīn wa satara hādhihi al-asrār wa al-ʿajā'ib ʿalā ghayri-him min ʿulamā' al-ẓāhir wa ahl al-rusūm alladhīna hum fī ḥaẓẓ wāfir min al-nāsikh wa al-mansūkh wa al-fiqh wa al-ʿilm wa maʿrifat al-ḥalāl wa al-ḥarām wa al-ḥudūd wa al-aḥkām*; Abū Mūḥammad Rūzbihān b. Abī al-Naṣr al-Baqlī al-Shīrāzī, *ʿArā'is al-bayān fī ḥaqā'iq al-qur'ān*, Lucknow: Naval Kishōr, n.d., 2–3 (I am reading *wa jaʿala li-khāliṣat ahl ṣafwati-hi* for *wa jaʿala khāliṣat ahl ṣafwati-hi*; it might also be *wa jaʿala li-*

The idea that God's Truth is a *differentiated truth of many layers*—differentiated, that is according to the capacity of the hierarchy of layers of individuals in society to *know* it—is forcefully in evidence in the above passage as a fundamental principle of Sufi hermeneutic (and itself draws upon Qur'ānic statements such as "We raise in degrees whomsoever we will, and above every possessor of knowledge is one who knows,"[53] and "We raise some of them above others, in degrees").[54] The highest and deepest truths are those which Sufis access from the Unseen by direct experience of divine communication, while the lower truths are the truths of the law, of "the abrogator and the abrogated, jurisprudence and science and knowledge of the permitted and the prohibited, of the statutory punishments and the rulings" which are deduced by jurists from the surface of the Divine Text and occupy the bottom rung of the hierarchy of knowing.

There are, in other words, connected but differentiated levels of T/truth—the fact of which implies that there are connected but differentiated epistemologies for the determination of T/truth.[55] These epistemologies have human protagonists who both assert the truth-making authority of their respective epistemologies in society and are also conditioned by the social authority of those very epistemologies. In this way epistemologies are not merely theoretical notions but are also social actors. That these distinct trajectories of truth posed not merely an intellectual but a *social* challenge of truth-making is well expressed in the above passage by Rūmī where this social fact is summed up with the Qur'ānic quotation *Each party is rejoicing in what they have*: that is, each party advocates its own means to Truth, its own hermeneutic and epistemology.

A prominent and permanent thread of the history of Muslims has been the struggle to arrive at a coherent working relationship in society between the respective truth-claims of law and of Sufism—a challenge to negotiate a sort-of *Balance of Truth* (to adopt the title that the brilliant and urbane Ottoman bibliophile, social commentator, and cultural critic, Ḥājjī Khalīfah Kātib Çelebī, gave to the book that he completed shortly before his death in 1657);[56] a

*khāṣṣat ahl ṣafwati-hi*). (Compare the partial translation of Kristin Zahra Sands, *Ṣūfī Commentaries on the Qurʾān in Classical Islam*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2006, at 10–11).

[53] *narfaʿu darajātin man nashāʾu wa fawqa kulli dhī ʿilmin ʿalīm*, Qurʾān 12:76 Yūsuf.

[54] *wa rafaʿnā baʿḍa-hum fawqa baʿḍin darajātin*; Qurʾān 43:32 Zukhruf.

[55] See on this Vincent J. Cornell, "Faqīh versus Faqīr in Marinid Morocco: Epistemological Dimensions of a Polemic," in Frederick de Jong and Bernd Radtke (editors), *Sufism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999, 208–224.

[56] Kātib Chelebi, *The Balance of Truth* (translated by G. L. Lewis), London: George Allen and Unwin, 1957; the Ottoman original was first printed as Kātib Çelebī, *Mīzān-ül-ḥaqq fī iḫtiyār-il-eḥaqq*, Istanbul: Kitābḫāneh-yi Ebü-ż-Żiyā, 1306 *h* [1889].

balance, at different times and places in history, and in different social and discursive spaces in society, often weighted more to one side than to the other. Thus, Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj was judicially executed in Baghdad in 922 on the basis of his (not at all unique) proclamation, "I am the Truth"—but has been remembered and celebrated by Muslims down to this day, not in his legal capacity as a heretic, but in his Sufi capacity as a knower and martyr of Truth.[57] In sum, then, the Sufi lays claim to an *epistemological and hermeneutic authority that is superior to that of the jurists* of whom Muḥyi al-Din Ibn ʿArabī once said: "The jurists [*al-fuqahāʾ*] in every age have been, and still are, in relation to those who have realized Truth [*al-muḥaqqiqūn*] at the station of pharaohs in relation to prophets."[58]

Already, nearly a century before Rūmī and Ibn ʿArabī, and in another milieu, the Baghdādī Ḥanbalī preacher, Abū al-Faraj Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 1201)—who, as a professional matter, *competed* in the marketplace of ideas for the "hearts and minds" of the citizens of the greatest city in the Islamic world—invoked his learned forbear, the master-jurist Ibn ʿAqīl, in excoriation of his rivals; namely, those Sufis who claimed that the higher Real-Truth (*al-ḥaqīqah*) and the Revealed Law (*al-sharīʿah*) were *not* the same: "The Sufis turned the law into a name!"[59] Perhaps nowhere is this paradox expressed more pithily (and in a more revealing tone of familiarity) than in the tart exchange between

[57] Ḥallāj's immortal utterance is a phrase from a line of his poetry: "I am the Truth, and the Truth, for the Truth, is Truth / Clothed in its Essence, so there is no Separation [*anā al-ḥaqqu wa al-ḥaqqu li-al-ḥaqqi ḥaqqu / lābisun dhāta-hu fa-mā thamma farqu*]" (see the Arabic text and compare the translation in Martin Lings, *Sufi Poems: A Medieval Anthology*, Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2004, 28–29). For various other examples of the expression of this idea, including Ibn ʿArabī's poem beginning, "I am not I, and I am not H/he; For whoever I am and whoever H/he is are identical [*lastu anā wa lastu huwa / fa-man anā wa man huwa huwa*," see Franz Rosenthal, "'I am You'—Individual Piety and Society in Islam," in Amin Banani and Speros Vryonis Jr. (editors), *Individualism and Conformity in Classical Islam*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1977, 33–60, at 52 (for the original, see Muḥyi al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyah*, Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Arabiyyah al-Kubrā, 1911, 1:496).

[58] *wa mā zālat al-fuqahāʾ fī kulli zamānin maʿa al-muḥaqqiqīn bi-manzilat al-farāʿinah maʿa al-nabiyyīn*, Muḥyi al-Dīn ʿIbn ʿArabī, *Rūḥ al-qudus fī muḥasabat al-nafs* (edited by ʿAlī b. Aḥmad Sāsī), Tunis: Dār al-ʿArabiyyah li-al-Kitāb, 2004, 181 (compare the translation by Michel Chodkiewicz, *An Ocean Without A Shore: Ibn ʿArabi, The Book and the Law*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993, 21). A leading scholar of Ibn ʿArabī has noted soberly that "the common concern underlying Ibn ʿArabī's many particular criticisms of the categories and methods of *fiqh*, when they are confused with the revealed "Path" of the *Shariʿa*, is the way that the legal preoccupations expressed in those guiding assumptions—which may in fact be necessary and inherent parts of any system of *laws* as such—inevitably tend to obscure the primary spiritual intentions of the original revelation," James W. Morris, "Ibn ʿArabi's 'Esotericism': The Problem of Spiritual Authority," *Studia Islamica* 71 (1990) 37–64, at 52.

[59] *jaʿalat al-ṣūfiyyatu al-sharīʿata isman*; Jamāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Abū al-Faraj Ibn al-Jawzī, *Talbīs Iblīs* (edited by Muḥammad Munīr al-Dimashqī), Cairo: Idārat al-Ṭibāʿah al-Munīriyyah, 1368*h*, 325 (cited also in Walther Braune, "Historical Consciousness in Islam," in

God and the celebrated Sufi, Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī, reported by Ibn ʿArabī in his magisterium, *The Meccan Revelations* (*al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyah*):

> Abū Yazīd said to God-the-Truth, "If people knew about You as I know, they would not worship You!" God-the-Truth-Most-High retorted, "Oh! Abū Yazīd. If they knew about you as I know, they would pelt you with stones!"[60]

(How) is this Islamic?

The third question proceeds from the first two. Two of the most *socially*-pervasive and consequential thought-paradigms in the history of societies of Muslims are the Philosophy of Illumination (*ḥikmat al-ishrāq*) of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d. 1191) and the Unity of Existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) of the "Akbar-ian" school of the most influential Sufi in history, the *Shaykh-i Akbar* (Greatest Shaykh), Muḥyi al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī (born in Andalucia in 1165, died in Syria in 1240). Both are cross-inflections of (Avicennan) philosophy and of Sufism; both are grounded in a hierarchical vision of the cosmos and *thus* in a hierarchical vision of humankind; both blur, in their respective emanationist iterations of the relationship between the Divinity and the material world, the boundary between Divine transcendence and Divine immanence, and thereby flirt incorrigibly with pantheism and relativism. Are these Islamic ideas?[61]

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G. E. von Grunebaum (editor), *Theology and Law in Islam*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1971, 37–51, at 47–48, footnote 6).

[60] *qāla Abū Yazīd li-al-ḥaqq law ʿalima al-nās min-ka mā aʿlamu mā ʿabadū-ka wa qālā la-hu al-ḥaqq taʿālā yā Abā Yazīd law ʿalima al-nās min-ka mā aʿlamu la-rajamū-ka*, Ibn ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyah*, 4:48; compare the translation by S.A.Q. Husaini, *The Pantheistic Monism of Ibn al-ʿArabi*, Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1945, 238. Abū Yazīd is famous for his utterance, "Glory to me! How great is my majesty!" as well as the impossible "I, I am not I, I, because I am I-am-He, I am He-I-am-He-is-He [*anā lā anā anā anā li-an-nī anā huwa anā huwa anā huwa huwa*]," putative al-Salhajī, *al-Nūr min kalimāt Abī Zayd Ṭayfūr*, in ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Badawī (editor), *Shaṭaḥāt al-Ṣufiyyah. al-Ǧuzʾ al-awwal. Abū Yāzīd al-Bisṭāmī*, Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍah al-Miṣriyyah, 1949, 37–148, at 111 (compare the translation by Arthur J. Arberry, *Revelation and Reason in Islam*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1956, 98). Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī has apparently left us a detailed narrative conversation of his experience of uniting with God: see al-Salhajī, *al-Nūr min kalimāt Abī Zayd Ṭayfūr*, 138–141 (translated by Arberry, *Revelation and Reason in Islam*, 98–103).

[61] A sense of the pervasiveness of both of these thought-paradigms in sixteenth/seventeenth century South Asia, as well as of the nature of the counter-currents thereto, is the erudite and insufficiently appreciated study by Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Muslim Revivalist Movements in*

The basic concept of Suhrawardīan Illuminationist philosophy is that all being is the emanation of light from the Divine Light; with the result that there is no real distinction in the essence of all beings, only in their degree of illumination with Divine Light– effectively, then, God is (in) all things to a lesser or greater degree.[62] The fundamental idea of Akbarian philosophy is that all things are the manifestations (*tajallīyāt*) by emanation of the Existence of God—a typical Ibn ʿArabī statement is "Whenever I said, 'Creation,' its Creator said, 'There is nothing there except Me . . . Creation is Real-Truth, and the Essence-Archetype of Creation is its Creator,'."[63] This makes it a very subtle operation to try to extricate God from all existing things, and has also the effect of rendering all things *true* in the degree that they are manifestations of God.[64] The potential pantheism and relativism of these concepts are encapsulated in the notorious passage from Ibn ʿArabī's celebrated *summa*, the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (*Ringstones of Wisdom*) in which the "Greatest Shaykh" addresses the refusal of the people of the Prophet Nūḥ (Noah) to abandon their idols, as mentioned in Qur'ān 71:23 Nūḥ:[65]

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*Northern India in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Agra: Agra University Press, 1965. For the importance of Akbarian Sufism in the Ottoman context, see the brilliant monograph by Derin Terzioğlu, "Sufi and Dissident in the Ottoman Empire: Niyāzī-yi Miṣrī (1618–1694)," PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 1999. There is still, to my knowledge, no focused study of the influence of Suhrawardī among the Ottomans, but a sense of it may be obtained from the number of copies of his works preserved in Ottoman libraries: see H. Ritter, "Die vier Suhrawardī. Ihre Werke in Stambuler Handschriften," *Der Islam* 24 (1937) 270–286; as well from the translation, commentarization and circulation of his work in Ottoman Turkish: see Bilal Kuşpınar, *Ismāʿīl Ankarāvī on the Illuminative Philosophy: His* Īżāḥu'l-Ḥikem*: Its Edition and Analysis in Comparison with Dawwānī's* Shawākil al-Ḥūr, *together with the Translation of Suhrawardī's* Hayākil al-Nūr, Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1996.

[62] This is summed up by Fazlur Rahman: "Thus does al-Suhrawardī, by taking the principles of the earlier Muslim philosophers, by refuting their cardinal distinctions between essence and existence and between possibility and necessity, and further by overthrowing their theory of knowledge by a simple substitution of Light, erect a pantheism of self-luminous, self-reflecting, self-present existence, varying in degree of intensity," Fazlur Rahman, *Selected Letters of Shaikh Aḥmad Sirhindī*, Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 1968, 18.

[63] *wa kullu-mā qultu khalq qāla khāliqu-hu mā thamma illā anā . . . al-khalq ḥaqqun wa ʿayn al-khalq khāliqu-hu*, cited in S. H. Nadeem, *A Critical Appreciation of Arabic Mystical Poetry*, Lahore: Islamic Book Service, 1979, 158.

[64] Toshihiko Izutsu has put it most directly of Ibn ʿArabī: " 'Self-manifestation' (*tajallī*) . . . is the very basis of his world view . . . His entire philosophy is, in short, a theory of *tajallī*," Toshihiko Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983, 152.

[65] "They said, 'Do not abandon your gods; do not abandon Wadd, nor Suwāʿ nor Yaghūth and Yaʿūq and Nasrā," *qālū lā tadharunna ālihata-kum wa lā tadharunna Waddan wa lā Suwāʿan wa lā Yaghūtha wa Yaʿūqa wa Nasrā*.

> If they had rejected those (gods/idols), they would have been ignorant of God-the-Truth [*al-ḥaqq*] in the measure that they rejected them, for in every object of worship there is an aspect of God-the-Truth, which one who knows Him knows, and one who does not know Him does not know. In regard to the Muḥammadans, there came (the verse of the Qur'ān), "Your Lord *determined* that you will not worship other than He,"[66] meaning: "He *established*." The one who possesses knowledge knows who is worshipped and which form He manifests so as to be worshipped . . . So nothing other than God [*Allāh*] is worshipped in every object of worship.[67]

Ibn ʿArabī is here taking the Qur'ānic verse "Your Lord has determined that you will not worship other than He" to mean *not* that God has *commanded* that nothing be worshipped other than Him (the intuitive reading and common Muslim creed), but rather that God has *established as an accomplished fact* that *any* act of worship *is necessarily* directed to Him alone, and thus "in every aspect of worship" *including idolatry* (the very practice to the eradication of which the Prophet Muḥammad had devoted himself) "there is an aspect of God."

By this profoundly counter-intuitive and destabilizing reading of the Text of Revelation (summed up in the well-known Persian slogan *hamah ūst*, "All is He"), Ibn ʿArabī is able to take an indulgent view of the Qur'ānic presentation of the Prophet Hārūn/Aaron's bootless attempt to prevent the Banū Isrā'īl/Children of Israel from worshipping the Golden Calf (for which his elder brother, Mūsā/Moses, had soundly berated him):

> The incapacity of Hārūn to restrain the followers of the Calf . . . was a wisdom from God made manifest in existence: that He be worshipped in every form.[68]

[66] Qur'ān 17:23 al-Kahf.

[67] *fa-inna-hum idhā tarakū-hum jahalū min al-ḥaqq ʿalā qadr mā tarakū min hāʾulāʾi fa-inna li-al-ḥaqq fī kull maʿbūd wajhan yaʿrifu-hu man ʿarifa-hu wa yajhalu-hu man jahala-hu. fī al-Muḥammadiyyīn* ***wa qaḍā rabbu-ka an lā taʿbudū illā iyyā-hu*** *ay ḥakama fa-al-ʿālim yaʿlam man ʿubida wa fī ayy ṣūrah ẓahara ḥattā ʿubida . . . fa-mā ʿubida illā Allāh fī kull maʿbūd*; Muḥyi al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (edited with commentary by Abū al-ʿAlāʾ ʿAfīfī), Cairo: ʿĪsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1946, 72 (the text in bold is Qur'ān 17:23 al-Kahf). Compare the translation of this passage by R.W.J. Austin in *Ibn Alʿ Arabi: The Bezels of Wisdom* (translation and introduction by R.W.J. Austin), Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1980, 78; and the translation by Caner K. Dagli in Ibn al-ʿArabī, *The Ringstones of Wisdom (*Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*)* (translation, introduction and glosses by Caner K. Dagli), Chicago: Kazi Publications, 2004, 45–46.

[68] *fa-kāna ʿadam quwwat irdāʿ Hārūn bi-al-fiʿl an yunaffidha fī aṣḥāb al-ʿijl . . . ḥikmatan min*

Another notorious instance of Ibn ʿArabī's counter-intuitive reading is his treatment of Heaven and Hell: "Though Ibn ʿArabī speaks of Hell and Heaven with utmost interest and in accordance with the sensual explication of traditional eschatology, he finds a number of occasions to introduce a spiritual explanation for them. The basis for this is that *ʿadhāb* (punishment or torment) is derived, according to his unconventional etymology, from *ʿudhūbah* (sweetness), and this is taken to imply that the torment of the disobedient in the hereafter will be acceptable and void of physical pain."[69]

The relativism implicit in Ibn ʿArabī's cosmology was recognized not only by the numerous Muslim scholars who condemned him down the centuries—barbedly renaming him *al-Shaykh al-Akfar* (The Most Unbelieving Shaykh), while lamenting and actively combating his social influence[70]—but also by those who accepted the validity of his Sufi experience, such as the seventeenth-century Indian Sufi reformer and self-styled "Renovator of the Second Millenium" (Mujaddid-i Alf-i S̲ānī) Aḥmad Sirhindī (1564–1624). Sirhindī noted matter-of-factly of Ibn ʿArabī that

> He, thus, avers the Unity of Being and deems the existence of the possibles to be identical with the Existence of the Necessary One, the Exalted, the Sanctified; and that evil and deficiency are relative [*nisbī*], and denies the existence of pure evil and absolute deficiency. From this position, he denies that anything is evil in essence, to the point that he considers Unbelief [*kufr*] and going astray to be evil only relative to faith and to being-rightly-guided—and not in their respective essences; for he considers them the same in essence as goodness and right-guidedness.[71]

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*Allāh ẓāhiratan fī al-wujūd li-yuʿbada fī kulli ṣūrah*; Ibn ʿArabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, 194. Compare the translation of Austin: Ibn Alʿ Arabi, *The Bezels of Wisdom*, 246; and the translation of Dagli: Ibn al-ʿArabī, *The Ringstones of Wisdom*, 248.

[69] Adīb Nāyif Diyāb, "Ibn ʿArabī on Human Freedom, Destiny and the Problem of Evil," *al-Shajarah* 5 (2000) 25–43, at 40–41.

[70] On this, see Knysh, *Ibn ʿArabi in the Later Islamic Tradition*.

[71] *va lā jaram ḥukm bi-vaḥdat-i vujūd kardah ast va vujūd-i mumkināt rā ʿayn-i vujūd-i vājib guftah taʿālā wa taqaddasa va sharr o naqṣ rā nisbī / nisbatī guftah nafy-i sharārat-i muṭlaq va naqṣ-i maḥż kardah ast azīnjāst kih hīch chīz rā qubḥ / qabīḥ-bi-z̲-zāt namīdānad ḥattā kih kufr o żalālat rā nisbat bi-īmān va hidāyat bad mīdānad nah nisbat bi-z̲avāt-i khwud kih ān rā ʿayn-i khayr o ṣalāḥ mī-angārad*, Aḥmad Sirhindī, *Maktūbāt-i Ḥażrat Imām-i Rabbānī Mujaddid-i Alf-i S̲ānī*, Amritsar: Maṭbaʿah-i Mujaddidī, 1329 *h* [1911], 1.4:32–33 [letter no. 234], the variants are in Rahman, *Selected Letters of Sh̲aik̲h Aḥmad Sirhindī*, 14 (of the Persian text), (compare the translation by Abdul Haq Ansari, "Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindī's Criticism of the Doctrine of *Wahdat al-Wujūd*," in Mohammad Rafique (editor), *Development of Islamic Religion and Philosophy in India*, New Delhi: Centre for Studies in Civilizations, 2009, 171–191, at 176–177. On the relativity of good

Sirhindī, fearing precisely that Ibn ʿArabī's cosmology "might lead common, uninitiated people to heresy and neglect of the *sharīʿah*,"[72] sought to domesticate unbounded Sufi experience of the Unseen within the parameters of legal regulation of the Seen (producing a Sufism that subordinates its epistemological claims to Real-Truth to the final arbiting authority of the epistemology and truths of legal discourse). Sirhindī inspired an important global Sufi reform movement with that goal (headquartered in the Sufi order that has ever since borne his *imprimatur*, the Mujaddidiyyah-Naqshbandiyyah) and that has enjoyed considerable historical success in promulgating its legally-subordinate concept of Sufism as the dominant notion of Sufism in modern Islam.[73]

The common goal of the respective projects of *ḥikmat al-ishrāq* and *waḥdat al-wujūd* has been experiential knowledge of the Higher Truth of Existence, as distinct from the lower truths of life. Fazlur Rahman, probably the finest modern student of Islamic intellectual history (as well as the Muslim modernist-reformist thinker to confront most squarely the inconveniences presented by that history) recognized the foundational and infrastructural influence of the received discourses of Islamic philosophy on the Suhrawardīan and Akbarīan trajectory of ideas—and coined for this trajectory the forensic phrase, "philosophic religion." He also recognized the central and seminal place of Suhrawardian and Akbarian "philosophic religion" in the subsequent history of societies of Muslims, and noted (unhappily):

> This trend of thought profoundly influenced the whole subsequent development of metaphysical thought in Islam, both Ṣūfic and philosophical: its importance and depth *cannot be overestimated*.[74]

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and evil in Ibn ʿArabī, see the magisterial work of A. E. Affifi, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muḥyid-Dīn Ibnul ʿArabī*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939, at 156–170.

[72] Yohanan Friedmann, *Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī: An Outline of His Thought and a Study of His Image in the Eyes of Posterity*, Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press, 1971, 67.

[73] Legally-subordinate Sufism (or what Marshall Hodgson famously called "Sharîʿa-minded Sufism," Hodgson, *Venture of Islam,* 2:219) has been an important presence in societies of Muslims from quite early on, but has become the dominant form of Sufism only over the course of the last three centuries. Two important eleventh-century textual representatives are the Arabic *Risālah* of ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Qushayrī (986–1072)—see the early printed edition with the supercommentary of the incumbent Shaykh of al-Azhar, Muṣṭafā al-ʿArūsī (1799–1876), on the commentary on the *Risālah* of the fifteenth-/sixteenth-century jurist, Zakariyā al-Anṣārī (d. 1520), *al-Afkār al-Qudsiyyah fī bayān maʿānī Sharḥ al-Risālah al-Qushayriyah li-Zakariyā al-Anṣārī*, Cairo: Dār al-Ṭibāʿah al-ʿĀmirah, 1873; and the Persian *Kashf-ul-Maḥjūb* of the patron saint of Lahore, ʿAlī Hujvīrī (d. *ca.* 1072)—an early Lahore printing is ʿAlī Hujvīrī, *Kashf-ul-Maḥjūb*, Lahore: Gulzār-i Hind, 1923.

[74] On "philosophic religion" see Rahman, *Islam*, 123–126; the quotation (italics mine) is in

Rahman's fundamental, and insufficiently recognized, historical point is that the Sufi and philosophical claim to a Real-Truth (*ḥaqīqah*) that lay above and beyond the truth of the Revealed law (*sharīʿa*) was not a bit of intellectual or esotericist social *marginalia*, but was effectively the manifesto of a wide-ranging social and cultural phenomenon that Rahman has called "a religion not only within religion but above religion."[75] We might profitably characterize this "religion not only within religion but above religion" as the *Sufi-philosophical (or philosophical-Sufi) amalgam*.[76]

Mainstream scholarship in the twenty-first century seems now, at long last, to have begun to recognize in regard to the Sufi-philosophical amalgam that its ideas, though "fantastically complex," were nonetheless "remarkably popular" and "percolated . . . widely through the population"[77]—yet, in my own experience of the community of scholars (and even more so in the community of educated modern Muslim laypersons), there is still much resistance to that recognition. And when it comes to thinking about the *consequences* of this "percolation" for the task of conceptualizing "Islam" as a human and historical phenomenon, far from *overestimating* the historical presence, persistence, and influence of "Sufi-philosophical" Islam, the dominant tendency is still to very much *underestimate* it.[78]

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specific reference to the Illuminationist philosophy of Suhrawardī, which Rahman regarded as an exemplum of 'philosophic religion'.

[75] Rahman, *Islam*, 245; the italics are mine.

[76] The fundamental component elements of what I am calling 'the Sufi-philosophical amalgam' are duly identified by John Walbridge when he observes that "postclassical—or perhaps we should say 'mature'—Islamic philosophy could trace its origins to three roots: the Aristotelianism of Ibn Sīnā, the Neoplatonism of Suhrawardī, and the monism of Ibn ʿArabī," Walbridge, *God and Logic in Islam*, 95. Forty years earlier, Seyyed Hossein Nasr noted of these "three Muslim sages" that "each speaks for a perspective which has been lived, and a world view which has been contemplated by generations of sages and seers over the centuries . . . and they demonstrate in their totality a very significant part of Islamic intellectuality, revealing horizons which have determined the intellectual life of many of the great sages of Islam," Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages: Avicenna, Suhrawardī, Ibn ʿArabī,* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964, 7.

[77] Jonathan Berkey, "Islam," in Robert Irwin (editor), *The New Cambridge History of Islam, Volume 4: Islamic Cultures and Societies to the End of the Eighteenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 19–59, at 57 (Berkey is speaking here about Ibn ʿArabī; there is still less awareness of the "percolation" of al-Suhrawardī).

[78] I agree, for example, with the historiographical diagnosis made by Francis Robinson for the study of Islam in South Asia: "a distorted picture of eighteenth-century Indian Islam has grown up, which has tended to obscure the dominance of rationalist scholarship after the fashion of Farangi Mahal and mysticism in the tradition of Ibn al-ʿArabi . . . this picture . . . sacrifices eighteenth-century realities to twentieth-century concerns," Robinson, "Perso-Islamic culture in India from the seventeenth to the early twentieth century," 122. The situation is little different for Ottoman studies.

The fourth question: when the most widely-copied, widely-circulated, widely-read, widely-memorized, widely-recited, widely-invoked, and widely-proverbialized book of poetry in Islamic history—a book that came to be regarded as configuring and exemplifying ideals of self-conception and modes and mechanisms of self-expression in the largest part of the Islamic world for half-a-millennium—takes as its definitive themes the ambiguous exploration of wine-drinking and (often homo-)erotic love, as well as a disparaging attitude to observant ritual piety, is that canonical work and the ethos it epitomizes *Islamic*?

I refer, of course, to the *Dīvān* (Complete Poems) of Shams-ud-Dīn Muḥammad Ḥāfiẓ of Shīrāz (1320–*ca.*1390). The *Dīvān* of Ḥāfiẓ was, in the period between the fifteenth and the late-nineteenth centuries, a pervasive poetical, conceptual and lexical presence in the discourse of educated Muslims in the vast geographical region extending from the Balkans through Anatolia, Iran and Central Asia down and across Afghanistan and North India to the Bay of Bengal that was home to the absolute demographic majority of Muslims on the planet (the historical constitution of which has already been noted, above, with regard to the teaching in *madrasah*s of the basic philosophical-theological handbook, the *Hidāyat al-ḥikmah*). To this temporal-geographical entity I will henceforth refer as the *Balkans-to-Bengal complex*. The *Dīvān* of Ḥāfiẓ consists of about five hundred *ghazal*s in Persian: the *ghazal* being a poem written in rhyming couplets in the voice of a lover on the theme of loving an impossibly beautiful and habitually unattainable beloved.

The performative *mise-en-scène* for the *ghazal* is a drinking-assembly of the poet's social peers where the shared individual experience of loving is configured in and expressed by the consumption of *wine* as the definitive medium for the intoxication (that is, deepening and heightening and expanding) of the physical and imaginal senses. The *ghazal* became the pre-eminent literary form of self-construction and self-articulation—the *literary* being a discourse that is socially valorized as being rhetorically worked, experientially charged, and imaginally invested for the purpose of creating, retaining and communicating social and existential meaning. The *ghazal* played this function most especially in societies of Muslims speaking Persian, (different types of) Turkish, and Urdu in the world of the Balkans-to-Bengal complex; Ḥāfiẓ being recognized as the most celebrated exemplar of this highly inter-allusive, inter-referential, and inter-textual discourse. It is most telling that the two most important commentaries on Ḥāfiz were composed in the middle

of the historical age of the Balkans-to-Bengal complex by two contemporaries from the distant geographical poles of the region: Aḥmed Sūdī of Sarajevo (d. 1598),[79] and Abū-l-Ḥasan Khātamī of Lahore (*fl.* 1617).[80]

The centrality of the *Dīvān* of Ḥāfiẓ to the constitution of a paradigm of identity for Muslims in the world of the Balkans-to-Bengal complex (which, as I shall argue towards the end of this chapter, is a historically dominant paradigm of the self-construction and self-articulation of Muslims)—that is, the centrality of the *Divān* of Ḥāfiẓ to the historical *being* of Muslims—runs no risk of overstatement, yet its significance is rarely stated in these terms. In a recent attempt to set the record straight, Leonard Lewisohn rightly refers to the "the Ḥāfiẓocentrism of Persianate civilization" by which he means:

> all the Persianate civilizations of Islamdom (Ottoman Turkey, Safavid and Qajar Persia, Timurid Central Asia and Mughal India . . .) have for the past five centuries been "Ḥāfiẓocentric" as well. Up to the 1950s, Muslim children in Iran and Afghanistan and India were taught first to memorize the Qur'ān, and secondly to commit the poetry of Ḥāfiẓ to heart, thus absorbing in their grammar-school curriculum the sacred and revealed book of Islam alongside the verses of the inspired "Tongue of the Invisible." From Istanbul to Lahore, from the Persian Gulf to thithermost Transoxania, for some five centuries *the* "Book" of Islam—the Qur'ān—has in this fashion shared pride of place beside Ḥāfiẓ's *Dīvān*.[81]

Ḥāfiẓian discourse regards itself squarely as falling under the phenomenal dome of the Muḥammadan Revelation. Ḥāfiẓ himself was an accomplished student of the commentary on the Qur'ān most widely taught in *madrasahs* throughout the Balkans-to-Bengal complex, the *Kashshāf* of the Khwaraz-

[79] Sūdī Bosnevī, *Şerh-i Dīvān-i Ḥāfiẓ*, in the margins of Meḥmed Vehbī Qonevī, *Şerh-i Dīvān-i Ḥāfiẓ*, Istanbul: Maṭba'ah-'i 'Āmireh, 1872; see also Muḥammad Sūdī Bōsnevī, *Sharḥ-i Sūdī bar Dīvān-i Ḥafiẓ* (translated into Persian by 'Iṣmat Sattarzādeh), Tehran: Nigāh, 1387 *sh.*

[80] Abū-l-Ḥasan Khātamī Lahōrī, *Sharḥ-i 'irfāni-yi ghazal-hā-yi Ḥāfiẓ* (edited by Bahā-ud-Dīn Khurramshāhī, Kūrūsh Manṣūrī, and Ḥusayn Mu'ṭī'ī Amīn), Tehran: Nashr-i Qaṭrah, 1374 *sh [1995].*

[81] Leonard Lewisohn, "Socio-historical and Literary Contexts; Ḥāfiẓ in Shīrāz," in Leonard Lewisohn (editor), *Hafiz and the Religion of Love in Classical Persian Poetry*, London: I. B. Tauris, 2010, 3–30, at 16. Two leading scholars of Ottoman literature speak more specifically of the "Hafezan" character of Ottoman poetry "in that it looked to Persian models (among which the poetry of the fourteenth-century master poet Hafez stood out)," Walter Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı, *The Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2005, 195. Some sense of the influence of Ḥāfiẓ in the Indian subcontinent may be obtained from Sayyidah Ch̲ānd Bībī, *Ḥāfiẓ-shināsī dar shibh-i-qārrah (bar rasī-yi sharḥ-hā-yi fārsī-yi Dīvān-i Ḥāfiẓ dar shibh-i qārrah)*, Islamabad: Markaz-i Taḥqīqāt-i Fārsī-yi Īrān va Pākistān, 2007.

mīan Muʿtazilī-rationalist Jār Allāh al-Zamakhsharī (d. 1144), and declared of himself:

> No Qur'ān-scholar beneath the prayer-niche-dome of the heavens can ever know
> The blessing I have had from the wealth of the Qur'ān.[82]

The word I am translating here as "Qur'ān-scholar" is, of course, *ḥāfiẓ*: hence the *double-entendre*, "No Ḥāfiẓ beneath the prayer-niche-dome of the heavens can ever know . . ." Ḥāfiẓ is here presenting himself alongside all the other Ḥāfiẓes/*ḥāfiẓ*es: that is, alongside every other Muslim who has ever sought meaningfully to engage with "the wealth of the Qur'ān." Indeed, Ḥāfiẓ's poetry was itself conceived of by the society of his readers in none other than *revelatory* terms: it was the Olympian personage of Nūr-ud-Dīn Jāmī of Herat (d. 1492), philosopher, poet, and pre-eminent translator of the cosmology of Ibn ʿArabī into Persian verse, who bestowed upon Ḥāfiẓ the appellation by which he would hence be known: *Lisān-ul-Ghayb*, the "Tongue of the Unseen."[83] As a prefatory inscription to a royally-commissioned scholarly edition of the *Dīvān* of Ḥāfiẓ prepared in Herat in 1501 proclaims:

> This treasure-house of meanings devoid of imperfection
> Is the impress from that Book of *No-Doubt*;
> Famous in the world as the emanation of the *Holy Spirit*;
> Spoken upon the tongues as the "Tongue of the Unseen."[84]

The "Book of *No-Doubt*" (*ṣaḥīfah-i lā-rayb*) to which the *Dīvān* of Ḥāfiẓ is here likened is, of course, the Qur'ān itself (in the words of its famous self-affirmation: *kitāb lā rayba fī-hi*;[85] "a book wherein is no doubt"). The Qur'ānic phrase I have translated here as *Holy Spirit* (*rūḥ al-qudus*, more accurately

[82] *hīch ḥāfiẓ na-kunad dar kham-i miḥrāb-i falak / īn tanaʿum kih man az dawlat-i qur'ān kardam*; Khwājah Shams-ud-Dīn Muḥammad Ḥāfiẓ, *Dīvān-e Ḥāfiẓ* (edited by Parvīz Nātil Khānlārī), Tehran: Intishārāt-i Khwārazmī, 1362 *sh* [1983] (2nd edition), *ghazal* 312. (Compare the translation of Lewisohn, "Socio-historical and Literary Contexts; Ḥāfiẓ in Shīrāz," 17).

[83] On Jāmī, see now Hamid Algar, *Jami*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

[84] *īn ganj-i maʿānī kih tuhī az ʿayb ast / naqsh-īst kih az ṣaḥīfah-i lā rayb ast // mashhūr-i jahān ba-fayż-i rūḥ-ul-qudus ast / maẓkūr-i zabānhā bih lisān-ul-ghayb ast*; see Hans Robert Roemer, *Staatsschreiben der Timuridenzeit: Das Šarafnāmä des ʿAbdallāh Marwārīd in Kritischer Auswertung*, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1952, 97a. Compare the translation by Hossein Ziai, "Ḥāfeẓ, *Lisān al-Ghayb* of Persian Poetic Wisdom," in Alma Giese and J. Christoph Bürgel (editors), *Gott ist schön und Er liebt die Schönheit / God is beautiful and He loves beauty: Festschrift für Annemarie Schimmel zum 7. April 1992 dargebracht von Schülern, Freunden und Kollegen / Festchrift in honour of Annemarie Schimmel presented by students, friends and colleagues on April 7, 1992*, Bern: Peter Lang, 1992, 449–469, at 453.

[85] Qur'ān 2:2 al-Baqarah.

rendered as "Spirit of the Blessed," or "Spirit of the Pure") is identified by the Qur'ān as the agent of Divine Revelation to Muḥammad[86] (and thus generally construed as the Angel Jibrīl/Gabriel). Thus, the *Dīvān* of Ḥāfiẓ is here conceived of as a *simulacrum* to the Book of God sent down upon Muḥammad. The social prevalence of this notion of Ḥāfiẓ is evident not only in the fact that another famous sixteenth-century introduction to his *Dīvān* invokes the Qur'ān's famous description of the Divine Revelation to Muḥammad to say that Ḥāfiẓ "cast, upon the horizons and within the souls, the echo of the essence of *He does not speak of his own desire; truly, it is none other than an Inspiration inspired*,"[87] but also in the utter ubiquity, in the historical societies of Balkans-to-Bengal down to the twentieth century, of the everyday oracular practice of using copies of the *Dīvān* of Ḥāfiẓ for divination (*fāl*) —that is, for what one might call "quotidian prophecy," an operation initiated by the recitation by the augury-seeker of either or both of the *Fātiḥah* (opening chapter of the Qur'ān) and the *durūd sharīf* (invocation of Divine blessings upon the Prophet), accompanied by the entreaty:

> O! Ḥafiẓ of Shīrāz:
> You, the privy-companion of every secret!
> I seek but one secret:
> You are the unveiler of all secrets![88]

An engaging Ottoman work, the *Rāznāmeh* (*Book of Secrets*) of Kefeli Hüsayn (d. 1601), which is a collection of anecdotes about the real-life contemporaries of its author in which almost every story ends in the protagonists turning (often in a crisis) to a copy of the *Divān* of Ḥāfiz to obtain a divinatory prophecy, shows clearly not only that to know Ḥāfiẓ was a *sine qua non* for an Ottoman Muslim gentleman to function in society, but also indicates the widespread circulation of copies of the work (in these real-life sixteenth-century

[86] See Qur'ān 16:102 al-Naḥl: "Say! *rūḥ al-qudus* has sent it down from your Sustainer with the Truth [*qul nazzala-hu rūḥ al-qudusi min rabbi-ka bi-al-ḥaqqi*]."

[87] *va ṣadā-yi faḥvā-yi* ***wa mā yanṭiq ʿan al-hawā in huwa illā waḥyun yūḥā*** *dar āfāq va anfus andākht*; cited in Ziai, "Ḥāfez, *Lisān al-Ghayb*," 453, footnote 11 (compare Ziai's translation); the phrase in italics in the translation (and in bold in the transliteration) is Qur'ān 53:3–4 al-Najm. The Persian phrase "on the horizons and within the souls" is a gesture to Qur'ān 41:53 Fuṣṣilat: "We shall show them our Signs on the horizons and in themselves [*sa-nurī-him āyāti-nā fī al-āfāqi wa fī anfusi-him*]."

[88] *yā Ḥāfiẓ-i Shīrāzī / tū maḥram-i har rāzī / man ṭālib-i yak fālam/ tū kāshif-i har rāzī*. I have the text of this invocation by oral tradition; for another version where the second line reads *bar man naẓar andāzī* ("Look to me!"), see Tahsīn Yazıcı, "Hâfız-ı Şîrâzî," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Istanbul: İSAM, 1988–2013, 15:103–106, at 104. The historical continuity of the practice is nicely illustrated in the fact that the numerous early printed editions of Ḥāfiẓ's *Dīvān* were invariably issued with divination tables in the end papers.

narratives, a copy of the *Dīvān* seems always to be ready-to-hand on a nearby table or wall-niche or in someone's coat-pocket), as well as the special powers invested in the book by its readers, reciters and rehearsers.[89] Ḥāfiẓ's poetry is, indeed, as Daryush Shayegan so eloquently put it:

> The intimate interlocutor of every heart in distress, of every soul that is seized by mystical exaltation . . . every listener seems to find in it an answer to his question, every reader thinks he is discovering an allusion to his desire, every man finds in him a sympathetic interlocutor capable of understanding his secret . . . hence this connivance of the poet with all his readers.[90]

Now, the definitive conceptual, experiential and expressive register of the Ḥāfiẓian *ghazal*—which Shayegan has called "the *humanitas* of Islam"[91]—is *ambiguity* ("ability to be understood in more than one way")[92] and *ambivalence* ("the co-existence in one person or one work of contradictory emotions or attitudes towards the same object or situation").[93] Love in the *ghazal* is at once carnal love, as well as chaste Platonic love, and love for/of the Divine; the beloved is at once the tantalizing fleshly object of physical desire, as well a beautiful youth who manifests and thus bears witness (*shāhid*) by virtue of his/her chaste beauty to the Beauty of the Divine, or is simply God Himself; the wine of the *ghazal* is at once the red liquid imbibed in metal cups by boon-companions in their social gatherings (*majlis*, *maḥfil*) where the *ghazal* is recited (both in literary conceit and in actual social practice), and/or an image that conveys the experience of intoxication with the Divine. The socially-pervasive language of the *ghazal*, a language in which people thought about and fashioned their experience of the self and in which they spoke to each other about the individual and collective self, is thus a language that expresses, not merely a theoretical tension between legal and non-legal norms—but the very ethos of a lived reality comprising a plurality of evidently contradictory meanings in life.

[89] Kefeli Ḥüsayn, *Rāznāme* (edited by İ. Hakkı Aksoyak), Cambridge: The Department of Near Eastern Studies and Civilizations, Harvard University, 2004. On this work, see J. Schmidt, "Hāfiz and Other Persian Authors in Ottoman Bibliomancy; the Extraordinary Case of Kefevī Hüsayn Efendi's *Rāznāme* (Late Sixteenth Century)," *Persica* 21 (2006–2007) 63–74; and Ahmed and Filipovic, *Neither Paradise, nor Hellfire*.

[90] Daryush Shayegan, "The Visionary Topography of Hafiz," *Temenos* 6 (1985) 207–233, at 207, and 209.

[91] Shayegan, "The Visionary Topography of Hafiz," 208.

[92] *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (edited by Lesley Brown), Oxford: Clarendon, 1993, 64.

[93] *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 64.

Ḥāfiẓian discourse—and the prodigious historical community that engaged with it—interrogates, in and from the communal social space of the *ghazal*, the worldviews and values of the jurist (*faqīh*) and the preacher (*vāʿiẓ*) and the ascetic Sufi (*zāhid*), and asserts the norms and values of the *ghazal*.

The following is a smattering of famously representative couplets that convey those norms and values:

> Ḥāfiẓ; drink wine, live in non-conforming-libertinage [*rindī*], be happy, but do not
> Like others, make the Qur'ān a snare of deception.[94]

> If the jurist admonishes you against love-play,
> Give him a bowl of wine; tell him to loosen his mind![95]

> Ascetic! Since from your prayers nothing is forthcoming:
> I shall with nightly drunkenness and secret lover's talk![96]

> Since the wine-bearer was a moon-faced beloved, and a keeper-of-secrets,
> Ḥāfiẓ drank from the wine-cup, and so did the *shaykh* and the jurist.[97]

[94] *Ḥāfiẓā may khwur u rindī kun u khwush bāsh valī / dām-i tazvīr makun chun digarān Qur'ān rā*; Ḥāfiẓ, *Dīvān-e Ḥāfiẓ*, *ghazal* 9. The word I am inadequately translating as "non-conforming-libertinage" is, of course, *rindī*, a concept deeply meaningful to all readers of Ḥāfiẓ and Hāfiẓian literature, but that requires a monograph to itself. Perhaps the best rendering so far is that of Daryush Shayegan: "This term . . . evokes a lively lucidity, a *savoir faire*, an authentic detachment from the things of this world, suggesting the deliverance of the man who, shaking off his tawdry finery, lays himself open without shame, and naked to the mirror of the worlds . . . Equally in this concept we find a sense of immoderacy, a behaviour out of the ordinary, shocking, scandalous, able to disorient the most composed spirits, a non-conformity which derives not so much from ostentation as from the explosive exuberance of a vision so rich, so full, that it cannot manifest itself without doing violence to everyday banality and without breaking the limits defined by the normality of things. This term expresses, further, a predilection for the uncertain, for language that is veiled and masked, for hints and insinuations, which in the authentic *rend* are expressed in inspired paradoxes . . . Finally, there is in this concept a boundless love of the divine . . . The word *rend* sums up a whole anthropology; I would say a whole anthroposophy," Shayegan, "The Visionary Topography of Hafiz," 224–225. See also Naṣr-Allāh Pūrjāvādī, "Rindī-yi Ḥāfiẓ," in Naṣr-Allāh Pūrjāvādī, *Bū-yi jān: maqālah-hā'ī dar bārah-'i shiʿr-i ʿirfānī-yi fārsī*, Tehran: Markaz-i Nashr-i Dānishgāh, 1372 *sh* [1993], 214–288.

[95] *wa-gar faqīh naṣīḥat kunad kih ʿishq mabāz / piyālah'ī bidahash gū dimāgh rā tar kun*; Ḥāfiẓ, *Dīvān-i Ḥāfiẓ*, *ghazal* 389.

[96] *zāhid chu az namāz-i tu kārī namīravad / ham mastī-yi shabānah u rāz u niyāz-i man; Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān-i Ḥāfiẓ, ghazal* 392.

[97] *sāqī chu yār-i mahrukh u az ahl-i rāz būd / Ḥāfiẓ bikhwurd bādah u shaykh u faqīh ham*; Ḥāfiẓ, *Dīvān-i Ḥāfiẓ*, *ghazal* 302.

Around the Sacred House of the wine-vat, Ḥāfiẓ—
If he does not die—head-over-heels will go![98]

The umbrella-term given to the paradigmatic ethos and aesthetic associated with Ḥāfiẓian discourse, as well as with the composite discourse of other diverse pillars of the Balkans-to-Bengal Persian canon, such as Niẓāmī, Saʿdī, ʿAṭṭār, Rūmī, and Jāmī (onto each of whom this ethical and aesthetical paradigm configures quite differently) is the "*madhhab* of Love" (*madhhab-i ʿishq*). The word *madhhab* means, literally, "way of going," Expressed in this nomenclature is precisely that love is *a way of going about being Muslim*—a mode of being with God, of identifying, experiencing and living with the values and meaning of Divine Truth. Earthly love—the love for human beauty—is metaphorical love (*ʿishq-i majāzī*), and is the experiential means by which to come to know Real-True Love, or love for/in Real-Truth.[99] In the famous lines of Jāmī:

Try even a hundred different things in this world –
It is love alone that will free you from your Self.
Do not turn from love of a fair-face, even if it be metaphorical [*majāzī*],
Though it be not Real [*ḥaqīqī*], it is a preparatory.
For, if you do not first study "A" and "B" on a slate,
How, then, will you take lessons in the Qur'ān?
It is said that a disciple went to a Sufi master
That he might guide him upon his journey:
The master said, "If you have not yet set foot in the realm of love;
Go! First, become a lover—and only after that come back to us!
For, without having emptied the wine-cup of the Form [*ṣūrat*],
You will not attain to taste the draught of Meaning [*maʿnī*].
Do not, though, tarry overlong with the Figure [*ṣurat*],
But bring yourself swift across this bridge!"[100]

[98] *gird-i bayt-ul-ḥarām-i khum Ḥāfiẓ / gar namīrad bih sar bipūyad bāz*, Ḥāfiẓ, *Dīvān-e Ḥāfiẓ*, *ghazal* 256.

[99] A tidy summary is Husayn Ilahi-Ghomshei, "The Principles of the Religion of Love in Classical Persian Poetry," in Leonard Lewisohn (editor), *Hafiz and the Religion of Love in Classical Persian Poetry*, London: I. B. Tauris, 2010, 77–106.

[100] *bi-gītī gar chih ṣad kār āzmā'ī / hamīn ʿishqat dahad az khwud rahā'ī// matāb az ʿishq-i rū khwud majāzī-st / kih ān nahy-i ḥaqīqī kārsāzī-st // bi-lawḥ avval alif bī tā nakhwānī / zi Qur'ān dars khwāndan kī tavānī // shanīdam shud murīdī pay-yi pīrī / kih bāshad dar sulūk-ash dastgīrī // biguft ar pā nashud dar ʿishqat az jāy / buraw ʿāshiq shaw ān-kih pīsh-i mā āy // kih bī jām-i may-i ṣūrat kashīdan / nayārī jurʿah-'i maʿnā chashīdan // valī bāyad kih dar ṣūrat namānī / va-z-īn pul zūd khwud rā biguẕaranī*, Nūr-ud-Dīn Muḥammad Jāmī, *Maṣnavī-yi Haft Awrang* (edited by Āqā Murtażā Mudarris-i Gīlānī), Tehran: Kitābfarūshī-yi Saʿdī, 1337 sh [1958], 594.

However, the relationship between metaphorical and Real-True love is anything but a straightforward linear progression from one thing to another: rather, as is the case with the relation between any metaphor and the meaning that the metaphor *configures*, the relationship is altogether more ambiguous (which is a point that will be taken up fully in Part 3 of this book). In the conceptualization and practice of the *madhhab-i ʿishq* the beloved is, at once, both the external object-form for metaphorical love *and* the source for the derivation of Real-meaning. Thus, in exemplifying one of the most famous and profound love affairs in the way and lore of the *madhhab-i ʿishq*, Jalāl-ud-Dīn Rūmī invokes his truth-transfiguring beloved, Shams-i Tabrīz, thus:

> Shams-i Tabrīz: your form [*ṣūrat*] is beautiful!
> And in meaning [*maʿnī*]: what a beautiful source![101]

That the meaningful love of the *madhhab-i ʿishq* encompassed and fused *in ambiguity* both carnal and spiritual love is summed up in the following couplets from one of the most famous *ghazals* of Rūmī in which the poet addresses his earthly beloved as follows:

> If anyone asks you about the houris; show your cheek, say:
> "Like this!"
> If anyone asks you about the moon, ascend to the roof; say:
> "Like this!"
> If anyone is in search of a fairy; show your own face;
> If anyone speaks of the scent of musk; loosen your hair, say:
> "Like this!"
> If anyone asks, "How do the clouds reveal the moon?"
> Untie your shirt, knot by knot, say: "Like this!"
> If anyone asks, "How did Jesus raise the dead?"
> Kiss me on the lips and say: "Like this!"[102]

[101] *Shams-i Tabrīz ṣūratat khwush / v-andar maʿnī chih khwush maʿīnī*, Jalāl-ud-Dīn Rūmī, *Kulliyāt-i Shams-i Tabrīzī* (edited by Badiʿ-uz-Zamān Furūzunfar), Tehran: Nashr-i Paymān, 1379 *sh* [2000], 653 (ghazal 2760).

[102] *Har kih zi ḥūr pursadat rukh binamā kih hamchunīn / har kih zi māh gūyadat bām bar-ā kih hamchunīn // har kih parī ṭalab kunad chihrāh-ʾi khwud bi-du namā / har kih zi mushk dam zanad zulf gushā kih hamchunīn // har kih bigūyadat zi māh chiāgūnah v shavad / bāz gushā girih girih band-i qabā kih hamchunīn / gar zi Masīḥ pursadat murdah chigūnah zindah kard / būsah bidih bih pīsh-i ū jān-i marā kih hamchunīn*, Rūmī, *Kulliyāt-i Shams-i Tabrīzī*, 653 (*ghazal* 1826). I have barely departed from the translation of Fatemeh Keshavarz, *Reading Mystical Lyric: The Case of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī*, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998, 146, who cites this *ghazal* in illustrating Rūmī's "juxtaposing the spiritual and the carnal."

In this celebrated example of the ambi-valent condition of love as *both* carnal and ideal, as both *majāzī* and *ḥaqīqī*, the sensual kiss of Rūmī's luminous, musky, bare-chested, paradisaical lover upon the poet's lips is (and is not) the miraculous soul-resurrecting kiss of the Messiah himself.

The philosophical foundations of the idea of the cosmological *value* of love are to be found already in Ibn Sīnā, who wrote in his *Epistle on Love* that "love is the manifestation of Essence and Existence"—meaning that Love is the manifestation of God, Essence and Existence being consubstantial in God in Ibn Sīnā's conceptualization of Him.[103] The intrinsic and instrumental social and human value of love is plainly stated in a long chapter entitled "On the Virtue of Love, By Means of Which Societies Are Bound Together," in the most widely read work of political thought and social ethics in the history of societies of Muslims, the Persian-language *Ethics* (*Akhlāq*) of Naṣīr-ud-Dīn Ṭūsī (1201–1274)—itself based on the chapter on "Love and Friendship" in the Arabic-language *Refinement of Ethics* (*Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*) of Miskawayh (d. 1030)—which presents love as a definitive constituent of a shared Muslim identity, and as a virtue superior even to justice:

> The people of the Virtuous City, although they are different from one part of the world to another, are in reality in concord, for their hearts are upright one towards the other, and are adorned with love one towards the other. In their close-knit affection, they are like a single individual. As the *sharīʿah*-giver, peace be upon him, says: "Muslims are a single hand against all others, and are as one soul."[104]

> The need for Justice . . . arises from the absence of love, for if love were to accrue between individuals, there would be no necessity for equity and impartiality . . . In this regard, the virtue of Love over Justice is obvious.[105]

[103] See now the convenient treatment of this in Maha Elkaisy Freimuth, *God and Humans in Islamic Thought: ʿAbd al-Jabbār, Ibn Sīnā and al-Ghazālī*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2006, 74–118 (the chapter entitled "God and ʿishq in the philosophy of Ibn Sīnā"), the quote from Ibn Sīnā is cited at 83. See also Joseph Norment Bell, "Avicenna's Treatise on Love and the Nonphilosophical Muslim Tradition," *Der Islam* 63 (1986) 73–89.

[104] *va ahl-i madīnah-yi fāżilah agar-chih mukhtalif bāshand dar aqāṣī-yi ʿālam bi-ḥaqīqat muttafiq bāshand chih dilhā-yi īshān bā yakdīgar rāst buvad va bi-maḥabbat-i yak-dīgar mutaḥallī bāshand va mānand-i yak shakhṣ bāshand dar ta'alluf va tavaddud chwūnān-kih shāriʿ ʿalay-hi-as-salām gūyad: al-muslimūn yadun wāhidatun ʿalā man siwā-hum, Khwājah Naṣīr-ud-Dīn Ṭūsī, Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* (edited by Mujtabā Mīnavī and ʿAlī-Riżā Ḥaydarī), Tehran: Intishārāt-i Khwārazmī, 1387 sh (6th edition), 285–286. Compare the translation by G. M. Wickens in *Naṣīr-ud-Dīn Ṭūsī, The Nasirean Ethics* (translated by G. M. Wickens), London: George Allen and Unwin, 1964, 215.

[105] *pas maʿlūm shud kih iḥtiyāj bih ʿadālat . . . az jahat-i fiqdān-i maḥabbat-ast chih agar*

That Muslims have conceived of love as more than "mere emotion" was well-recognized half-a-century ago by Helmut Ritter who wrote in a magnificent study on the significance and meaning of the concept and practice of love in the history of societies of Muslims:

> There is a spiritual power which is suited above all other to promote the soul's concentration on another being, to suppress and eliminate all other ties and interests, to make that being the center of one's feelings, and from within this emotionally laden center to dominate all aspects of life and to determine all expression in life; a power which is more effective than any other efforts at overcoming restraints and hindrances, which can traverse the distance of a day's travel in minutes and perfoms achievements of high aspiration where all other efforts fail. The power in question is love. It provides the mystic with assistance to attain his goal, closeness to God, and to achieve union with him.
>
> In the case of the lover the intensity of feeling is stronger, the capacity for suffering and endurance is greater, the happiness of proximity is higher than with the world-renouncing ascetic and the saint of actions who sees the purpose of his existence in acts of obedience . . . Love has its own laws and specific qualities of emotion which makes it more than simply a means of intensifying other spiritual emotions.[106]

In the literature of the "*madhhab* of Love" (which is, of course, not limited to the works of the above-listed authors; rather, it encompasses a vast textual corpus produced down the centuries in their paradigmatical image and tenor), the world-view and life-way that is human love for Divine Beauty manifest as earthly beauty, is valorized as the paramount human sensation, sensibility,

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*maḥabbat miyān-i ashkhāṣ ḥasil būdī bih inṣāf va intiṣāf iḥtiyāj nayuftādī . . . pas bidīn vujūh faẓīlat-i maḥabbat bar ʿadālat maʿlūm shud*, Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*. I have slightly amended the translation by Wickens, *The Nasirean Ethics*, 196. See Abū ʿAlī Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Miskawayh, *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* (edited by Constantine K. Zurayk), Beirut: The American University of Beirut, 1966, 135–173; see the translation by Constantine K. Zurayk, *The Refinement of Character* (A translation from the Arabic of Aḥmad ibn-Muḥammad Miskawayh's *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*), Beirut: The American University of Beirut, 1968, 123–154. On love in Ṭūsī's political theory, see Christian Jambet, "Idéal du politique et politique idéale selon Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī," in N. Pourjavady and Ž. Vesel (editors), Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī: *Philosophe et savant du xiiie siècle*, Tehran: Presses Universitaires d'Iran / Institut Français de Recherche en Iran, 2000, 31–57, at 46–55.

[106] Hellmut Ritter, *The Ocean of the Soul: Men, the World and God in the Stories of Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār* (translated by John O'Kane with Bernd Radtke), Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2003, 358–359 (first published as *Das Meer der Seele: Mensch, Welt und Gott in den Geschichten des Farīduddīn ʿAṭṭār*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1955). Ritter's study is a remarkably rich and clear exposition of the ideas, values and literary vehicles of the *madhhab-i ʿishq*.

action and condition. Love functions as an elevating experience for the realization, apprehension, and experience of the values and higher Truth. It functions, in other words—as in the foregoing verses by Ḥāfiẓ—as a mode of knowing, of valorizing and meaning-making, and as the medium for the mobilization and incorporation of these meanings and values into a manner and ethos and critical principle of living "by means of which societies are bound together."

There is still inadequate awareness and recognition of the central place of the idea and practice of love in the historical discourses and practices constructive and expressive of being Muslim. An important corrective is a massive recent work on the role of love in the history of the discourses of Muslims that takes up where Ritter left off. The distinguished author William C. Chittick prefaced his opus with the statement "Those familiar with the histories and literatures of the Islamic peoples know that love . . . is so central to the overall ethos of the religion that if any word can sum up Islamic spirituality—by which I mean the very heart of the Qur'anic message—it should surely be *love*. I used to think that *knowledge* deserved this honor and that the Orientalist Franz Rosenthal had it right in the title of his book *Knowledge Triumphant*. Now I think that *love* does a better job of conveying the nature of the quest for God that lies at the tradition's heart."[107] I suggest, however, that rather than to draw a sharp distinguishing line between "love" and "knowledge," it is more accurate to conceive of love as construed and practiced by the *madhhab-i ʿishq* precisely as a register or *type of knowing*: the *experience* of love is a learning experience (or an experience of learning) that *teaches* the lover how to identify value (i.e., what is valuable) and to constitute the human being—both as individual and as society—accordingly, in terms of those values.[108] Some of us may find it a challenge to conceive of love

[107] William C. Chittick, *Divine Love: Islamic Literature and the Path to God*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013, xi. In his magisterial study, Rosenthal argued boldly that "in Islam, the concept of knowledge enjoyed an importance unparalleled in other civilizations" and asserted that "*ʿilm* [knowledge] is Islam," Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970, 334 and 3.

[108] A straightforward modern expression of this is the following lines by the most-widely read Urdu poet of the second half of the twentieth century, Faiz Ahmed Faiz (Fayż Aḥmad Fayż), in a poem addressed "To the Rival-Lover! [*raqīb sē*!]," where the literary tradition of the *madhhab-i ʿishq* becomes an instrument by which to learn the values of human sympathy and solidarity: "You have seen that brow, that cheek, that lip / In contemplation of which I laid waste my life / Those dream-lost spell-binding eyes have raised themselves up to you / You know well the reason for my lost years / We share the favours bestowed by the sorrow of love's-devotion / So many favours that in the counting remain uncountable / What did I lose in this love? What did I learn? / Were I to explain to any other than you, I could not make them understood / I learned helplessness, I learned to protect the poor / I learned the meaning of despair and deprivation, of pain and sorrow / I understood the travails of the constrained and coerced / I learned the mean-

as a rigorous or far-reaching principle for knowing, valorization or meaning-making. It may in this regard be instructive to consider the argument of the anthropologist, Richard Shweder, for the mobilization of a love-centered ethos of "romanticism" as a mode for the practice of the scholarly field of cultural anthropology:

> The practical result of romanticism's doctrine is a *revaluation* of . . . beauty as the figure of truth . . . love as the realization of our veritable nature; language in general, and poetic language in particular, as the divine expressive instruments of the real; adventure, astonishment and cultural anthropology as proper responses to the variety of inspiring manifestations of pure being in the world . . . For the aim of romanticism is to revalue existence, not to denigrate pure being; to dignify subjective experience, not to deny reality; to appreciate the imagination, not to disregard reason . . . Romanticism inclines towards an interest in those inspirations . . . that take us beyond our senses to real places where even logic cannot go.[109]

The protagonists of the *madhhab-i ʿishq* would agree.

In the prolific literary discourses of the *madhhab-i ʿishq*, the experiential and discursive registers of the spiritual and the physical are collapsed into each other in a synthetic Sufi-philosophical conceptual and imaginal vocabulary that con-figures the registers of the literal and the metaphorical—a vocabulary of concepts and images so widespread in its usage as to be effectively, as Dick Davis acutely put it, "a *lingua franca* . . . the conventional rhetoric of Persian poetry, what we may call its dialect."[110] The major works

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ing of chill sighs, of yellow faces / . . . When the labourer's flesh is sold in the marketplace / When the blood of the poor flows in the street / Something like a fire stays burning in my heart—do not ask! / No control over my heart is left to me [*tū nē dēkhī hay voh pēshānī voh rukhsār voh hōṅt / zindagī jin kē taṣavvur mēṅ luṭā dī ham nē / tujh pē uṭhī hayṅ voh khō'ī hu'ī sāḥir ānkhēṅ / tujh kō maʿlūm hay kyūṅ ʿumr gaṅvādī ham nē / ham pih mushtarakah hayṅ iḥsān gham-i ulfat kē / itnē iḥsān kih ginvā'ūṅ tō ginvā nah sakūṅ / ham nē is ʿishq mēṅ kyā khōyā hay kyā sīkhā hay/ juz tērē awr kō samjhā'ūn tō samjhā nah sakūṅ / ʿājizī sikhī gharībōn kī ḥimāyat sīkhī / zēr-dastōṅ kē maṣā'ib kō samajhnā sīkhā / sard āhōṅ kē rukh-i zard kē maʿnī sīkhē / . . . jab kahīṅ biktā hay bāzār mēṅ mazdūr kā gōsht / shāhirāhōṅ pih gharībōṅ kā lahū behtā hai / āg sī sīnē mēṅ reh reh kē ubaltī hay nah pūchh / apnē dil par mujhē qābū hī nahīṅ rehtā hay],* Fayż Aḥmad Fayż*, Naqsh-i Faryādī,* 60–62, in Fayż Aḥmad Fayż, *Nuskhah-hā'-i Vafā*, Lahore: Maktabah-i Kāravāṅ, 1984, 68–70. I have benefited from, and sometimes reproduced, the translation of V. G. Kiernan, *Poems by Faiz*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1971, 74–75.

[109] Richard A. Shweder, *Thinking Through Cultures: Expeditions in Cultural Psychology*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991, 10–11.

[110] Dick Davis, "Sufism and Poetry: A Marriage of Convenience," *Edebiyat* 10 (1999) 279–292, at 280, and 281.

of this literature were, with the sole exception of the Qur'ān itself, the most widely-copied (and, with the eventual spread of the technology in the nineteenth century, widely-printed) and widely-consumed texts throughout this vast Balkans-to-Bengal region. Collectively, they provided a language for thinking, and reading, and communicating and living—that is, for *a way of going* about (*madhhab*) the articulation, narration, celebration, recitation, transmission, performance and exploration in the self and in society of meaning and value. These discourses, and their accompanying practices, expressed and embodied a mode of valorization—that is of setting the values of things, as positive or negative—and thus put forward a complex of values and meanings as *norms*—as "what is expected or regarded as normal."[111] For any Muslim to enter into the social, textual, imaginal and experiential space of the literary discourses of the Balkans-to-Bengal canon—that is, to recite a *ghazal* to oneself, or to be present in a *majlis* where one was recited, or to experience or imagine loving or wine-drinking in terms of the discursively-pervasive vocabulary of the *ghazal*—was necessarily to engage with the *normative* value- and meaning-claims of the *madhhab-i ʿishq* (normative claims are "claims to establishing a norm or standard").[112] Now, the word *madhhab*, which is usually translated as "school," is, of course, the term used to designate a *madhhab*/school of Islamic law—thus, the Ḥanafī *madhhab*, the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*, the Mālikī *madhhab*, the Ḥanbalī *madhhab*, and the Jaʿfarī *madhhab*—and, certainly, the practitioners of *madhhab-i ʿishq* were all associated with one or another of these legal *madhhabs*. Yet alongside these legal *madhhab*s, whose norms we might, by ingrained force of cognitive habit, be more readily inclined to call "religious" or "Islamic," the Sufi-philosophical-aesthetical *madhhab-i ʿishq* posited its own prolific normative claims in society with Love as the primary principle and value.

(How) are these truth-claims *Islamic*? One the one hand, Omid Safi has noted that "It is important to point out that these Sufis were not abrogating the established theological and legal schools, nor were they dismissing their relevance. In fact many of the Sufis . . . were themselves important members of these other 'schools' as well . . . The Sufis of the Path of Love were presenting not a new religion, but a fresh, dynamic, and ever transforming understanding of themselves, the world around them, and the Divine based primarily on love."[113] On the other hand, whether or not the protagonists of the *madhhab-i ʿishq* were "dismissing the relevance" of the legal schools—and if

[111] *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 1939.

[112] *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 1940.

[113] Omid Safi, "On the Path of Love Towards the Divine: A Journey with the Muslim Mystics," *Sufi* 78 (2009–2010) 22–36, at 28.

not dismissing outright, many of them were, without doubt, meaningfully *qualifying* the relevance and scope of the truth-claims of the legal schools—the question to be considered is precisely what the implications and consequences are for normative Islam of a discourse whose practitioners insistently argued for an "understanding of themselves, the world around them, and the Divine based primarily on love." What are the implications and consequences for normative Islam of a statement such as that with which, Amīr Ḥasan Sijzī of Delhi (1254–1338), poet, Sufi, and compiler of one of the most famous books of Islam in South Asian, the *Favā'id-ul-Fuvād*, comes to conclude his *Dīvan*:

> The work of the lover is the work of the heart:
> Those meanings are beyond Belief [*dīn*] and Unbelief [*kufr*].[114]

We will see in Chapter 5 that this idea of "meanings beyond Belief and Unbelief" was an absolutely standard one, widely-heard in the self-expression of Muslims in the literature of the Balkans-to-Bengal complex. J. Christoph Bürgel, one of the most original and supple-minded scholars of the literary discourses of Muslims, says of Ḥāfiẓ's poetry that "on reading these verses one gets the impression of facing something like a counter-religion."[115] Now, Bürgel does not say what he means by "counter-religion," but if we understand the term in parallel with the well-established concept "counter-culture," then we are talking about "a mode of life deliberately deviating from established social practices"[116] or "the culture and lifestyle of those people . . . who reject or oppose the dominant values of society"[117] or "a subculture whose values and norms of behavior deviate from those of mainstream society, often in opposition to mainstream cultural mores."[118] My point, however, is that the self-

[114] *kih kār-i ʿāshiqī kār-īst jānī / zi kufr u dīn birūn-ast āṅ maʿānī*, Ḥasan Sijzī Dihlavī, *Dīvān-i Ḥasan Sijzī Dihlavī* (edited by Masʿūd ʿAli Maḥvī), Hyderabad: Ibrāhīmiyyah Press, 1934, 623 (also cited by Muzaffar Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam in India c. 1200–1800*, New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2005, 120). The *Favā'id-ul-Fuvād*, which records the discourses over fourteen years (1308–1322) of the patron Sufi saint of Delhi, Niẓām-ud-Dīn Awliyā, of whom Ḥasan Sijzī was a close disciple, has been published numerous times: an early edition is Amīr Ḥasan ʿAlā Sijzī, *Favā'id-ul-Fuvād*, Lucknow: Naval Kishōr, 1885.

[115] J. Christoph Bürgel, "Ambiguity: A Study in the Use of Religious Terminology in the Poetry of Hafiz," in Michael Glünz and J. Christoph Bürgel (editors), *Intoxication, Earthly and Heavenly: Seven Studies on the Poet Hafiz of Shiraz*, Bern: Peter Lang, 1991, 7–39, at 25, see also 31 (some of the verses of Ḥāfiẓ cited above appear also in this article).

[116] *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 526.

[117] *Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*, New York: Random House, 197 (2nd edition), 461.

[118] en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Counterculture (accessed 10 October 2012).

evident historical *commonplaceness* and *centrality* of the *madhhab-i ʿishq* and of Ḥāfiẓ-ian literature at the very heart of the mainstream—that is, moving with and as a part of the flow rather than counter to it—of the historical discourses, practices, valorizations and self-constructions of Muslims makes the characterization *counter*-religion highly unsatisfactory, and fails entirely to help us conceptualize *the co-herence of contradictory norms* in the lived "religious" reality of Muslims.

Now, it might be argued that literary works of fiction and imagination are an expression not of *Islam*, but of *culture*—at best of "Islamic culture"—and thus, unlike works of law or theology or Qur'ānic exegesis, are not to be taken as constitutive elements in conceptualizing *Islam*. This assumed distinction between "Islam," understood reflexively as being something other than (and, somehow, both more than and less than) "culture"—usually as "religion"—on the one hand, and between "culture" on the other hand, is something to which I shall return at greater length later in this book. For the moment, though, it should be borne in mind that even if we somehow designate something as belonging to "Islamic culture" rather than to "Islam," we must still determine what the qualifier Islamic *means* in the term "Islamic culture," and how that attribute *Islamic* relates to *Islam*.

This resort to a distinction between the somehow self-evidently distinct categories of "religion" and "culture" is often invoked in addressing the fifth question: whether there is such a thing as "Islamic art," and if there is, then what is actually Islamic about it? As one art historian has put it: "The problem of where to locate Islamic art . . . is particularly fraught with the qualifying adjective caught between a religious identity and a cultural identification."[119] Thus, the father of the modern study of Islamic art, Oleg Grabar, noted in his entry on "Islamic Art" in the leading *Dictionary of Art*: "These arts are almost exclusively secular arts, with the corollary paradox that most of the arts (with the exception of architecture) from a culture defined by its religious identity

[119] Finbarr Barry Flood, "From the Prophet to Postmodernism? New world orders and the end of Islamic art," in Elizabeth Mansfield (editor), *Making Art History: A Changing Discipline and its Institutions*, London: Routledge, 2007, 31–53, at 32. See also Wendy M. K. Shaw: "The problematic nomenclature of 'Islamic art' has been met with two primary modes of solution, both of which attempt to avoid the problem of 'Islam' by redefining terminology: first, the consideration of 'Islam' as culture rather than religion; and second, the fragmentation of the category into regional and temporal terms," Wendy M. K. Shaw, "The Islam in Islamic art history: secularism and public discourse," *Journal of Art Historiography* 6 (2012) 19–34, at 3.

have been devoted to the beautification of life rather than to the celebration of the divine."[120] Two of the leading historians of Islamic art have written:

> What exactly is Islamic art? How well does this category serve the understanding of the material? Does a religiously based classification serve us better than geographic or linguistic ones? . . . While some Islamic art may have been made by Muslims for purposes of faith, much of it was not. A mosque or a copy of the Koran clearly fits everybody's definition of Islamic art, but what about a twelfth-century Syrian bronze canteen inlaid with Arabic inscriptions and Christian scenes? . . . most scholars accept that the convenient if incorrect term "Islamic" refers not just to the religion of Islam but to the larger culture in which Islam was the dominant—but not sole—religion practiced . . . "Islamic art" is therefore not comparable to such concepts as "Christian" or "Buddhist" art, which are normally understood to refer specifically to religious art . . . In sum then, the term "Islamic" art seems to be *a convenient misnomer* for . . . the visual culture of a place and time when the people (or at least their leaders) espoused a particular religion.[121]

But the difficulties with the "convenient misnomer" of "Islamic art" are not limited to the relationship between "religion" and "culture," but also with the relationship between "unity" and "diversity":

> One of the most harmful ideas developed by historians of Islamic art is the myth of the unity of Islamic art. This idea of unity creates a paradigm for understanding Islamic art that primarily serves to explain similarities between different artistic products. It therefore provides an easy solution for quite intriguing and remarkably specific cases of parallelism in the history of the art of Islam . . . The projected meta-similitude in Islamic art seems to put together different objects . . . thus creating what is often termed "unity in diversity" . . . this stance means that similitude . . . can be explained away very simply on the basis of unity, and other potential reasons for visual similarities are sometimes ignored. Should we not rewrite and critically rethink and discuss the history of unity in Islamic art?[122]

[120] Oleg Grabar, "Islamic Art, §I. Introduction. 1. Definition," in Jane Turner (editor), *The Dictionary of Art*, London: Grove, 1996, 16: 99–101, at 100.

[121] Sheila Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, "The Mirage of Islamic Art: Reflections on the Study of an Unwieldy Field," *The Art Bulletin* 85 (2003) 152–184, at 152–153 (italics mine).

[122] Avinoam Shalem, "What Do We Mean When We Say 'Islamic Art'? A Plea for a Critical Rewriting of the History of the Arts of Islam," *Journal of Art Historiography* 6 (2012) 1–18, at 9.

That the scholarly field that studies this art and that represents it to the global public is uncertain of how to pin down the relation of this art to Islam is nicely illustrated in the fact that, while the custodian of the most important single collection of the art produced in societies of Muslims, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, has an institutional Department of Islamic Art, the Museum has publicly designated its acclaimed "New Galleries of the Art of the Arab Lands, Turkey, Iran, Central Asia, and Later South Asia" with an elaborate ethnic, geographical, and temporal circumlocution that omits any mention of the words "Islam" or "Islamic."

The question of what constitutes Islamic art is an especially vexing one in the case of art-objects such as wine-cups, made for a widespread social practice that is in direct violation of the overwhelming prohibitions of Qur'ān-based Islamic law, or of figural painting produced in evident indifference to sound Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad recorded in the canonical collections of al-Bukhārī (810–870) and Muslim (821–875)—versions of which appear across the major Hadith collections—which are regarded as possessing normative prescriptive authority next only to that of the Qur'ān, and which state categorically and ominously:

> The most grievously tormented people amongst the denizens of Hell on the Day of Resurrection will be the makers of images [*al-muṣawwirūn*].[123]

> He who makes an image [*ṣawwara ṣūratan*] will be punished by God on the Day of Resurrection until he breathes life into it—which he will not be able to do![124]

[123] *inna min ashadd al-nās ʿadhāban ʿinda Allāh yawma al-qiyāmah al-muṣawwirūn*; 160–161, for this, and other Hadiths in this vein, see Abū al-Ḥusayn Muslim b. Ḥajjāj b. Muslim al-Qushayrī al-Naysābūrī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-Saḥīḥ* (edited by Muḥammad Shukrī b. Ḥasan al-Anqarawī, Aḥmad Rifʿat b. ʿUthmān Ḥilmī al-Qarahḥiṣārī and Muḥammad ʿIzzat b. ʿUthmān al-Zaʿfarānbūlīwī), Istanbul: al-Maṭbaʿah al-ʿĀmirah, 1334 *h* [1915], 6:160–162. There is also a report in Shīʿī Hadith collections of the first Imām, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, stating that "Whoever . . . makes a figural image has gone out of Islam [*man . . . maththala mithālan kharaja min al-islām*]," Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī, *Wasā'il al-shīʿah ilā taḥṣīl masā'il shīʿah* (edited by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Rabbānī), Tehran: Maktabat al-Islāmiyyah, 1376–1399 h [1956–1978], 3:562.

[124] *man ṣawwara ṣūratan fa-inna Allah muʿadhdhibu-hu ḥattā yunfikha fī-hā al-rūḥ wa laysa bi-nāfikh fī-hā* ; Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl b. Ibrāhīm b. Bardizbah al-Juʿfī al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Cairo: al-Majlis al-Aʿlā li-al-Shuʾūn al-Islāmiyyah, 1991, 9:206 (along with several other Hadiths against the making of figural images). Versions of both the above-cited Hadiths appear across the canonical collections: see A. J. Wensinck, J. P. Mensing, W. P. de Haas and J. B. van Loon, *Concordances et Indices de la Tradition Musulmane: Les six livres, le Musnad d'al-Dārimi, le Muwaṭṭa' de Mālik, le Musnad de Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1955, 3:437 (the latter Hadith appears nine times in the *Musnad* of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, alone). For a Shīʿī version going back to the Imām Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, see al-Ḥūrr al-ʿĀmilī, *Waṣā'il al-Shīʿah*, 3:562–563.

The latter Prophetic imprecation alludes to the text of Qur'ān itself that indicates that God has given ("by My blessing . . . by the Holy Spirit") to the Prophet ʿĪsā (Jesus), among mortals, the power to pass the impossible test that will be imposed upon the image-makers come Doomsday: "O! ʿĪsā, son of Maryam . . . when you fashion from clay the form of a bird, by My leave, and you blow into it—it becomes, by My leave, a bird!"[125] No artist other than Jesus, it would appear, has a wing or a prayer. Are, then, these art objects "Islamic" despite their evident "irreligiosity"—can we speak of an "Islamic wine-cup" or of "Islamic portraiture"? Or are they "secular" objects—in which case are they non-/un-Islamic? Can and should we somehow speak non-oxymoronically of "secular Islamic art" (as so many art historians do)—and if so, by what criteria do we make the distinction?

Setting aside wine-cups for the moment, it will be helpful to look more closely at the exemplary definitional problems that are posed by the question of how to categorize figural painting in relation to or in terms of Islam. The truth-function of the collections of canonical Prophetic Hadith is supposed to be that they establish specific indefeasible norms based upon the authority of Prophetic pronouncements: Hadith authoritatively identify and specify Divine law.[126] The Prophetic statements on figural representation seem pretty unambiguous in the direness of their implications, leaving very little, if any, interpretive wiggle-room (the word *ṣūrah*, that is used in the Hadith without any qualification, is the broadest conceptual term in Arabic for "image," the plain meaning of which covers animate, inanimate, two-dimensional, and three-dimensional figures, made for whatever purpose).

It is thus hardly surprising that Islamic legal discourse has, throughout its history, been overwhelmingly hostile towards figural representation, as is summed up by the eminent Shāfiʿī jurist and Hadīth scholar, Sharaf al-Dīn al-Nawawī (1234–1278), whose accessible short selection of pietistic Hadith, the *Riyāḍ al-ṣāliḥīn* (*Garden of the Righteous*), is a very widely-printed and -read work in our present day,[127] and who wrote in his authoritative commentary on the canonical Hadith collection of Muslim b. Ḥajjāj:

> The authorities of our school and others hold that the making of a picture of any living thing is strictly forbidden and that is one of the great sins

[125] *yā ʿĪsā ibn Maryam . . . niʿmat-ī ʿalay-ka . . . bi-rūḥ al-qudusi . . . idh takhluqu min al-ṭīni ka-hay'ati al-ṭīri bi-idhn-ī fa-tanfukhu fī-hā fa-takūnu ṭīran bi-idhn-ī*, Qur'ān 5:113 al-Mā'idah.

[126] For a convenient survey of the Hadiths against figural images, and for some of the legal arguments built thereupon, see Isa Salman, "Islam and Figurative Art," *Sumer* 25 (1969) 59–96, at 62–87.

[127] A casual visit to the annual Cairo International Bookfair will confirm this assessment.

> because it is specifically threatened with the grievous punishment mentioned in the Hadith . . . the crafting of it is forbidden under every circumstance, because it imitates the creative activity of God . . . This is the summary position of our school on the question, and the absolute majority of the Companions of the Prophet and their immediate followers and the succeeding generations of scholars accepted it; it is the view of al-Thawrī, Mālik, Abū Ḥanīfah, and others besides them.[128]

In invoking Mālik and Abū Ḥanīfah, the eponymous founders of the Mālikī and Ḥanafī *madhhab*s, the Shāfiʿī al-Nawawī is basically saying that all the legal schools hold the same view. Even when legal scholars have occasionally adopted interpretive devices that delimit the application of the plain meaning of these Prophetic statements in a manner so as to construe them as not requiring outright legal prohibition of figural representation (by distinguishing, for example, between two- and three-dimensional images, or between images of animate and inanimate beings, or between objects and spaces intended for devotion and those for daily use, or between illustrations that depict the shadow of a body and those that do not), these positions are unable to lose the tone of partial qualifications to a larger principle of disapproval, and have hardly been received with an excess of juridical conviction or enthusiasm (the above-cited prohibitory ruling of al-Nawawī, for example, goes on firmly and deliberately to reject these very qualifications).[129] A thorough analysis of the

[128] *qāla aṣḥābu-nā wa ghayru-hum min al-ʿulamā' taṣwīr ṣūrat al-ḥayawān ḥarām shadīd al-taḥrīm wa huwa min al-kabā'ir li-anna-hu mutawaʿʿad ʿalay-hi bi-hādhā al-waʿīd al-shadīd al-madhkūr fī al-aḥādīth . . . fa ṣunʿatu-hu ḥarām bi-kull ḥāl li-anna fī-hi muḍāhāt li-khalq Allāh taʿālā . . . hādhā talkhīṣ madhhabi-nā fī al-masʾalah wa bi-maʿnā-hu qāla jamāhīr al-ʿulamā' min al-ṣaḥābah wa al-tābiʿīn wa man baʿda-hum wa huwa madhhab al-Thawrī wa Mālik wa Abī Ḥānīfah wa ghayri-him*; Sharaf al-Dīn al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Imām Muslim*, on the margins of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qasṭallānī, *Irshād al-sārī li-sharḥ Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿah al-Kubrā al-Amīriyyah, 1305 *h* [1887], 8:398; compare the translation of Thomas W. Arnold, *Painting in Islam: A Study of the Place of Pictorial Art in Muslim Culture*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1928, 9–10.

[129] See Arnold, *Painting in Islam*, 9–10. The deep-rooted negative valorization of figural images in the Hadith literature pervades even such concession to such legal wiggle-room as there might have been, as is conveyed in the conclusion to a detailed study of the *aḥādīth* on figural representation: "The Bilderverbot implies that it is forbidden for a Muslim to create, have, use, buy or sell images of living creatures or to be in a place where such images are found. Exceptions to this prohibition are the following: trees, plants and other 'things' without 'rūḥ' are allowed to be portrayed, this is also the case for things that cannot be considered to be alive any more, like pictures of living things without a head . . . Living creatures can be depicted when it is not possible to respect or venerate the pictures, for example when they appear on carpets, pillows, diwans, etcetera. Sitting, standing or lying on them makes it impossible to respect them . . . Children's toys in the form of living creatures, like dolls, are allowed. The reason for this is said to be that for girls playing with dolls was considered to be a good preparation for later maternal duties," Daan van Reenen, "The *Bilderverbot*, A New Survey," *Der Islam* 67 (1990) 27–77, at 54. De-

legal opinions towards figural representation, which examines the question in the context of the prolific production of figural painting in Safavid Iran, concludes with the distressing assessment: "All of the above plainly leaves . . . Persianate painters in dire straits. They are still going to be severely punished in the next world."[130]

Whatever one's personal attitude to legal opinions, it is a cognitive challenge to conceive of how these authoritative Prophetic pronouncements, taken at face-value, would not intuitively and straightforwardly translate into a larger normative attitude of anti-iconism (or, at least, aniconism). Certainly, the tendency to, at the least, a legal, cultural and moral discomfort with figural images and, at the most, the outright enacted repudiation thereof has been evident in the history of societies of Muslims. This tendency was recently enacted on the world stage in the dramatic destruction of the giant Buddha statues of Bamiyan by the Afghan Taliban[131] (my own first encounter with the same statement of what is/is not Islam/ic took place on a smaller

spite this, there is a peculiar insistence on the part of even the finest historians that the "Islamic prohibition of the image" is "a trope" and that "no such overarching prohibition exists in any foundational Islamic sources," as says Wendy Shaw, "The Islam in Islamic art history," 5. Similarly, Oliver Leaman: "The ban on images in Islam does not exist . . . the Qur'an says nothing directly on this issue. There are *ahadith* which are critical of images, in particular images which can be seen as frivolous but this could be taken as a critique of the frivolous as such, not necessarily all images," Oliver Leaman, *Islamic Aesthetics: An Introduction*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004, 17. Also David Wasserstein: "One of the most popular misconceptions about medieval Islam . . . is that relating to the reproduction of human images. It is widely supposed, even among those who should know better, that such representation is forbidden . . . It is true, of course, that adoration of images is forbidden, and it is true, too, that, because of their possible use as objects of worship, the production of human or other animate images is censured. But it is important to note that this is not the same thing as prohibition," David J. Wasserstein, "Coins as Agents of Cultural Definition in Islam," *Poetics Today* 14 (1992) 303–322, at 303. The severely and categorically anti-iconic *ṣaḥīḥ* Hadith cited above appear in the canonical collections of al-Bukhārī and Muslim than which there are no "foundational Islamic sources" more "authoritative" save the Qur'ān—and the Qur'ān is understood by all schools of Islamic law to have been explained and qualified by the Hadith. In other words, to the extent that it is possible to have an authoritative statement of prohibition in Islam, these Hadith are prohibitive. It seems to me that such statements by contemporary scholars proceed from their being unable to imagine how Muslims could have invested themselves in the production and consumption of figural imagery *without* this being considered *legally* permissible. The question we need to ask (and to answer) is how despite the prohibition in legal principle Muslims expressed themselves in figural images as a routine practice in their self-expression as Muslims; that is, how they made sense of this as a normative part of their Islam.

[130] Nomi Heger, "The Status and the Image of the Persianate Artist," PhD Dissertation, Princeton University, 1997, 82 (the legal discussion is at 27–82).

[131] On this, see the article by Finbarr Barry Flood that "draws attention to the fact that figuration has been a contested issue even between Muslims" in which there is "negotiation between iconoclasts and iconophiles," Finbarr Barry Flood, "Between Cult and Culture: Bamiyan, Islamic Iconoclasm, and the Museum," *Art Bulletin* 84 (2002) 641–659.

scale in 1980 at an airport in Saudi Arabia, where I watched customs officers employ a hammer to shatter chess-pieces that had emerged from the suitcase of an unfortunate Pashtun labourer).[132] Indeed, in view of these canonical Hadith, there would have been no particular reason for us to have been surprised had this attitude to figural images been universal, if there had been no production of figural images in Islamic history, or if such production as there was had been carried out as an underground enterprise in service of an illicit pleasure. What tends to surprise and also to confuse is that this was precisely *not* the case: the historical production of figural images took place under the financial and custodial patronage of the rulers of states and of their associated political and cultural elites as an enterprise in which considerable financial resources were invested, in which artists were held in high social esteem,[133] and where miniature paintings were sold as luxury goods in a roaring trade across the Islamic world,[134] and were also exchanged as tokens of legitimate and legitimating value in diplomatic gift-giving.[135] The texts which many of these expensively-produced illustrations accompanied were the self-same works of poetry, ethics, morals, and epic that make up the Balkans-to-Bengal literary canon discussed above—one might add to the list the definitive narrative of self-conceptualization of rulership, the *Shāhnāmah* of Firdawsī (for which, see Chapter 6) in engagement with the values of whose pre-Islamic legends every ruler in the Balkans-to-Bengal complex constructed his mandate to enact and uphold the order on earth of the God of Islam (the shared value and values invested in the *Shāhnamah* is well-expressed in the fact that numerous rulers commissioned the production of court copies, and that lavishly illustrated copies were given as diplomatic gifts, such as the famous one given in 1568 by the Shiʿī Ṣafavid Shah Tahmasp [*r.* 1533–1576] to the Sunnī Ottoman Sultan Selīm [*r.* 1566–1574]).[136]

A historian of Mughal art notes at one geographical end of the Balkans-to-Bengal complex, "The illustrated manuscripts that were a prized possession of the Mughals included eclectic esoteric works like the *Khamsa-i* Niẓāmī,

[132] I vividly recall the customs officer shouting at the labourer that the chess pieces were "statues and idols" [*awthān wa aṣnām*]. I am told that under Saudi law chess sets are prohibited as "games of chance."

[133] See Heger, "The Status and the Image of the Persianate Artist."

[134] On the production of illustrated manuscripts in Shiraz for export to the market of Istanbul, see Lâle Uluç, *Turkman Governors, Shiraz Artists, and Ottoman Collectors: Sixteenth Century Shiraz Manuscripts*, Istanbul: Türkiye Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2006.

[135] See Lâle Uluç, "Gifted Manuscripts from the Safavids to the Ottomans," in Linda Komaroff (editor), *Gifts of the Sultan: The Arts of Giving at the Islamic Courts*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011, 144.

[136] *The Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp: The Persian Book of Kings*, New York City: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011.

*Dīwān-i* Ḥāfiẓ, Saʿdī's *Gulistān* and *Būstān*, Jāmī's *Yūsuf u Zulaykhā*, *Bahāristān* and *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār*, *Dīwān*s of Anwari, Amir Khusraw and Amir Shahi, *Akẖlāk-i Nāṣirī* and an illustrated version of the lives of saints, the *Nafaḥāt al-uns*."[137] A historian of Ottoman art notes at the other geographical end, "The pasha was an obvious enthusiast of classical Persian literature, which was a taste he shared with most members of the Ottoman court. His illustrated books were all Persian: *Divān* of Navā'i, *Laylī va Majnūn*, *Dīvān* of Amir Khusraw Dihlavi, Niẓāmī's *Khamsa*, *Shāhnāma*, *Fālnāma*, *Dīvān* of Jāmī . . . *Kitāb majālis al-ʿushshāq* (Gatherings of Lovers, biographies of Sufi saints) . . . the *Kulliyāt* of Saʿdī."[138] In other words, these figural illustrations were employed throughout the Balkans-to-Bengal complex precisely as visual expressions of the ideas and values relayed in canonical texts of narrative fiction, poetry, and history that were regarded as the highest registers of self-conceptualization and self-expression in these societies.[139]

This much said, we can now turn to the most instructive element as regards the problematic at hand; which are the *stated terms* in which figural pictorial art was conceived of by the social groups that practiced it. Thus we find that Ṣādiqī Bēg Afshār (1533–1610), the author of a treatise in Persian verse entitled *The Canon of Figural Representation* (*Qānūn-uṣ-Ṣuvar*) and himself an acclaimed portrait-painter, wrote in his autobiographical introduction to this poem about art:

> I take the chattels of my ambition to the alleyway of the Figure;
> I aspire to Meaning from the face of the Figure.
> My heart, which had known of the Art of the Figure,
> Brought itself, now, to the high-road of Meaning . . .
> So far have I come in portraying the Figure
> That I have traversed "Figure" and arrived at "Meaning."[140]

[137] Meera Khare, "The Wine-Cup in Mughal Court Culture: From Hedonism to Kingship," *Medieval History Journal* 8 (2005) 143–188 at 148.

[138] Emine Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013, 52–54 (I have combined titles from the personal libraries of two pashas listed by Fetvacı). See also the ubiquity of these titles, and others of their stripe, in a detailed list of sixteenth-century illustrated manuscripts prepared in Shiraz, mainly for export to the Ottoman market, given in Lale Uluç, "Arts of the Book in Sixteenth Century Shiraz," PhD dissertation, New York University, 2000, at 380–527.

[139] On this, see for example, Mehnaz Shayesteh Far, "The Impact of the Religion on the Painting and Inscriptions of the Timurid and the Early Safavid Periods," *Central Asiatic Journal* 47 (2003) 250–293.

[140] *kasham rakht-e havas dar kū-yi ṣūrat / shavam maʿnā-ṭalab az rū-yi ṣūrat // dilam rā k'az fann-i ṣūrat khabar būd / bi-khwud dar rāh-i maʿnā pay-sipar būd . . . rah-i ṣūratgarī chandān sipardam / kih az ṣūrat bih maʿnī rāh burdam*; Ṣādiqī Bēg Afshār, *Qānūn-uṣ-Ṣuvar* (edited by Yves

Quite simply, the statement of the author of the *Canon of Figural Representation*—which stands in counter-distinction to the statement of the prescriptive-proscriptive canon of Hadith, and its elaboration as law—is that engagement with figural art is an act of *positive* value: that in the crafting and contemplation of the image the individual may traverse the material limitations of this-worldly materiality and form, and attain to the knowledge of pure higher-worldly *meaning*.

The governing concepts here are clearly those of the hierarchical cosmology of the philosophical-Sufi amalgam outlined above (the parallel with the lines of Jāmī on "Real" and "Metaphorical" love, quoted earlier, is readily evident). The artist-author of these lines of poetry simply *assumes, as a human and historical fact*, that the philosophical-Sufi amalgam in whose language he speaks is both understood by and is operational for his audience—which is the audience of both poetry and of figural painting. The reason for his assumption is obvious: he and his audience share the same human and historical fact: the *Canon of Figural Representation* speaks from and to and within a *norm* that is held by Muslims and that embraces Muslims: a norm where figural representation, far from being anathema, is *truth*.

In case we might assume that the above text is somehow exceptional,[141] the commonplaceness of the normative notion of figural art as a source of Truth is readily evident in another, more elaborate, statement of art theory that appears in the foreword to the album of art assembled for the delectation of the Ottoman Sultan Aḥmed I (*r.* 1603–1617), which is preserved today in the Topkapı Sarayı Museum in Istanbul.

> The raiment and adornment of the finest decorated garments of word and picture, the pearl-ornaments of eloquence and of art, those most chaste of discourses and those most beautiful of images from behind the

Porter), in Yves Porter, *Peinture et Arts du Livre: Essai sur la littérature indo-persane*, Paris: Institut Français de Recherche en Iran, 1992, 198–207, at 198–199 (Porter has followed the edition of Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazhūh, "Qānūn-uṣ-Ṣuvar," *Hunar va Mardum* 90 (1349 *sh* [1970]) 11–20, and has included in his notes the textual variants in the earlier edition, Ṣādiq Bēk Afshār, *Qānūn-uṣ-ṣuvar* (edited by ʿĀdil Qāżīyof), Baku: Farhangistān-i ʿUlūm, 1963 (there is one variant in the quoted lines; namely, *bī-sipar* for *pay-sipar*, which would translate as "My heart, that had known of the Art of Figure / unshielded itself on the High-Road of Meaning"). The translation of these lines by Martin Bernard Dickson (in Martin Bernard Dickson and Stuart Carey Welch, *The Houghton Shahnameh*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981, 1:260), though regularly cited by art historians, is very loose indeed.

[141] For more invocations of this idea see Yves Porter, "La forme et la sens: à propos du portrait dans la littérature persane classique," in Christophe Balaÿ, Claire Kappler and Živa Vesel (editors), *Pand-o Sokhan: Mélanges offerts à Charles-Henri de Fouchécour*, Tehran: Institut Français de Recherche en Iran, 1995, 219–232.

curtain of *No-Doubt* and from the palace of no-imperfection having been bestowed upon the virgin-girls; then, by this beguiling beauty the hearts of the worldly are stolen away and the capacities of the discerning are enamoured and confounded.

Whereas the glowing mirror of the world forever is displaying figures-depicted and images-drawn, and is the object for contemplation by those possessed of insight for instruction, it may yet be rusted by the vicissitudes of time. In such infelicitous days, we turn to our predecessors of yore and of late to view images fitted for contemplation and to narrate accounts express for instruction.

In the disappearing and appearing of the revolving heavens, and in the chameleonic varieties of types of images, such strange effects and marvelous forms present themselves—the imagining and imaging of which serves as occasion for the acquisition of the capital of the science of philosophical-wisdom, and as means for perfecting the refinement of the moral-detecting and -drawing eye. It serves, moreover, certainly and assuredly, to quicken the profound thinking and to edify the illuminating conscience and enlightened heart of the auspicious person of the Emperor of the zenith of ascending degrees.[142]

The introduction to the Sultan's album is nothing less than an outright celebration of figural representation. Again, one sees arrayed here the epistemological structures of "philosophical religion"—and not in a manner or in a discursive register that is seeking to *argue for* a philosophical or Sufi position, or to *argue against* a juridical one, but rather in a manner and register that forthrightly expresses the *assumed and operational norms* of the educated and self-consciously Muslim elite of the Balkans-to Bengal complex. The source of images in this world is the pure and high domain of "no doubt" and "no-

[142] *ōl dürer ve ġurer-i ṣanāyiʿ ve bedāyiʿ-i serāy-i bī-ʿayb ve serāperdah-'i lā-rayb-deh ōlān enfes-i nefāyis-i maqālāt ve aḥsen-i meḥāsin-i muṣavverāt benāt-i nukātah ḥilyet-i ḥulel-i elfāẓ ve ebṣārılah zīver ü zīb vīrüb zīnet-i dil-farīb ileh qulūb-i cehāniyānı ferīfteh ve ṭabʿ-i ehl-i dilānı ālufteh ve āṣüfteh ītmişlerdür imdī her bār kih āyineh-'i ṭabʿ-i mücellā-yi rüzgār manẓar-i iʿtibār ūlī-yi ebṣār dur dāyiman ṣüretnümā-yi naqsh ü nigār īken ḥavādiṣ-i rüzgār-i nā-hemvār-dan zenk vāqiʿ olah ānuŋ gibī eyyām-i nā-fercām-deh baʿżı ṣuver-i muʿteber ve siyer-i pür-ʿiber-i selef ve ḫalef menẓūr ve mezkūr ōlıcaq mürūr ve ẓuhūr-i gerdiş-i gerdūn ve envāʿ-i eṣnāf-i naqş-i būqalamūn ileh nümāyān ōlān āṯār-i ġarībeh ve eşkāl-i ʿacībehnuŋ taḫayyülāt ve taṣavvurrāt bāʿiṯ-i taḥṣil-i sermāyeh-'i ʿilm-i ḥikmet ve sebeb-i tekmīl-i pīrāyeh-'i ʿayn-i ʿibret öldüğündan mā ʿadā öl zāt-i ferḫundeh-simāt-i pādişāh-i ʿālī-derecātah mūcib-i tenşīṭ-i ḫāṭir-i ḫaṭīr ve mustevcib-i taṭyīb-i żemīr-i münīr ve qalb-i müstenīr ōlmaq muqarrer ve muḥaqqaq dur*, Ahmet Süheyl Ünver, "L'album d'Ahmed Ier," *Annali (Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli)*, n.s. 13 (1963) 127–162, the text is transcribed from the facsimile of folio 3b of MS Topkapı Sarayı, Bāġdad Köşkü 418, which is reproduced by Ünver at 146 (compare Ünver's French translation at 140–141).

imperfection" whence forms Neo-Platonically descend and impregnate with meaning the receptacle "virgin-girls" of this material world. The world in which we live is a "chameleonic" gallery of forms that present themselves "for contemplation" and "instruction." We make pictures of the forms of this world for the same reason: to attain, by our "imagining and imaging [*taḫayullāt ve teṣevvurāt*] . . . the capital of the science of philosophical-wisdom, and as means for perfecting the refinement of the moral-detecting and -drawing eye." Figural art is a means to attain the meanings of the "zenith of ascending degrees."

The contradiction between this norm and the other norm expressed on behalf of juridical discourse by al-Nawawī on the basis of Hadith appears difficult to reconcile. The puzzle is even further complicated when we discover the "reconciliation" between the two positions that were stated by two eminent *connoisseur* contemporaries of the master-painter, Bihzād of Herat (d. 1535):

> So heart-affecting is his depiction of the bird:
> That like the bird of Jesus, it has become filled with the
> breath-soul-of-life.[143]
>
> By his mastery the hair of his brush
> Has given life-soul to inanimate form.[144]

By these words, Bihzād's critics unhesitatingly attribute to him a pneumatic power *like to* the power witnessed by the Qur'ān as having been granted in apparent monopoly by God to Jesus (see above). Now, no such statement (whether read literally or metaphorically) could be made or understood without an awareness on the part of both the authors of these statements and of their audiences of those Hadith that tell us, not only that image-makers *cannot* give life to the work of their hands—but that they will be eternally punished for presuming an undertaking similar to God's. In other words, figural

[143] *buvad ṣūrat-i murgh-i ū dil-pazīr / chu murgh-i masīḥā shudah rūḥ gīr, Mīr Sayyid Aḥmad, Muraqqaʿ-i Mīr Ghayb Bēg:Dībāchah-'i Mīr Sayyid Aḥmad*, in Wheeler M. Thackston, *Album Prefaces and Other Documents on the History of Calligraphers and Painters*, Leiden: Brill, 2001, 24–29, at 27; compare Thackston's translation on the facing page. Compare also the translation of Michael Barry who cites this at the outset of his eye-opening work, *Figurative Art in Medieval Islam and the Riddle of Bihzâd of Herāt (1465–1535)*, Paris: Flammarion, 2004, 13.

[144] *Mū-yi qalam-ash az ūstādī / jān dādah bih ṣūrat-i jamādī, Khwāndamīr, Muraqqaʿ-i ustād Kamāl-ud-Dīn Bihzād: Dībachah-'i Ghiyāṯ-ud-Dīn Khwāndamīr*, in Thackston, *Album Prefaces,* 41–42, at 41; compare Thackston's translation at 42; also the translation of Arnold, *Painting in Islam*, at 36.

painting is here being *celebrated* with reference to the very *same* scriptural texts that legal discourse takes as the criteria for its *proscription*.

Bihzād's painting is thus assigned positive value and larger meaning by invocation of the language of Prophetic Revelation: if we are ignorant of Qur'ān and Hadith we cannot grasp the terms of reference and value and meaning in which Bihzād's audience appreciated him. Here it would appear that the self-same language of the texts of Muḥammadan Revelation is read in two hermeneutical trajectories that are so divergent as to produce two contrary values: one trajectory that reads the text to categorically prohibit the image; another that reads the text to celebrate the image. Each respective reading invokes the same body of text but *inverts* the value produced by the other reading—one transforming the negative value of prohibition into the positive value of celebration, and the other *vice versa*. (How) are both of these *Islamic*?

Sixth, and finally, there is the question with which we began this book: that of wine. The consumption of wine made from grapes is prohibited by all schools of Islamic law, which forbid the consumption of intoxicating liquids on the basis of the verse of the Qur'ān, "Wine, and games of chance, and stone-idols, and divining-arrows are an abomination from the works of Satan: shun it, that you might do good works!"[145] further specified by the axiomatic Hadith of the Prophet, "That of which a large amount intoxicates, a small amount is forbidden" (early in their history, the Ḥanafī school of law allowed the consumption of some spirits made from sources other than grape in amounts that fall short of intoxicating the drinker, although by the sixth/thirteenth century, the majority position of that school also became that of blanket prohibition).[146] "The prohibition of wine," as one scholar straightfor-

[145] *yā ayyuhā alladhīnā āmanū inna-mā al-khamru wa al-maysiru wa al-anṣābu wa al-azlāmu rijsun min ʿamal al-shayṭāni fa-ijtanibū-hu laʿalla-kum tufliḥūna*; Qur'ān 5:92 al-Mā'idah.

[146] See the discussion of the respective positions and arguments of the legal schools on alcoholic beverages by Najam Haider, "Contesting Intoxication: Early Juristic Debates over the Lawfulness of Alcoholic Beverages," *Islamic Law and Society* 20 (2013) 43–89; also Najam Haider, *The Origins of the Shīʿa: Identity, Ritual, and Sacred Space in Eighth-Century Kufa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, at 138–186. For a (spirited) argument that the founder of the Ḥanafī school, the Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, permitted the consumption of grape wine in a non-intoxicating measure (and that this view was held by some of the Companions of the Prophet) see the famous dynastic history by the Saljuq vizier, Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Sulaymān Rāvandī (fl. 1202), *Rāḥat-us-Ṣudūr va āyat-us-surūr dar tārīkh-i āl-i Saljūq* (edited by Muḥammad Iqbāl), London: E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Trust, 1921, 417–418.

wardly puts it, "is one of the distinctive marks of the Muslim world; its consequences can hardly be overrated."[147]

However, an equally distinctive mark of the history of Muslims has been a widely-held and constantly reiterated alternative evaluation of wine in non-legal discourses where wine and the consumption thereof are invested with a *positive* meaning expressive of higher, indeed, *rarefied* value—and this positive meaning has been enacted in society both in literary re-iteration and in the physical consumption of wine in social settings. Thus, in a foundational work of medical literature, *The Welfare of Bodies and Souls* (*Kitāb maṣāliḥ al-abdān wa al-anfus*) of Abū Zayd al-Balkhī (849–943),[148] we find the author stating:

> The best drink that humans, through their reason and understanding, have devised a means of producing, is the refined grape-drink among whose properties is that it intoxicates [*al-sharāb al-ʿinabī al-raqīq alladhī min ṭabʿi-hi al-iskār*]. It is, of all beverages, the most noble in essence, most superior in composition, and most beneficial—if taken in moderation, and not to excess.[149]

Abū Zayd is, of course, speaking of grape-wine.

> The benefit of a substance to the body lies in what the substance provides the body by way of health and strength, whereas its benefit to the soul lies in what the substance provides the soul by way of happiness and animation: for these two things—I mean: health and happiness—are the end to which all people strive in this world; and they are not found together in any food or drink save for in this particular drink [*illā fī hādhā al-nawʿ min al-sharāb*].
>
> . . . Its benefit to the soul is the happiness and animation that it provides the soul. This is something unique to it among all foods and drinks,

[147] A. J. Wensinck, "Wine in Islam," *Muslim World* 18 (1928), 365–373, at 373 (this is a reprinting of the entry on "Khamr," in M. H. Houtsma, A. J. Wensinck, T. W. Arnold, W. Heffening, and E. Lévi-Provençal (editors), *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden: E. Brill, 1927, 4:894–897).

[148] On him see W. Montgomery Watt, "Abū Zayd Balkhī," in Ehsan Yarshater (editor), *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, London: Routledge Kegan Paul, continued by New York: Bibliotheca Persica Press, continued by New York: Encyclopaedia Iranica Foundation, 1982–, 1.4:399–400.

[149] *afḍal al-ashribah allatī istakhraja al-nās ṣanʿata-hā bi-tadbīri-him wa ʿuqūli-him al-sharāb al-ʿinabī al-raqīq alladhī min ṭabʿi-hi al-iskār wa huwa ashrafu-hā jawharan wa afḍalu-hā tarkīban wa aktharu-hā nafʿan idhā kāna al-tanāwul bi-qaṣd wa min ghayr isrāf*; Abū Zayd Aḥmad b. Sahl al-Balkhī, *Maṣāliḥ al-abdān wa al-anfus* (edited by Maḥmūd Miṣrī), Cairo: Maʿhad al-Makhṭūṭāt al-ʿArabiyyah, 2005, 416.

for none of these have in them anything of which the pleasure is transported from the body to the soul producing therein—as does this drink—an abundance of happiness, animation, openness, stimulation, self-contentment, generosity, and freedom from cares and sorrows.

Among its virtues is that it acts to produce a marvelous effect within the capacities of the soul by bringing forth from it that which was not seen to be present in it prior to drinking: such as the capacities for courage and magnanimity—which are known to be the noblest of human capacities—this even if these things were lacking in a person before: thus, wine gives courage to the coward and makes generous the miser. It also increases that which is already present in a person: such as the capacities for understanding, memory, intellect, eloquence, and sharpness of thought; for it is known that these virtues increase in a person when he has reached the midway state of drinking—before he is overcome by inebriation.

Further among its virtues is that it is the thing that creates a cause for friends to come together around it in conversation and close company . . . It is known that society is made pleasurable by listening or by conversing . . . and that it is by listening and conversing that companionship and happiness flourish in social gatherings—and that nothing makes listening and conversing so agreeable and pleasurable as partaking in wine. It is wine that provides excellence to society and conversation . . . and there is nothing that makes possible relations of intimacy and confidence between friends so tastefully and pleasantly and effectively as does drinking wine together. In this way one finds that . . . the person dearest to anyone from among all his associates is his boon-companion who drinks with him.[150]

[150] *manfaʿat al-ajsād inna-mā hiya fī-mā yufīdu-hā siḥḥatan wa quwwatan wa manfaʿat al-anfus inna-mā hiya fī-mā yufīdu-hā nishāṭan wa surūran wa hādhāni al-shayʾān aʿnī al-ṣiḥḥah wa al-quwwah humā al-ghāyah min maṭālib al-nās fī hādhihi al-dunyā wa laysa yajtamiʿāni fī shayʾin min al-aṭʿimah wa al-ashribah illā fī hādhā al-nawʿ min al-sharāb. wa ammā manfaʿatu-hu li-al-anfus fa-hiya mā yufīdu-hā al-surūr wa al-nishāṭ wa dhālika shayʾ khāṣṣ la-hu dūna mā siwā-hu min al-aṭʿimah wa al-ashribah li-anna-hu laysa shayʾ min-hā tataʿaddā ladhdhatu-hu al-jasad ilā al-nafs fa-yufīdu-hā min farṭ al-surūr wa al-nishāṭ wa al-arīḥiyyah wa al-ihtizāz wa ghinā al-nafs wa ruḥb al-dhirāʿ wa al-takhallī min al-humūm wa al-aḥzān mā yufīdu-hā hādhā al-sharāb. wa min tilka al-faḍāʾil anna-hu yafʿal fī quwā al-nafs afʿālan ʿajībatan bi-iẓhāri-hi min-hā mā lā yurā mawjūdan fī-hā qabla shurbi-hi mithlu quwā al-shujāʿah wa al-sakhāʾ fa-qad ʿulima anna-hā min ashraf quwā al-insān wa in lam yakun al-sharāb min-hu yushajjiʿ al-insān al-jabbān wa yusakhkhī al-bakhīl wa bi-ziyādati-hi baʿd fī-mā yakūn mawjūdan fī-hi min-hā mithlu quwwat al-fahm wa al-ḥifẓ wa al-dhihn wa durābat al-lisān wa ḥiddat al-khawāṭir fa-qad ʿulima anna hādhihi al-faḍāʾil tatazayyadu fī-hi idhā balagha al-ḥāl al-mutawassiṭah fī al-shurb wa min qabl ifḍāʾi-hi ilā al-sukr. wa min tilka al-faḍāʾil anna-hu al-shayʾ alladhī jaʿala [*reading* jaʿala *for* juʿila] *sababan li-ijtimāʿ al-mutaḥābbīna min al-ikhwān ʿalay-hi li-al-muḥādathah wa*

Medicine was conceived of in pre-modern societies of Muslims as a register of *ḥikmah*, or universal wisdom—as (a) *truth*. Medical science is *truth* at which humans arrive, not through the prophetically-revealed text, but through the exercise of rational observation and experimentation—most physicians and natural scientists were thus also philosophers—and *its validity is demonstrated in its curative power* to provide *Welfare for Bodies and Souls*. Abū Zayd al-Balkhī's evaluation of wine is a truth-claim made by someone practicing the epistemology of what the philosopher-physician Ibn Sīnā, in his great *Law of Medicine* (*al-Qānūn fī al-ṭibb*) called "the *real sciences* wherein it is *established* that knowledge of a thing is obtained only through knowledge of its causes and original principles—if such are available; and if they are not, then knowledge of it is only effected by way of coming to know its accidental and self-necessary properties."[151]

Having adumbrated the accidental and self-necessary properties of wine precisely on the basis of scientific observation, Abū Zayd al-Balkhī (who, incidentally, also authored several works on the Qur'ān)[152] then pronounces the universal principle that, in his evaluation and diagnosis, governs wine: the "general rule that applies in regard to everything that is both of great value and of great danger [*ḥukm muṭṭarrid fī kulli shayʾ jalīl al-qadr ʿaẓīm al-khaṭar*]"—that "it be taken in moderation [*al-tanāwul min-hā ʿalā sabīl al-iqtiṣād*]."[153] Abū

*al-muʾānasah . . . wa maʿlūm anna al-ijtimāʿ inna-mā yaṭību bi-samāʿ aw muḥādathah fa bi-himā taʿmuru majālis al-uns wa al-surūr wa humā lā yaṭībāni illā bi-al-sharāb wa ʿāmmi-hi fa-al-sharāb huwa alladhī yuʿṭī faḍīlat al-ijtimāʿ wa al-muḥādathah . . . wa lā shayʾ aladhdh wa aṭyab wa ashadd tamkīnan li-asbāb al-khuṣūṣiyyah wa al-mufāwaḍah bayna al-mutaḥābbīna min al-tanādum . . . wa ka-dhālika yūjad aʿazz al-nās ʿalā kullin min al-mutākhīna nadīmu-hu alladhī yushāribu-hu*, Abū Zayd al-Balkhī, *Maṣāliḥ al-abdān wa al-anfus*, 416–418. These passages are highlighted and paraphrased by David Waines, "Abū Zayd al-Balkhī on the Nature of Forbidden Drink: A Medieval Islamic Controversy," in Manuela Marín and David Waines (editors), *La Alimentación en las Culturas Islámicas*, Madrid: Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional, 1994, 111–126, at 115–117.

[151] *qad tabayyana fī al-ʿulūm al-ḥaqīqiyyah anna al-ʿilm bi-al-shayʾ inna-mā yuḥṣal min jihat al-ʿilm bi-asbābi-hi wa mabādī-hi in kānat la-hu wa in lam takun fa-inna-mā yutammam min jihat al-ʿilm bi-ʿawāriḍi-hi wa lawāzimi-hi al-dhātiyyah*, Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī Ibn Sīnā, *al-Qānūn fī al-ṭibb*, Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿah al-ʿĀmirah, 1877, 1:4 (compare the translation of O. Cameron Gruner, *A Treatise on the Canon of Medicine of Avicenna, Incorporating a Translation of the First Book*, London: Luzac & Co., 1930, 25–26; and that of Mazhar T. Shah, *The General Principles of Avicenna's Canon of Medicine*, Karachi: Naveed Clinic, 1966, 19). For the place of experimentation in Ibn Sīnā's methodology and epistemology, see Jon McGinnis, "Scientific Methodologies in Medieval Islam," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 41 (2003) 307–327, especially at 319–327.

[152] See the list of works by Abū Zayd assembled by Maḥmūd al-Miṣrī in his editor's introduction to Abū Zayd al-Balkhī, *Maṣāliḥ al-abdān wa al-anfus*, 80–84.

[153] Abū Zayd al-Balkhī, *Maṣāliḥ al-abdān wa al-anfus*, 420; see also Waines, "Abū Zayd al-Balkhī on the Nature of Forbidden Drink," 118.

Zayd's is a value judgement or *ḥukm* on wine—he uses the same term, *ḥukm*, as is used for a legal judgement or valorization, and which derives from the same verbal root as does *ḥikmah/ḥikmat* (the same term, *ḥakīm*, designates both a physician and a philosopher)—as well as a prescription for the social use of wine that is founded on criteria for truth and that arrives at conclusions of truth quite different to the *ḥukm* of legal discourse that states, "That of which a large amount intoxicates, a small amount is forbidden." And far from being alone in his evaluation of wine in terms autonomous of those of legal discourse, Abū Zayd is highly representative of the medical discourse: an evalution of the benefits and harms of wine issued in terms independent of those of legal discourse is, for example, also presented at length in what would become the foundational Persian-language medical text, the *Ẕakhīrah-i Khwārazmshāhī* by Sayyid Ismā'īl b. Ḥasan Jurjānī (1043–1137).[154] Abū Zayd's was also, evidently, a value judgement that was shared by the physician-philosopher, Ibn Sīnā, who—when apparently not engaged in the problem of defining God—routinely drank wine in good company. As Ibn Sīnā's student, Abū ʿUbayd al-Jūzjānī reports in his biography of his great teacher:

> Every night, pupils would gather at his house, while, by turns, I would read from the *Shifā'* and someone else would read from the *Qānūn*. When we were done, various types of singers would appear, a drinking party [*majlis al-sharāb*] was prepared along with its appurtenances, and we would partake of it.[155]

[154] See the facsimile edition from the manuscript held in the library of the Majlis-i Shūrā of Iran: Sayyid Ismāʿīl Jurjānī, *Ẕakhīrah-i Khwārazmshāhī: chāp-i ʿaksī az rū-yi nushkhahā'ī khaṭṭī*, (prepared by Saʿīdī Sīrjānī), Tehran: Intishārāt-i Bunyād-i Farhang-i Īrān, 2535 *shāhī* [1976], 146–152; and Sayyid Ismāʿīl Jurjānī, *Ẕakhīrah-i Khwārazmshāhī* (edited by Muḥāmmad Riẓā Muḥarrirī), Tehran: Farhangistān-i ʿUlūm-i Pizishkī, 1382 *sh* [2003], 3:91–106. The continuing influence of this work may be may be gauged from the fact that, eight hundred years after it was authored and in the newly emergent age of the printing press, it was commissioned for translation into Urdu by the leading commercial publisher of nineteenth-century North India, Munshī Naval Kishōr of Lucknow, for the benefit of a wider readership (and, presumably, of the Munshī's profits); see Seema Alavi, *Islam and Healing: Loss and Recovery of an Indo-Muslim Medical Tradition, 1600–1900*, New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2008, 207–214. On the Naval Kishōr publishing house, see Ulrike Stark, *An Empire of Books: The Naval Kishore Press and the Diffusion of the Printed Word in Colonial India*, Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2008.

[155] *wa kāna yajtamiʿu kulla laylatin fī dāri-hi ṭalabat al-ʿilm wa kuntu aqra' min al-Shifā' nawbatan wa kāna yaqra' ghayr-ī min al-Qānūn nawbatan fa-idhā farighnā haḍara al-mughannūna ʿalā ikhtilāf tabaqati-him wa ʿubbiya majlis al-sharāb bi-ālāti-hi wa kunnā nashtaghil bi-hi*, see William E. Gohlman, *The Life of Ibn Sina: A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1974, 54 (compare Gohlman's translation at 55).

It is worth noting, by-the-by, that the works studied prior to these nightly wine-drinking sessions, namely Ibn Sīnā's *Shifā'* and his *Qānūn*, would become the most influential books, respectively, of physics and metaphysics, and of medicine, in the subsequent centuries of the history of societies of Muslims.

The *positive* valorization of wine is, of course, universally evident in the history of the poetical discourses of Muslim societies—that is, in the form of speech regarded as the highest register of human self-expression and social communication—where wine served as the pre-eminent and pivotal image for the deepest experience of the meaning of human existence in relation to the Divine. When seeking to make sense of the contradictory valorization of wine in literary and legal discourses, respectively, the tendency on the part of modern analysts is to insist on understanding the image of wine in the literary discourse of the Islamic world in purely metaphorical terms. Unaccountably, this tendency ignores the widespread practice of grape-wine-drinking as a persistent and standard feature in the history of societies of Muslims (as mentioned above by al-Balkhī, and as practiced by Ibn Sīnā and his students) in which the ideal setting for wine was in a gathering of friends with the accompaniment of poetry and music. The consumption of grape-wine took place in social gatherings un-embarrassedly and frankly designated in the various languages of Islamic civilization as "drinking assemblies" (Arabic: *majlis al-sharāb*, Persian: *majlis-i sharāb*, Turkish: *bādeh meclisi*, *çāğīr meclisi*, etc)—and in which partakers were certainly not all drinking on doctor's orders.

Given the fact that Muslims did not merely spout poetry about wine but consumed wine and poetry together in the same social gatherings as a part of the same body-and-soul-nourishing repast, it is hardly reasonable to wish the wine-poetry away as mere symbolism divorced from material reality. Wine-drinking was a *collective and normative group practice*—which is to say, it was practiced in often large social gatherings of friends and peers; neither furtively and secretly on the one hand, nor in the common and general public on the other—it is hardly reasonable, then, to conceive of its practitioners to have considered it a categorical and unmitigated violation of the Divine Truth of the God in acknowledgement of whose existence they lived. Qur'ānically-prohibited wine was not only the most rarefied *metaphorical* drink of Muslims; it was also the most rarefied *social* drink of Muslims.[156] Is this conceivably "Islamic"?[157]

[156] On the culture of the consumption of wine in social gatherings at court and in private parties, see now the rich and richly-illustrated study by Halil İnalcık, *Has-bağçede ʿayş u tarab: nedimler, şairler, mutribler*, Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kultur Yayınları, 2010.

[157] It cannot be overemphasized that one is referring here to not just alcoholic beverages

The most influential—that is, most widely copied, read and re-worked—book of political theory and "practical philosophy" (*ḥikmat-i ʿamalī*) in Islamic history until the modern period, the *Ethics* (*Akhlāq*) of the philosopher, astronomer and statesman, Naṣīr-ud-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 1274), which circulated widely, enjoying paradigmatic status as a book of social norms and ideals throughout the Balkans-to-Bengal complex (it is cited above in the list of standard illustrated books), contains a chapter expressly dedicated to the "Manners of Wine-Drinking [*ādāb-i sharāb-khwurdan*]," indicating the *norm*alness of the practice. Ṭūsī's bottom line is: a gentleman may drink, but should never be blotto.

> When one enters a wine gathering . . . in no case may one stay so long as to become drunk . . . if a man have a poor head for wine, he should drink little, or he should dilute it, or he should leave the party earlier . . . Let him not become involved in the conversation of drunken men or busy himself in mediation between them; however, where matters eventuate in hostility, he should restrain them from (attacking) each other . . . Should a malaise overcome him, let him fight it off in the midst of the assembly in such a way that his companions do not become aware thereof, or let him go outside without delay; once he has vomited, he may return to the party.[158]

Ṭūsī is here not telling Muslims *not* to drink; rather, he is telling them, as a practical and social matter, the *right way* to drink.

That there was an *ethic* (as in the title of Ṭūsī's work) attached to drinking, and that the drinking of wine constituted an element within a larger articulated and integrated world-view and ethos of Muslim existence is precisely what is expressed in the poetry of Ḥāfiẓ, discussed above. And any doubts that the poetry of Ḥāfiẓ was understood by its audience to refer as much to physical wine as to metaphysical/metaphorical wine may be removed summarily by admitting into exhibitory evidence a representative wine-jug (there

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made from sources other than grape and date which were permitted in a minority view within the Ḥanafī legal school followed by the Sunnī Turkic peoples, but precisely to grape-wine, the prohibition of which was unambiguous in legal discourse.

[158] I have slightly emended the translation of Wickens, *The Nasirean Ethics*, 176–177; *chun dar majlis-i sharāb shavad . . . bā-yad kih bih hīch ḥāl chandān muqām nakunad kih mast gardad . . . pas agar żaʿīf-sharāb buvad andak khwurad yā mamzūj kunad yā az majlis sabuktar barkhīzad . . . va dar ḥadīṣ-i mastān khūż nakunad va bih tavassuṭ-i īshān mashghūl nashavad magar kih bih khuṣūmat anjāmad āngāh īshān rā az yak-dīgar bāzdārad . . . va agar ghasayān ghalabah kunad dar miyān-i majlis ān rā mudāfaʿat kunad bar vajhī kih aṣḥāb vuqūf nayāband yā dar ḥāl bīrūn āyad va chun qayy kunad bā majlis muʿāvadat nanumāyad*; Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*, 234–235.

are several others) made in Herat in 1461/62 inscribed with the following *ghazal* from the *Dīvān* of Ḥāfiẓ:

> Better than pleasure, than the conversation of friends, than the garden and Springtime:
> What is there?
>
> Where is the wine-bearer? Tell: Why are we waiting? What is there?
> Every moment of joy that comes in hand: take as a gift!
> No one has knowledge: at the end of this work: What is there?
> Life is tied by a hair-thread: Take heed!
> Tend your own sorrows! As for the sorrows of the world: What is there?
> The meaning of the Water of Life and the Garden of Iram:
> Save for the bank of a brook and agreeable wine: What is there?
> The abstinent and the drunkard are both of the one tribe:
> If we give our heart: to whose charms? What choice! What is there?
> What does this silent firmament know of the secret beyond the veil?
> O, claimant! You quarrel with the curtain-keeper: What is there?
> If the cruelty and infidelity of the beloved are not taken into the reckoning:
> What means the Grace and Mercy of God? What is there?
> The ascetic desired drink from the Fountain of Paradise, and Ḥāfiẓ from the wine-cup;
> God's Will 'twixt the two? We shall see what is there.[159]

This wine-jug (preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London) dates from the reign in Herat of Sultan Ḥusayn Mīrzā Bāyqarā (*r.* 1470–1506)—patron of a magnificent cultural efflorescence which included the above-mentioned philosopher, poet and Sufi, Jāmī (the great elaborator in Persian of

[159] *khwush-tar zi ʿaysh u ṣuhbat u bāgh u bahār chīst / sāqī kujāst gū sabab-i intiẓār chīst // har vaqt-i khwush kih dast dahad mughtanam shumār / kas rā vuqūf nīst kih anjām-i kār chīst // payvand-i ʿumr bastah bih mū'īst hūsh dār / ghamkhwār-i khwīsh bāsh gham-i rūzgār chīst // maʿnī-yi āb-e zindagī u rawżah-yi Iram / juz ṭarf-i jūybār u may-i khwushgavār chīst // mastūr u mast har du chu az yak qabīlah-and / mā dil bih ʿishva-yi kih dahīm ikhtiyār chīst // rāz-e darūn-e pardah chih dānad falak khamūsh / ay muddaʿī nizāʿ-i tu bā pardahdār chīst // sahv u khaṭā-yi bandah garash hast iʿtibār / maʿnī-yi lutf u raḥmat-i parvardigār chīst // zāhid sharāb-i kawṯar u Ḥāfiẓ piyālah khwāst / tā dar miyānah khwāstah-yi kirdigār chīst*; Ḥāfiẓ, *Dīvān-i Ḥāfiẓ*, *ghazal* 66. The inscription was first transcribed and identified by Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World: 8th-18th Centuries*, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1982, 248–250 (item number 109); it was re-read by Linda Komaroff, *The Golden Disk of Heaven: Metalwork of Timurid Iran*, Cosa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 1992, 156–158.

the thought of Ibn ʿArabī), and also of the above-mentioned Jesus-like painter, Bihzād—who acquired the status of a model prince in the historical imagination of the Balkans-to-Bengal complex, and of whom the Mughal Emperor, Bābur, wrote in his autobiography, "For the nearly forty years that he was King in Khurasan, there was not a day when he did not drink wine after performing the noon-day prayer—but that he never drank a morning draught—as was also the state of affairs with his sons, and all his military and civilian officials"[160] (Ḥusayn Bāyqarā seems, in this matter, to have been one step ahead of the eleventh-century Ziyārid ruler of northern Iran, Kaykāvūs b. Iskandar who, in his mirror-for-princes, the *Qābūsnāmah*, advised, "Begin your drinking after the mid-afternoon prayers").[161] The inscribed verses of Ḥāfiẓ present a moral, intellectual, and existential valorization of wine where a positive value is articulated for wine by conscious means of a dialectical invocation of elements of the textual world of Muhammadan Revelation: "the secret beyond the veil" (Qur'ān 42:51 al-Shūrā tells us that God speaks to man *min warā'-i ḥijābin*, "from behind a veil"), "the Fountain of Paradise" (an engagement with Qur'ān 108:1 al-Kawthar),[162] "the garden of Iram" (an invocation of Qur'ān 89:6 al-Fajr),[163] and the Qur'ānically ubiquitous "Grace and

[160] *Qırq yılğa yavuq kim Xurāsānda pādišāh edi, heč kün yoq edi kim namāz-i pešındın song ičmägäy, valî hargiz ṣabūhī qılmas edi. Oğlanları va jamīʿ sipāhīğa va šahrīğa bu ḥāl edi.* [Persian: *nazdīk bi-chihil sāl kih dar Khorāsān pādishāh būd hīch rūz nabūd kih baʿd az namāz-i pīshīn sharāb nakhwurd ammā hargiz ṣabūḥī namīkardah. Pisarān-i ū va jamīʿ sipāhī va shahrī-yi ū rā īn ḥāl būd*]; Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur Mirza, *Bâburnâma (Chaghatay Turkish Text with Abdul-Rahim Khankhanan's Persian Translation* (Turkish transcription, Persian edition and English translation by Wheeler M. Thackston Jr.), Cambridge: Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University, 1993, 2:340–341 (I have reproduced Thackston's transliteration of the Chaghatay Turkish; compare Thackston's translation).

[161] *ammā āghāz-e sīkī-khwurdan namāz-i dīgar kun*; Kaykāvūs b. Iskandar b. Qābūs b. Washmgīr b. Ziyār, *Qābūsnāmah* (edited by Saʿīd Nafīsi), Tehran: Maṭbaʿ-i Majlis, 1313 *sh* [1934], 48; compare the translation in Kai Kā'ūs ibn Iskandar, *Prince of Gurgān, A Mirror for Princes: The Qābūs Nāma* (translated by Reuben Levy), London: Cresset Press, 1951, 59. On the manners of wine-drinking, see also the famous work of the Saljuq vizier and founder of the great Niẓāmiyyah madrasah in Baghdad where al-Ghazzālī taught, Niẓām-ul-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāmah*, Tehran: Kitābfurūsh-i Ṭahūrī, 1334 *sh* [1955], 128–129 (translated as *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings: The Siyāsat-nāma or Siyar al-Mulūk of Niẓām-ul-Mulk* (translated by Hubert Drake), New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960, 122–123); as well that of his successor, Rāvandī, *Rāḥat-uṣ-Ṣudūr*, 416–427.

[162] The word I am translating as "fountain of paradise" is, of course, *kawṯar* (Arabic: *al-kawthar*), which is named in the Qur'ān as something granted to Muḥammad by God (Qur'ān 108:1 al-Kawthar), and is identified in Hadith as either a fountain, pool, cistern or river in Paradise; see J. Horovitz and L. Gardet, "Kawthar," in E. van Donzli, B. Lewis and Ch. Pellat (editors), *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (New Edition). Volume IV, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978, 4:805–806.

[163] "Iram of the Pillars [*iram dhāt al-ʿimād*]" is invoked in Qur'ān 89:6 al-Fajr as a corrupt people who were destroyed by God. It became widely accepted that these people lived in the city of Iram, which was famous for its magnificent gardens. The phrase "garden of Iram" became

Mercy of God." The present *ghazal* ends with the statement that it remains to be seen in favour of whom/what it is that God will ultimately rule: will it be Ḥāfiz and wine, or the ascetic and abstinence, or neither, or both (God might well finally say, "If we give our heart—to whose charms? What choice! What is there?")? This wine-jar—similar to other (surviving) objects like it made by and for the use of Muslims[164]—is self-evidently a reification of the place of wine in a larger inter-articulated aesthetical and ethical sensibility that has *meaning* only with reference to the Revelatory sources of Islam, as well as an instrument of the fact of the practice of the consumption of wine in a social milieu conscious of (we might say: *inscribed with*) this complex of values.[165] Is this complex of values and practices and the object that embodies and bears witness to them *Islamic*?

The consumption of wine was, thus, like the production of figural painting discussed above, prohibited in legal discourse, but positively valued in non-legal discourse—especially amongst those social and political elites who instituted and secured the structures of the state and the very legal institutions that regulated society. Thus, the Mughal Emperor, Bābur, writes disarmingly in his autobiography about his life-long struggle with the bottle,[166] the diplomatic gifts of the Ṣafavid Shāh ʿAbbās to the Great Mughal Jahāngīr included a choice selection of wine,[167] and the Ottoman Sultan İbrāhīm, remembered as

standard in Persian, Ottoman and Urdu poetry. It is worth noting that the city in which Ḥāfiẓ lived and wrote, Shiraz, itself has to this day a famous garden, built in the eighteenth century, called "The Garden of Iram" (*Bāgh-i Iram*).

[164] See, for example, the sixteenth-century wine-cup preserved in the Freer Gallery in Washington, DC (object number F 1954.115), inscribed with similar verses from another of Ḥāfiẓ's *ghazal*s:

> We and wine—and the pious ascetics:
> Let us see to whom the beloved turns.

*mā vu may u zāhidān-i taqvā / tā yār sar-i kudām dārad*; Ḥāfiẓ, *Dīvān-e Ḥāfiẓ*, *ghazal* 115; also items 165 and 167 in Melikian-Chirvani, *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World*, 350–353. For the larger engagement with Ḥāfiẓ in the pictorial and plastic arts, see the important article by Priscilla Soucek, "Interpreting the *ghazals* of Hafiz," *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 43 (2003) 146–163.

[165] For a strictly metaphysical and symbolic reading of this *ghazal* that makes no reference to its appearance on a wine-jug, but rather scoffs at the possibility that it might legitimately be taken as referring to physical wine—"naively literalist (if not forthrightly stupid) readers might well read this . . . as though the poet were actually speaking of this particular outward wine and stream of Shīrāz—rather than of that Wine and Stream and spiritual Conversation of ever-renewed Creation"—see James Morris, "Transfiguring Love: Perspective Shifts and the Contextualization of Experience in the *Ghazals* of Ḥāfiẓ," in Leonard Lewisohn (editor), *Hafiz and the Religion of Love in Classical Persian Poetry*, London: I. B. Tauris, 2010, 227–250, at 242.

[166] On this famous characteristic, see Anna Malecka, "The Muslim Bon Vivant: Drinking Customs of Bābur, the Emperor of Hindustan," *Der Islam* 78 (2001) 310–327.

[167] Rudi Matthee, *The Pursuit of Pleasure: Drugs and Stimulants in Iranian History, 1500–1900*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005, 67.

Sarḫōsh ("the Drunk"), was popularly reputed to have undertaken the conquest of vine-rich Cyprus for the express purpose of lubricating his habit. Bābur noted further of his royal cousin, Bāysonġūr, whom he recognized as a "just, humane, fine-natured prince of learned-virtue," that "he was excessively fond of wine; when not drinking, he would perform his prayers."[168]

The remarkable Ottoman traveler, Evliyā Çelebī, describes his first encounter with the Ottoman Sultan Murād IV as having taken place at a royal party where wine was consumed (Evliyā himself abstained), terminated by the mid-afternoon prayer, followed by a recitation from the Qur'ān.[169] What Rudi Matthee has written about Safavid Iran applies throughout the Balkans-to-Bengal complex: "Wine . . . presents us with the fundamental paradox of a substance that, although formally forbidden, played an important role in society, its rituals, and its conventions."[170]

It is in this broader historical context of the *normalcy* of wine-consumption to the life-ways of Muslims of the Balkans-to-Bengal complex that I should like to turn to three physical objects that are most instructive in helping us to diagnose the *mutually-constitutive* relationship between wine and Islam in history. These are three inscribed wine-vessels that belonged to the Mughal Emperor Jahāngīr: a grey jade wine-cup made for Jahāngīr in 1607/08, a green jade wine-cup made for him in 1613/14, and a white jade wine-jug that Jahāngīr acquired the same year and that had once belonged to another great imbiber, the Timurid astronomer-mathematician-Sultan Uluġ Bēg (1394–1449, whose great observatory and *madrasah* still stand in Samarqand, and whose father, Shāh Rukh, was a stern teetotaler).

The first of these objects, preserved today in the Brooklyn Museum in New York, bears on its lip the unambiguous identifying legend "The wine-cup [*jām-i may*] of the King of the Age, *Anno Secundo*," and is blazoned with the following inscription:

> By order of His-Presence-Most-High, the Great Khāqān, Master of the Kings of the World, Manifestation of Divine Favours, Pearl-on-the-Stairway of Caliphal Succession and Emperorship, Sun-in-the-Firmament of Sultanate and World-Government, Moon-in-the-Heavens of Justice

[168] *ʿadālatpeša u ādamī u xušṭabʿ u faḍīlatlıġ pādišāhzāda edi . . . xaylī čağırğa ḥirṣı bar erdi čağir ičmas maḥallda namāz ötär edi* [Persian: *ʿadālatpīshah va ādamī va khwushṭabʿ va bā-faẓīlat pādishāhzādah būd . . . khaylī bih sharāb ḥirṣ dāshtah dar vaqtī kih sharāb namīkhwurdah namāz mīguẕārdah*]), Babur, *Bâburnâma*, 140–141 (I have reproduced Thackston's transliteration of the Chaghatay Turkish; compare Thackston's translation).

[169] Robert Dankoff (with an afterword by Gottfried Hagen), *An Ottoman Mentality: The World of Evliya Çelebi*, Leiden: Brill, 2006, 35–41.

[170] Matthee, *The Pursuit of Pleasure*, 67.

> and Felicity, Abū-l-Muẓaffar, the Shāh, son of Akbar, the Shāh, Nūr-ud-Dīn Jahāngīr Muḥammad, the Emperor, Muslim-Warrior.[171]

The inscription on the green-jade wine-cup of 1613/14 (preserved today in the Victoria and Albert Museum) reads:

> By the World-Seizing [=Jahāngīr] Emperor the world found order;
> From the radiance of his justice the age was filled with light;
> From the reflection of the spinel-coloured wine, may
> The jasper-wine-cup be—forever—like a ruby![172]

The inscription that Jahāngīr had carved into the lip of the wine-jar that had once belonged to Uluġ Bēg (preserved today in the Gulbenkian collection in Lisbon, see Figure 1), reads:

> God is Most Great [*Allāhu Akbar!*] The King of the Seven Lands! The Emperor of Emperors who spreads Justice! The Knower of the Signs, Real and Metaphorical! Abū-l-Muẓaffar Nūr-ud-Dīn Jahāngīr, the King, son of Akbar, the King! Righteous-Warrior![173]

To the limited extent that wine-cups are read as objects related to rulership in Islamic history[174] the tendency is to understand them as merely literary

[171] *jām-i may-i pādishāh-i dawrān sanah-i iṣnayn . . . bi-farmūdah-i aʿlāḥażrat <u>kh</u>āqān-i muʿaẓẓam mālik-i mulūk-i ʿālam maẓhar-i alṭāf-i ilāhī durr-i daraj-i khilāfat va pādishāhī mihr-i sipihr-i salṭanat va jahānbānī māh-i āsmān-i muʿaddalat va kāmrānī Abū-l-Muẓaffar pādishāh ibn-i Akbar pādishāh Nūr-ud-Dīn Ǧahāngīr Muḥammad pādishāh ghāzī*; the inscription was transcribed by A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, "Saʿīda-ye Gīlānī and the Iranian Style Jades of Hindustan," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*, n.s. 13 (1999) 83–140, at 92. I am reading *durr-i daraj* for the more rhetorically conventional *durr-i durj*, thus taking the phrase to mean "Pearl-on-the-Stairway of Caliphal Succession and Emperorship" rather than "Pearl-in-the-Casket of Caliphal Succession and Emperorship"; this on the basis that the image of the stairway conveys the idea of succession—in particular, each of the stairs of the *minbar* in a mosque symbolizes the seat of a succeeding Caliph (compare Melikian-Chirvani's translation).

[172] *az shāh-i jahān-gīr jahān yāft niẓām / pur nūr shud az partaw-i ʿadlash ayyām / az ʿaks-i sharāb-i laʿl-rangash bādā / yāqūt āsā piyālah-i yashm mudām*; the inscription was transcribed by Melikian-Chirvani, "Saʿīda-ye Gīlānī and the Iranian Style Jades of Hindustan," 96 (I have very slightly amended Melikian-Chirvani's translation).

[173] *Allāhu Akbar pādishāh-i haft kishvar shāhanshāh-i ʿadālat-gustar vāqif-i rumūz-i ḥaqīqī va majāzī Abū-l-Muẓaffar Nūr-ud-Dīn Ǧahāngīr pādishāh ibn-i Akbar pādishāh ghāzī sanah-i 8 julūs muṭābiq-i sanah-i 1022 hijrī* [In the year 8 *regnant*, correspondent to the year 1022 *hijrī*]. The inscription was transcribed by Melikian-Chirvani, "Saʿīda-ye Gīlānī and the Iranian Style Jades of Hindustan," 107 (I have slightly amended Melikian-Chirvani's transcription, and have duly re-translated the text, correcting Melikian-Chirvani's significant mistranslation of *vāqif* from "mortmain donor" to "knower").

[174] The wine-cups of the Mughal emperors have, to the best of my knowledge, never been studied as statements of self-conceptualization of rulership.

**Figure 1.** White jade wine-jug produced in Samarqand for the Tīmūrid astronomer-mathematician-Sultan Uluġ Bēg (1394–1446), acquired in 1613 by the Mughal Emperor Jahāngīr, bearing the inscription on the lip: "God is Most Great [*Allāhu Akbar!*] The King of the Seven Lands! The Emperor of Emperors who spreads Justice! The Knower of the Signs, Real and Metaphorical! Abū-l-Muẓaffar Nūr-ud-Dīn Jahāngīr, the King, son of Akbar, the King! Muslim-Warrior!" (Courtesy, Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon).

gestures towards the pre-Islamic image of the world-divining wine-cup of Kay-Khusraw, the mythic Iranian King commemorated in the *Shāhnāmah*, which also came to be associated with another mythic Iranian king, Jamshīd (remembered as the first wine-maker), as the *jām-i J̌ām*.[175] The texts inscribed on the wine-cups of Jahāngīr, however, go well beyond this pre-Islamic value to articulate a conception of *legitimate rulership in a distinctively Islamic hermeneutic*—a statement of legitimate rulership, it should be added, which is here being made by the political and social order that ruled over a larger population of Muslims than any other on the planet. It is striking that the third inscription begins with the fundamental Islamic declaration, *Allāhu*

[175] See Mahmoud Omidsalar, "Jamšid. ii. Jamšid in Persian Literature," in Ehsan Yarshater (editor), *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, London: Routledge Kegan Paul, continued by New York: Bibliotheca Persica Press, continued by New York: Encyclopaedia Iranica Foundation, 1982–, 14.5:522–528.

*Akbar* (God is Most Great!); the same glorification of God also appears four times on another wine-vessel made for Jahāngīr in 1618/19.[176]

Thus, the wine-vessels of the Great Mughal declare categorically his fealty to the God of Islam. The wine-cup of 1607/8 expressly links Jahāngīr's rule to the *khilāfat*, or Vicegerency—that is, at the very least, to the Caliphal Succession to the Prophet Muḥammad, if not to the Vicegerency on Earth to God Himself.[177] Two of the objects characterize Jahāngīr as *ghāzī*—as a warrior who fights for the community of Muslims and is ready to lay down his life in the way of Islam (for which reason I have rendered the word as "Muslim-Warrior")—a self-designation that invariably appears on the coins minted by the Mughal emperors. The primary terms in which the Emperor is constituted and presented are by the fulfillment of the political function of giver of Justice and Order—which are, significantly, the qualities emphasized and reiterated as definitive of legitimate Rulership by Ṭūsī in his *Ethics*, the book that the historian, Muzaffar Alam, has shown to have been the foundational text for Mughal political thought.[178]

These defining attributes of the Emperor in the world are likened by the inscription on the Victoria and Albert Museum wine-cup to the attribute of wine in the cup: just as the world finds order and is illuminated by the justice of the Emperor—the Successor of the Prophet—so is the wine-cup illuminated by the radiance of wine. The Emperor *is* wine, and he is also the Caliph and Ghazi. Deeply evident in these inscriptions is the language of the epistemological apparatus of the philosophical-Sufi amalgam: thus, the Emperor is, in clear Sufi terms, the *manifestation* (*maẓhar*: literally, the "locus of making visible") of Divine favour; also, in clear Suhrawardīan idiom, his justice *illuminates* the world. Above all, he is the "Knower of the Signs, Real and Metaphorical," that is of the signs of *ḥaqīqah* and *majāz*: he is, in other words, knower of the hierarchical registers of higher and lower T/truth posited by Sufi and philosophical thought (this is a standard conceptualization and representation of Mughal political discourse: for example Jahāngīr's grandfather, the Mughal Emperor Humāyūn, was entitled "Unifier of the Sovereignty of the Real-True and of the Metaphorical [*jāmiʿ-i ṣalṭanat-i ḥaqīqī va majāzī*]."[179]

[176] Melikian-Chirvani, "Saʿīda-ye Gīlānī and the Iranian Style Jades of Hindustan," 104.

[177] On the concept of *khilāfah* as Vicegerency of God, see Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, 4–23.

[178] Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam in India*, 46–69.

[179] See Said Amir Arjomand, "Legitimacy and Political Organization," in Robert Irwin (editor), *The New Cambridge History of Islam, Volume 4, Islamic Cultures and Societies to the End of the Eighteenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 225–273, at 269–270. For another instance of Jahāngīr portraying himself as "By the Grace of God, Emperor of Form and Meaning [*pādishāh-i ṣūrat o maʿnā*]" see the inscription in the upper panels in the famous min-

The economy with which the wine-vessels of Jahāngīr invoke, condense and reify a complex language of conceptualization of meaning of existence and of political order can only be read as eloquent testimony of the profound and reflexive degree to which the consciousness of the people in the society in which these statements were made must itself have been inscribed with and cognizant of this complex of meaning. The language of the wine-vessels is, in other words, both commonplace and *normative*. Indeed, it would appear that the wine-vessels of the Mughal Emperor are *Islamic* wine-vessels in that they inscribe themselves with a *meaning* that is constructed and expressed squarely in terms of and by relation to referents and values that issue blatantly from Islamic hermeneutics—that is, hermeneutics addressed to the meaning of the Muhammadan Revelation. And in inscribing themselves with Islam, these objects also *inscribe* Islam: that is, by saying "*we are meaningful in terms of Islam*"—or "*we are Islamically meaningful*"—the wine-vessels, in turn, stake a claim to constructing the meaning of Islam.

Further illustrative of this dynamic is the fact that Jahāngīr minted several coins bearing an image of him holding a wine-cup (see Figure 2).[180] In this image, Jahāngīr holds a book in his other hand—one can only wonder which book! Historically, there are two definitive public actions by which a ruler demonstrates the legitimate fact of his rule to his Muslim subjects: one, the sermon at the Friday congregational prayers is read in the name of the legitimate ruler; and, two, the coin of the realm—which is the currency for legal transaction—is minted in the name of the legitimate ruler. Jahāngīr's gold sovereign (another surviving example of which is the illustration that appears on the dust jacket of this book) thus publicly and *statedly* posits his wine-cup at the semantic and symbolic center and apex of Islamic political order. Clearly, for Jahāngīr, his wine-cup cohered with his conceptualization of what is Islam: *does our own conceptualization of Islam allow us to understand this coherence?*[181]

In addressing the question of how to conceptualize Islam as a unity in light of diversity, the purpose of raising and elaborating the foregoing six exemplary

iature painting known as "Jahāngīr Preferring a Shaykh to Kings," (Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C, F42.15), http://www.asia.si.edu/collections/edan/object.cfm?q=fsg_F1942.15a.

[180] For other examples of such coins, see Andrew V. Liddle, *Coins of Jahangir: Creations of a Numismatist*, New Delhi: Manohar, 2013, 61–63.

[181] As Wilfred Cantwell Smith noted, "It is what the Hindu is able to see, by being a Hindu, that is significant. Until we can see it too, we have not come to grips with the religious quality of his life," Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion*, 138.

**Figure 2.** Gold coin struck by the Mughal Emperor Jahāngīr in 1611 (1020 *hijrī*) to commemorate the sixth year of his accession. Jahāngīr is depicted holding a wine cup in one hand, and a book in the other (©The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved).

questions has been threefold. First, to demonstrate to the reader that in relation to Islam, we are actually talking not so much about conceptualizing unity in the face of diversity, but rather about conceptualizing unity in the face of *outright contradiction*. As such, keen diagnostic attention needs to be paid to the *prolific scale and definitive import of the phenomenon of internal contradiction to the constitution of the human and historical phenomenon of Islam*. Of course, I am not suggesting that other human and historical phenomena are not characterized by contradiction; indeed, attending to contradiction in conceptualizing Islam might prove instructive for the study of other phenomena that display contradiction on a similar or lesser scale.

Second, it has been to re-orient the historical consciousness of the reader to awareness of the fact that these contradictory claims by Muslims about the normative constitution of Islam were claims made, not on the social and political and intellectual margins of the Muslims' discourses about Islam, but

rather *at the very social and political and intellectual center of Muslims' discourses about Islam*—and that, as such, they cannot be accounted for by the reflexive insistence that some of these discursive claims (such as law) somehow possess an inherently greater agency of normativity in constituting Islam than do others (such as the Sufi-philosophical amalgam).

Third, it has been to plant the seed in the mind of the reader that these contradictions cannot meaningfuly be understood, as they generally are, by separating them out as differences between the *religious* and *cultural* (or *religious* and *secular)* spheres of something called Islam, with integral Islam obtaining in a somehow self-evidently "religious" space—after all, is the wine-cup of Jahāngīr a religious, a cultural or a secular object? Rather, I suggest that these contradictions call for—indeed, demand and require—a suspension of these received categories of distinction in order to reconceptualize Islam as a human and historical phenomenon in *new* terms which map meaningfully onto the import of the prolific scale and nature of the *contradictory normative claims* made in history by Muslims about *what is Islam*.

I should like to emphasize that the examples presented in the six foregoing questions are not trivial or marginal: rather, they highlight historical phenomena that have been, for long periods of history, especially central to and definitively characteristic of a vast temporal, geographical and demographic swathe of societies of real Muslim people. Exemplarily, all of the ideas, values and behaviours listed above were, in the rough period 1350–1850, endemic to the societies living in the vast region extending from the Balkans through Anatolia, Iran and Central Asia down and across Afghanistan and North India to the Bay of Bengal. It has long been recognized that the societies of the geographical, temporal and demographic space that I have been calling the *Balkans-to-Bengal complex* (see Figure 3), in spite of local variations in language and ethnicity and creed, comprised a relatively distinct and integrated world (sometimes termed a "civilization," or a "cultural zone" within Islamic civilization). For example, Robert Canfield has noted:

> Across the territories of Western, Central and South Asia there was a remarkable similarity in culture, particularly among elite classes. The wealthy and powerful of the empires affected similar manners and customs, wore similar styles of dress, and enjoyed much the same literature and graphic arts. In building their palaces, mosques, and mausoleums, rulers competed for the services of the same great artisans, artists and

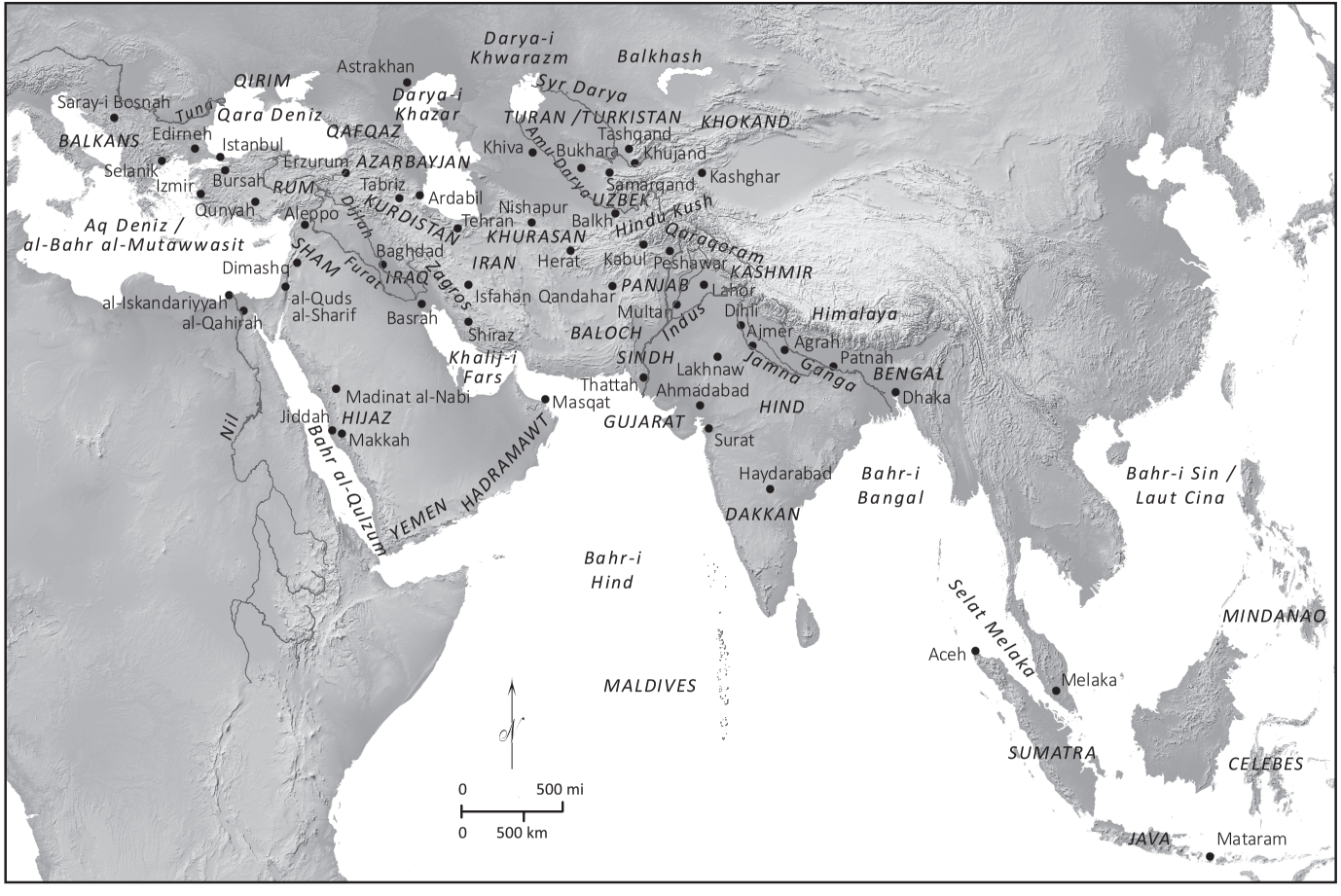


**Figure 3.** Map of the Balkans-to-Bengal complex, and those regions living under its strong immediate influence.

> scholars, whose eminence enhanced their reputations. Although the populations across this vast region were rent by conflicting allegiances (to sect, tribal coalition, and ethnic affiliation) and spoke many different languages . . . people on many levels of the society had similar notions about the ground-rules of cooperation and dispute, and in other ways shared a number of common institutions, arts, knowledge, customs, and rituals. These similarities of cultural style were perpetuated by poets, artists, architects, artisans, jurists, and scholars, who maintained relations among their peers in the far-flung cities of the Turko-Persian Islamicate ecumene, from Istanbul to Delhi.[182]

I should like to encourage and re-orient the reader to conceive of these interconnections of the Balkans-to-Bengal complex, not so much in terms of "a remarkable similarity in culture" as in terms of *a common paradigm of Islamic life and thought* by which Muslims (and others) imagined, conceptualized, valorized, articulated and gave mutually-communicable *meaning* to their lives in terms of Islam. This common paradigm of the Balkans-to-Bengal complex is readily manifest in and articulated through a critically overlapping discursive canon, embedded in which is a conceptual vocabulary, an array of expressive motifs, and other mutually-held and/or mutually-translatable modes of valorization and self-articulation.

The Balkans-to-Bengal complex constitutes what we might usefully conceive of as a *post-formative stage and condition* in the history of societies of Muslims—a stage at which earlier foundational elements are brought together in a capacious and productive historical synthesis that, in turn, provides a maniplex yet stable ingrediential base for a further striking forth in a dynamic variety of trajectories of being Muslim. By the thirteenth century (seventh century of Islamic history), the major theological points of dispute which had riven the community of Muslims in its first centuries were for the most part settled, with the theological schools—primarily (in terms of demographics) the Ashʿarīs and Mātūrīdīs—agreeing to disagree over an agreed set

[182] Robert L. Canfield, "Introduction: The Turko-Persian Tradition," in Robert L. Canfield (editor), *Turco-Persia in Historical Perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 1–34, at 20–21. Similarly: "The Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal empires are also important as a group because . . . Muslims in these contiguous empires jointly inherited political, religious, literary, and artistic traditions, and their shared inheritance was reinforced by the circulation of individuals along well-established and protected trade routes linking Istanbul with Isfahan and Delhi. Merchants, poets, artists, scholars, religious vagabonds, military advisors, and philosophers all moved with relative ease along these caravan routes and across political boundaries . . . the history of these empires illumines a shared, complex culture," Stephen Frederic Dale, *The Muslim Empires of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 3.

of secondary theological questions.[183] Similarly, beginning from the thirteenth century, the mutual recognition by the scholars of the four Sunnī legal schools of the orthodoxy of each other's legal method and corpus of legal positions—that is, the acceptance by members of one legal school of the validity of the legal position of another school even when one position directly contradicts the other—exemplifies a larger attitudinal *normalization* of the principle of agreeing to disagree.[184] Also, by this time, the idea of legitimate rule exercised by an office in which are invested the combined concepts of *sulṭān* (sovereign), *malik* (king; exerciser of dominion), *khalīfah* (Caliph; Vicegerent of God), and *pādishāh* (emperor), for the ordering and administration of society in accordance with Divine Justice—essentially what is summed up on the wine-cup of Jahāngīr where these concepts appear inscribed in close array—is universalized in this region as the norm of the political imagination.

Further, in this period, a set of institutions mark the social, physical and imaginal landscape of the Balkans-to-Bengal societies of Muslims in an interrelational matrix that structures and configures discourse differently to what has gone before. Exemplary among these is the proliferation of the public institution of the *madrasah* (made possible by the prodigious application of the legal institution of the *waqf* endowment) which displaces the private household as the major locus of education and which, in the vast territory of Balkans-to-Bengal, is characterized by a remarkably overlapping curriculum not only of subjects and program of study, but also of books.[185] From the Balkans to Bengal, *madrasah* students studied similar texts: foundational works of logic such as the the *Īsāghūjī* (*Isagoge*) of Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī (d. 1265)[186]

[183] See the various *non-polemical* works in the genre of "disagreements between the Mātūrīdīs and the Ashʿarīs," produced between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries in particular, such as that by the Şeyḫ-ül-Islām of the Ottoman empire, Shams al-Dīn b. Aḥmad b. Sulayman Ibn Kamāl Pāshā, or Kemālpāşāzādeh (1469–1534), *Masā'il al-ikhtilāf bayna al-Ashāʿirah wa al-Mātūrīdiyyah* (edited by Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Laṭīf Fūdah), Amman: Dar al-Fatḥ, 2009; and ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd b. ʿUmar Kharpūtī (1830–1902), *al-Simṭ al-ʿabqarī fi Sharḥ al-ʿIqd al-jawharī fī al-farq bayn al-kasbay al-Mātūrīdī wa al-Ashʿarī*, Istanbul: n.p., 1905 (which is a commentary on a work by a major figure of the Ottoman Mujaddidī Sufi movement, Khālid b. Aḥmad al-Naqshbandī (1776–1827), the founder of the Naqshbandiyyah Mujaddidiyyah Khālidiyyah Sufi order—the name Mujaddidiyyah indicates its link to Aḥmad Sirhindī.

[184] On the effects of this for the administration of law, see Yossef Rapoport, "Legal Diversity in the Age of *Taqlīd*: The Four Chief *Qaḍīs* Under the Mamluks," *Islamic Law and Society* 10 (2003) 210–228.

[185] See Francis Robinson, "Ottomans–Safavids–Mughals: Shared Knowledge and Connective Systems," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 8 (1997) 151–184.

[186] Two early Indian printed editions, both produced in the Kingdom of Avadh before its annexation by the East India Company in 1856, one by a private publisher, and the other by the government press, are Athīr al-Dīn Abharī, *Īsāghūjī*, Lucknow: Dār-us-Salṭanat, pre-1856; and

(whose other foundational text, the *Hidāyat al-Ḥikmah*, has been discussed earlier) and *al-Risālah al-Shamsiyyah* of Najm al-Dīn al-Qazwīnī al-Kātibī (d. 1204–1277);[187] of dialectics, such as the *Risālah Samarqandiyyah* of Shams al-Dīn al-Samarqandī (*fl.* 1303) and the commentaries thereon;[188] of "argumentative" (that is, dialectical) philosophical theology,[189] such as the *Mawāqif* of ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 1355),[190] the *Maṭāliʿ al-anẓār* of Abū al-Thanāʾ al-Iṣfahānī (d. 1349),[191] and the *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* of Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 1389);[192] of Qurʾānic exegesis such as the *Kashshāf* of the Muʿtazilī rationalist, Jār Allāh al-Zamakhsharī (d. 1144),[193] and the "toning-down" of the rationalism of the

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Athīr al-Dīn Abharī, *Mīr Īsāghūjī*, Lucknow: Āghā Jān, pre-1856. These were almost certainly printed for purchase by *madrasah* students. An early printed edition of a famous commentary on the *Īsāghūjī* used in the Ottoman *medreseh*s *is* Muḥammad b. Ḥamzah al-Fanārī (1350–1451), *Īsāġūcī şerḥī Fenārī*, Istanbul: Mekteb-i Ṣenayiʿ Maṭbaʿah, 1892.

[187] Some sense of the continuing historical importance of the *Shamsiyyah* may be discerned from the fact of its publication in 1905 by the government press in Cairo a volume containing no less than seven commentaries and supercommentaries on the work dating from the fourteenth to the twentieth centuries: *al-Majmūʿ al-mushtamil ʿalā Sharḥ al-Risālah al-Shamsiyyah fī al-manṭiq, taʾlīf Najm al-Dīn ʿUmar b. ʿAlī al-Qazwīnī al-maʿrūf bi-al-Kātibī, li-Quṭb al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Muḥammad al-Rāzī, wa ʿalā Ḥāshiyat ʿAbd al-Ḥakīm al-Siyālkūtī, wa Ḥashiyat al-ʿallāmah al-Dasūqī, wa Ḥāshiyat al-ʿallāmah ʿIṣām al-Dīn ʿalā Sharḥ al-Quṭb, wa Taqrīr ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Shīrbīnī ʿalā Ḥashiyat ʿAbd al-Ḥakīm, wa Ḥāshiyat al-Jalāl al-Dawwānī, wa Sharḥ al-Saʿd ʿalā al-Shamsiyyah*, Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿah al-Amīriyah, 1905.

[188] Shams al-Dīn al-Samarqandī, *al-Risālah al-Samarqandiyyah fī ādāb al-baḥth*, in Maḥmūd al-Imām al-Manṣūrī (editor), *Majmūʿah mushtamilah ʿalā al-ātī bayānu-hu: Badr al-ʿillah fī kashf ghawāmiḍ al-maqūlāt wa huwa Sharḥ al-Shaykh ʿUmar al-mashhūr bi-Ibn Qarahdāghī ʿalā Risālat al-Maqūlāt li-Mullā ʿAlī al-Qiziljī, wa Risālat al-Imām al-Kalanbawī fī ādāb al-baḥth maʿa ḥāshiyatay-hā, aḥadu-humā li-al-ʿAllāmah al-Shaykh ʿUmar al-madhkūr, wa al-thāniyah li-Mullā ʿAbd al-Raḥman al-Banjawānī, wa talī hādhihi ayḍan Ādāb al-Ḥakīm Shams al-Dīn al-Samarqandī, wa talī hādhihi ayḍan Ādāb al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī*, Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Saʿādah, 1935, at 125–132 (the volume contains a total of five works on disputation theory, all authored in the Balkans-to-Bengal complex).

[189] The rendering of *kalām* as "philosophical theology" is now standard; "argumentative theology" (which usefully suggests the link to dialectics) is the characterization of Richard C. Taylor, "Philosophy," in Robert Irwin (editor), *The New Cambridge History of Islam, Volume 4, Islamic Cultures and Societies to the End of the Eighteenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 532–563, at 532–533.

[190] ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī, *al-Mawāqif fī ʿilm al-kalām*, Cairo: Maktabat al-Mutanabbī, n.d. For the numerous commentaries on the *Mawāqif* known to Kātib Çelebī in the seventeenth century, see Kātib Çelebī, *Kashf al-ẓunūn*, 1891–1894.

[191] This is a commentary on the *Ṭawāliʿ al-anẓār* of al-Bayḍāwī; see Abū al-Thanā' Shams al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Iṣfahānī, *Maṭāliʿ al-anẓār maʿa matni-hi Ṭawāliʿ al-anwār li-al-Qāḍī ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar al-Bayḍāwī*, Istanbul: Şirket-i ʿIlmiyyeh, 1887. See now the translation by Edward E. Calverley and James W. Pollock, *Nature, Man and God in Medieval Islam: ʿAbd Allah Baydawi's Text* Tawaliʿ al-Anwar min Mataliʿ al-Anzar *along with Mahmud Isfahani's Commentary* Mataliʿ al-anzar Sharh Tawaliʿ al-Anwar, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2002.

[192] Masʿūd b. ʿUmar al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid fī ʿilm al-kalām*, Istanbul: Maṭbaʿat al-Ḥajj Muḥtaram Afandī Busnawī, 1305 *h* [1888].

[193] For a sense of the prodigious circulation of the work in the pre-modern period, see the list

*Kashshāf* in the *Anwār al-tanzīl* of ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar al-Bayḍāwī (*fl.* 1305);[194] of Hadith (not only the *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, but also later Hadith selections, such as the *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīh* of Walī al-Dīn al-Tibrīzī (*fl.* 1337);[195] and of *fiqh*-jurisprudence, such as, in the cases of the Ḥanafī Ottoman and Mughal *madrasah*s, the *Hidāyah* of Burhān al-Dīn al-Marghīnānī (d. 1197), and the commentaries thereon.[196]

The Balkans-to-Bengal complex is also a prolific theatre of operations for the re-infrastructuring of society by the local and universal organizations of the Sufi *ṭarīqah*s—with which the absolute majority of Muslims were in one way or another associated. The physical institutions of the Sufi *ṭarīqah*s, namely the *khānqāh*, *zāwiyah*, *dargāh*, *tekkeh* and *merkez*, functioned as the physical sites for a range of truth-seeking and truth-experiencing activities such as *dhikr* (collective ritual remembrance of/with God), *samāʿ* (collective auditory communion with Real-Truth), *ziyārah* (visitation of saint-tombs to benefit from the cosmic economy of the Sufi's *barakah* or spiritual power), *iʿtikāf* (meditative retreat); and the ongoing teaching of these practices and of Sufi texts. Especially seminal in the expansion of the Sufi phenomenon in societies of Muslims were the works of Ibn ʿArabī, and the development of his ideas by his philosophical commentators (such as his step-son, Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī, d. 1274,[197] and such as the first professor appointed to the first-ever Ottoman imperial *medreseh*, Dā'ūd al-Qayṣarī, d. 1350)[198] who elaborated "a system of thought strongly rooted in Sufism, but which adopted a systematic

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of the hundreds of extant manuscripts in Mu'assasat Āl al-Bayt, al-Majmaʿ al-Malikī li-Buḥūth al-Ḥaḍārah al-Islāmīyyah, *al-Fihris al-shāmil li-al-turāth al-ʿarabī al-islāmī al-makhṭūṭ: ʿulūm al-qur'ān, makhṭūṭāt al-tafsīr wa ʿulūmu-hu*, Amman: Mu'assasat Āl al-Bayt, 1989, 155–188.

[194] Al-Bayḍāwī based his commentary squarely on the *Kashshāf*, but sought to adjust content that was problematically expressive of al-Zamakhsharī's rationalism. For a sense of the prodigious circulation of al-Bayḍāwī's Qur'ān commentary in the pre-modern period, see the hundreds of extant manuscripts listed in Mu'assasat Āl al-Bayt, *al-Fihris al-shāmil: al-Tafsīr*, 280–334.

[195] See Ahmed and Filipovic, "The Sultan's Syllabus," 201; Kātib Çelebī, *Kashf al-ẓunūn*, 1700.

[196] See Y. Meron, "Marghīnānī, His Method and His Legacy," *Islamic Law and Society* 9 (2002), 410–416; for a long list of the commentaries on the *Hidāyah*, see Ḥājjī Khalīfah, *Kashf al-ẓunūn*, 2031–2040; see also Cengiz Kallek, "el-Hidâye," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1988–2013, 17:471–473.

[197] See William C. Chittick, "Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī on the Oneness of Being," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 21 (1981) 171–184.

[198] Dā'ūd al-Qayṣarī's introduction to Akbarian thought was widely circulated and taught throughout the Balkans-to-Bengal. The ongoing importance of the work is reflected in two early printings, one from Iran and one from India: Da'ūd b. Maḥmūd al-Qayṣarī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, Tehran: Dār al-Tibāʿah-i ʿIlmiyyah-i Madrasah-'i Mubārakah-'i Dār-ul-Funūn, 1882; and Da'ūd b. Maḥmūd al-Qayṣarī, *Maṭlaʿ khuṣūṣ al-kilam fī maʿānī Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, Bombay: Mīrzā Muḥammad Shīrāzī, 1883.

language of philosophy,"[199] thereby producing what Suʿād al-Ḥakīm has so rightly summed up as nothing less than "the birth of a new language."[200] As will be illustrated in the course of this book, the meaning of man's place in the cosmos came to be conceived of and expressed in the terms of the "new language" of the Sufi-philosophical amalgam (the historical self-consciousness of which is expressed in the fact that another of the philosophical expounders of Ibn ʿArabī, ʿAbd al-Razzāq Kāshāni, d. 1330, authored a famous dictionary of Sufi concepts, precisely as a guide to this new vocabulary).[201] This new philosophical-Sufi way of conceiving, seeing and articulating the cosmos amounted, effectively, to a cosmological re-infrastructuring in the apperceptions of the Muslims of the Balkans-to-Bengal.

It is not "merely" the case that the fundamental orienting concepts of the philosophical-Sufi amalgam were transposed by Muslims of the Balkans-to-Bengal complex into a cosmological trajectory. Rather, Muslims also transposed the fundamental orienting concepts of the philosophical-Sufi amalgam into an *anthropological* trajectory—which is to say that the human being was similarly conceived by these Muslims in these terms—most crucially by the re-infrastructing of the human being as *micro-cosmos*. This is, of course, the famous anthropocosmic/cosmoanthropic concept of the Perfect or Complete Human (*al-insān al-kāmil*) elaborated by Ibn ʿArabī, and subsequently in Iran by ʿAzīz-i Nasafī (*fl.* 1273)[202] and in Yemen by ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (1366–1424).[203] While very, very few human beings are the completely perfect human, all human beings are potentially *perfectable* or *complete-able*—and the consciousness-orientation of living towards completion or perfection of the self was informed, in the societies of the Balkans-to-Bengal complex, by the further foundational idiom of the Suhrāwardīan concept of Illumination (*ishrāq*) of the self. This orientation is evident in the literary and artistic self-statements of Muslims who lived in the Balkans-to-Bengal paradigm which may readily be observed to be marked by a developing and sophisticated discourse of self-conceptualization and self-articulation of individuals and of collectives that located the self in the cosmos and the cosmos in the self precisely in the terms articulated by the Sufi-philosophical amalgam (the central-

[199] Caner Dagli, "From Mysticism to Philosophy (and Back): An Ontological History of the School of the Oneness of Being," PhD dissertation, Princeton University, 2006, viii.

[200] Suʿād al-Ḥakīm, *Ibn ʿArabī wa mawlid lughah jadīdah*, Beirut: al-Muʾassasah al-Jāmiʿah li-al-Dirāsāt wa al-Nashr wa al-Ṭibāʿah, 1991, especially 59–92.

[201] This has been published numerous times, for example: ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Ṣufiyyah* (edited by ʿAbd al-Laṭīf Muḥammad ʿAbd), Cairo: Dār al-Nahḍah al-ʿArabiyyah, 1977.

[202] See Lloyd Ridgeon, *Aziz Nasafi*, Richmond: Curzon, 1998.

[203] See Reynold A. Nicholson, "The Perfect Man," in Reynold A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921, 77–148.

ity and significance of the idea of the *self* to the conceptualization of Islam/Islamic will be taken up in more detail in Chapter 5).

This discourse of self-conceptualization and self-articulation is the poetical and narrative tradition of the literary canon of the Balkans-to-Bengal complex, a tradition to which the concepts and vocabularies of the abovementioned Ibn Sīnā, Suhrawardī, Rūmī, Ibn ʿArabī, Ṭūsī, Ḥāfiẓ, and of other authors of the canon—such as Saʿdī, the author of the staple works of Persian literacy and literariness, the *Gulistān* and *Būstān*, ʿAṭṭār and Jāmī, the preeminent translators of the cosmology and sensibility of "philosophical religion" into Persian verse, and Shabistarī, popularizer in his best-selling *Gulshan-i Rāz*, or *Garden of the Secret*, of the *madhhab* of Love and of the philosophy of paradox and figural meaning—were *foundational* and *seminal*. Their canonical discourses constituted the *paideia* and, thus, the larger modes of thinking and the communicative idiom of the Muslims of this space and age—and as such, constituted an integral element in *the hermeneutics of Islam* of the Balkans-to-Bengal complex.[204] The members of the communities educated by and affiliated with these ideas constructed themselves—and communicated and represented themselves to each other—by the performance of (verbal and other) acts made meaningful in the shared language of this paideia. These communities of Muslims were characterized by a complex of social behaviours in which, for example, the consumption of wine and of figural images was *routine* and somehow *valued positively*.

This fact should and must give us profound pause as to what it is that constitutes the *normative* in the historical experience of Muslims—after which instructive moment of contemplation, we should recognize, once and for all, that these ideas and behaviours constituted part and parcel of the *norms of thought and conduct* of Muslims. By *norm*, I mean: that which Muslims—that is, the significant body of Muslims who held these ideas and practiced these behaviours; who, in the historical example I am highlighting, were quite simply the most powerful and influential social group in Islamic history: namely, the educated and cultivated Sunnī and Shīʿī elites of the Balkans-to-Bengal complex and the areas under its shadow in the half-millenium, 1350–1850—valorized at worst as neutral and at best as positive; or that which these Muslims regarded, at the very least, as legitimate and acceptable, and at most, as how things should *ideally* be.

These ideas and behaviours constitute a commonplace and standard part of the ways in which the cultivated and thoughtful Muslims who engaged in

[204] For a demonstration of the pervasive influence of Avicennan philosophy and Akbarian Sufism in the high culture of the Ottoman part of the Balkans-to-Bengal complex, see again Ahmed and Filipovic, *Neither Paradise nor Hellfire*.

them thought and lived *as Muslims*. These societies of persons thought and lived these things without regarding themselves as transgressing thereby what it *meant* to be a Muslim—indeed, these ideas and behaviours were construed, as paradoxical as it might seem, to be not only in harmony with, but actually as somehow articulating the meaning and *truth* of Islam.

In short, the Balkans-to-Bengal is a complex of societies in a post-formative stage of *being Muslim*, a productive human condition grounded upon the synthesis of discursive and institutional elements worked through and built up during the first six centuries of Islam on the basis of which many Muslims found themselves equipped and disposed to strike out in new constructions, trajectories, tenors and expressions of *what it means to be Muslim*. Unlike many Muslims of today, the Muslims of the Balkans-to-Bengal complex did not feel the need to articulate or legitimate their Muslim-ness/their Islam by mimesis of a pristine time of the earliest generations of the community (the *salaf*). Rather, they felt able to be Muslim in explorative, creative, and contrary trajectories—such as those treated in the six diagnostic questions above—taking as a point of departure the array and synthesis of the major developments of the preceding centuries, with the Avicennian, Suhrawardian, and Akbarian ideas very much present at the center of this post-formative dynamic. In the dynamics of the Balkans-to-Bengal complex, received elements and units of meaning are taken up, elaborated into a new relational and generational complex, and are made productive of new meanings in a new vocabulary of Islam.

Like many modern Muslims, many modern analysts too have fallen into what Robert Wisnovsky has identified as "our tendency to focus on the earliest period of Islamic history—the 'classical period' between 700 and 1050—and then to assume that this classical distinctiveness expresses something natural in Islamic intellectual history. In other words, the classical period is viewed as the model Islamic disciplinary arrangement, with subsequent developments seen as pale reflections or decadent versions of the pristine, 'true.' "[205] The reflexive logic of this conceptual and analytical disposition—

[205] Wisnovsky, who is writing here specifically about the study of the relationship between *falsafah* and *kalām*, goes on to assert: "More historically justifiable would be to determine the nature of the relationship between *falsafa* and *kalām* on the basis of evidence contained in texts produced during the longest segment of Islamic intellectual history . . . the 850-year span between 1050 and 1900 taken as the defining period," Robert Wisnovsky, "Islam," in M.W.F. Stone and Robert Wisnovsky, "Philosophy and Theology," in Robert Parnau (editor), *The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 2:687–706 (subsection at 698–706), 706. In another context, Frédéric Volpi notes that "traditional Islamic studies stressed two types of continuities at the expense of all others. First . . . the semantic continuity provided by the Islamic legal and theological texts (usually written in Arabic) . . . Second, they

which is the principle "the original is the authentic"—bears a peculiar similarity to that of modern Salafism (the conviction that the earliest Muslims, primarily, the Companions of the Prophet, and secondarily, the two generations that followed them, constitute the modular community whose beliefs and practice embody true Islam).[206] I aver that our task as analysts, whether historians or anthropologists, is to conceptualize this post-formative Balkans-to-Bengal Islam *as Islam* despite—indeed, *because of*—the inconveniences this task poses to our analytical habits. The Muslims of the Balkans-to-Bengal were in no doubt as to the authenticity of their complex and contradictory post-formative modes of being Muslim, and as to their coherence with/as Islam: the logic of our conceptualization of Islam must, therefore, if it is to be analytically meaningful, encompass their conceptualization—and must not exclude, marginalize, or delegitimate it.

The Balkans-to-Bengal complex represents the most geographically, demographically and temporally extensive instance of a highly-articulated shared paradigm of life and thought in the history of Muslims—it is, demographically, spatially, and temporally, an (if not *the*) *historically major paradigm* of Islam. Extending as it does over half a millenium and more than half the world (of Muslims), the Balkans-to-Bengal complex is certainly the dominant paradigm of Islam in the long historical period that directly preceded the violent irruption of European modernity into societies of Muslims. It is important to bear in mind that, from the sixteenth century to the twentieth, what we might call the "Old World" of Islam—that is, the historically significant societies of Arabic-speaking Muslims of Egypt, Syria, Palestine, ʿIraq, and the Hijaz—were under Ottoman rule and thus directly under the paradigmatic influence of the norms of the Balkans-to-Bengal complex. We must also remember that the Islam that arrived at the shores of and took root in the vast Malay archipelago (what we might call the "New World" of Islam) was heavily pregnant with the norms of the Indian region of the Balkans-to-Bengal. Yet, when moderns—both Muslims and non-Muslims—think about Islam in representative terms, our overwhelming conceptual and analytical tendency is to marginalize and dis-enchfranchise the paradigm of Islamic life and thought of the Balkans-to-Bengal complex. When we think about *what repre-*

emphasized the continuity between the past—often the very distant past—and present; Frédéric Volpi, *Political Islam Observed: Disciplinary Perspectives*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2010, 43. This analytically unhelpful privileging of the very distant (Arabic) past as the necessary and default conceptual model of Islam is one of the things I am seeking here to undo.

[206] A convenient introduction to the substance and scale of modern Salafism is the collection of essays edited by Roel Meijer (editor), *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.

*sents Islam*, we tend *not* to think of Balkans-to-Bengal in the period 1350–1850. It is very much for this reason that I am taking the Balkans-to-Bengal complex as the primary socio-historical case in this book: it is at once a major and a dominant historical paradigm of Islam—but is largely unrecognized as such. The purpose, then, is to answer the question "What is Islam?" by way of this Balkans-to-Bengal paradigm that—despite its scale, centrality, duration, maturity, articulation, and capaciousness—by and large, and for no good reason, usually is *not* conceived of as sufficiently "central" or "authentic" as to be appropriate to the question.

It should be needless to say that my focus on the Balkans-to-Bengal complex is in no way to delegitimate the normative Islam of the paradigm of any other region or period (and examples from other times and places will duly be cited in the course of this book). Neither is it the case that the Balkans-to-Bengal complex is so peculiar or unique as to be schematically unrepresentative or inapplicable of anything other than its (very large and protracted) self. Rather, the point is that re-directing our analytical and conceptual gaze to the normativities of the Balkans-to-Bengal complex will help us to recognize as integral to the meaningful conceptualization of Islam features and elements that, by focusing on other regions and periods, we have grown accustomed to marginalize and ignore. And once we have reconceptualized Islam in a manner and mode that accounts for the normativities of Balkans-to-Bengal complex, it will be possible to turn (back) to other periods and regions and to view them in a new light and with the benefit of a new perspective which will enable us to *see things that we have been unable to see before*. By taking the expansive, capacious and contradictory Balkans-to-Bengal complex as our representative case-study, we are, in the first instance, forced to think about how to conceptualize Islam in expansive, capacious and contradictory terms—and in the second instance, to look at other historical instances and expressions of Islam through this reconceptualization of Islam.

Finally, some readers might think that what I am calling the "Balkans-to-Bengal complex" is better termed the "Perso-Turkic" or "Persianate" world.[207]

[207] The cultural integrality of this geographical space was particularly emphasized by Marshall G. S. Hodgson, who designated this "zone" and "phase" of Islamic civilization by the term "Persianate," that is, characterized by "cultural traditions, carried in Persian or reflecting Persian inspiration" (Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, 2:293). Hodgson noted: "In the High Middle Ages Islamic cultural life had come to be divided more or less sharply into two geographical zones and this division became more marked after the Mongol conquests. In Arabia, the Fertile Cresent, Egypt, North Africa, and the Sudanese lands, Arabic continued to predominate as the literary tongue even where it was not the spoken language . . . From the Balkans east to Turkestan and China and south to southern India and into Malaysia, Persian became the standard literary language among Muslims, and with Persian came a whole tradition of artistic and literary taste . . .

The problem with these terms is that they assumptively privilege linguistic and "ethnic" elements, suggesting that it is these eponymous factors that are somehow the *distinguishing and generative source* of the phenomenon at stake. My point is not to deny or detract from the presence or importance of historical elements of pre-Islamic Persian or Turkic origin in the construction or articulation of Islam in the Balkans-to-Bengal complex; my objection is that the term "Persianate," used as a primary marker or adjective of first-instance, highlights and suggests "Persian" as the constitutive and definitive *genius* of the shared Islamic paradigm of the Balkans-to-Bengal historical space, rather than as a very important component element in ongoing relational engagement with and alongside other elements. The term "Persianate" serves to distract and detract from other generative elements in the paradigm—such as the prolific, fecund and (in so many ways) importantly antithetical and disorienting Indic/Hindu elements, the challenge of engaging with which so productively and profoundly inflected and informed the articulation of Islam in the environment of the Indian subcontinent, which, in the period of the Balkans-to-Bengal complex, became home to the largest geographical concentration of Muslims on the planet (and of which examples will appear shortly). This term serves also to detract from the continuing centrality and fundamentality of *Arabic* discourses to the construction of Islamic meaning and value throughout the historical space and discourses characterized as "Persianate."

"Persianate" thus runs too ready a risk of falling into service of the ever-recrudescent appeal of conceptualizing Islamic history in terms of "Persian" and "Arab" nationalist readings.[208] "Balkans-to-Bengal" is (not only) a more neutral term, but is better expressive of the ethnic and linguistic diversity and cultural heritages of this complex of historical societies and discourses. It is of prime importance always to bear in mind that the Balkans-to-Bengal is a *locally polyglot* region (that is, with more than one language spoken in local settings—often by the same people); and that the producers of its high culture,

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This is the phenomenon that makes Toynbee distinguish, in the late medieval period, two Islamic 'civilizations', an Iranic and an Arabic . . . The Persian zone was not only the more populous but also by and large the more culturally creative," Marshall G. S. Hodgson, "The unity of later Islamic history," in Marshall G. S. Hodgson (edited, with an Introduction and Conclusion, by Edmund Burke III), *Rethinking World History: Essays on Europe, Islam, and World History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 171–206, at 189 (this collection of Hodgson's writings was published two decades after his death). The term "Persianate" has recently been taken up actively in the scholarship so that there is there is now a *Journal of Persianate Studies*.

[208] I prefer to use the term "Persophone/Persophony" to characterize the register of phenomena that are tied to the fact of the Persian language used as the primary vehicle for literary self-expression. On Persophone/Persophony, see Bert G. Fragner, *"Die Persophonie": Regionalität, Identität und Sprachkontakt in der Geschichte Asiens*, Berlin: Das Arabische Buch, 1999.

in particular, were, above all, "poly-phone"—as is nicely exemplified in the fact that the Ottoman class defined itself not at all by ethnicity, but rather by knowledge of the *elsineh-'i ṣelāṣeh* (the three languages) of Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman, and their accompanying textual canons and *paideia*. Similarly, the seventeenth-century Mughal *Book of the Gentleman* (*Mīrzānāmah*) stipulated that a gentleman (Mīrzā) must have knowledge of all of Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and "Hindī" (the language that would come to be known as Urdu).[209] Above all, though, "Persianate," "Turco-Persian," and other such ethnic and linguistic identifications distract from the fundamental conceptual and analytical point towards which I am seeking to orient and habituate the reader: namely, that what we find articulated in the Balkans-to-Bengal complex is a major historical paradigm that is most meaningfully conceptualized not terms of the Persianate, Turkic, or Perso-Turkic, but of *Islam*.

Now, it might be objected that the six examples that I have presented are representative of *elite* society and culture, and that the society of elites is necessarily unrepresentative of society-at-large in that it possesses an isolated high culture the beliefs and practices of which are more likely to deviate from the accepted norms of "Islam-at-large"—which we might be inclined to assume to be more legally-determined or "orthodox" norms. To make this objection is to omit to take into account at least four important socio-historical facts.

The first is that the norms of this Balkans-to-Bengal elite were not hermetically isolated in high society but, rather, were part of an active economy of circulation of norms that moved through society-at-large by way of *active projects of circulation*, such as the epitomizing of fundamental Sufi-philosophical ideas in vernacular primers, as well as, and most importantly, the translation, configuration and dramatization of these ideas into poetical and narrative fiction, which served as the primary medium for their oral circulation. An excellent case-study of the circulation of "norms" through society is provided by Nazif Shahrani, who asks the question, "How is the Islamic vision of the world socially produced, reproduced, communicated, and sustained among the peoples of Afghanistan, both literate and urban as well as illiterate and rural? That is, how is the received Islamic knowledge contained in the 'Great' literate tradition of *madrasa* and *'ulama* mediated, appropriated

[209] Mawlawi M. Hidayat Husain, "The Mīrza-Nāmah (The Book of the Perfect Gentleman) of Mīrza Kāmrān with an English Translation," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, n.s., 9 (1913), 1–13, at 9.

and transformed into popular sources of knowledge easily accessible to the majority of illiterate Afghans and, for that matter, Turkistanis and other Muslims?" The answer: "A substantial part of the corpus of the high tradition of Islamic knowledge has been mediated by the social production and reproduction of vernacular popular Islamic texts, and thereby made available to the masses of non-literate Muslims . . . When this body of local Islamic knowledge and understanding is acquired and sustained through lifelong exposure to elements of textual materials and the day-to-day interactions of the members of a community, it *becomes a part* of the individual Muslim practitioner."[210] Shahrani cites as prominent examples of these textual materials by which "Islamic knowledge and understanding is acquired" the *Dīvān*s of Ḥāfiẓ, Saʿdī, Bīdil, and love epics such as *Laylā va Majnūn* (of Niẓāmī), *Yūsuf va Zulaykhā* (of Jāmī), *Farhad va Shīrīn*, as well as books of proverbs (*żarb-ul-miṯāl*), and narrative fiction (*afsānah*, *ḥikāyah*, *qiṣṣah*).[211] In a similar vein, Margaret A. Mills records from her extensive conversations in the 1970s with an Afghan Molla in a village about three hours journey from Herat, who was well-known in the rural locale both as a *teacher* (*ākhund*) and *storyteller*: "The Akhond's conception of religious books is broad . . . including didactic (but nontheological) works such as *Anwār-i Suhaylī* (*The Lights of Canopus*, a famous fifteenth-century Persian derivative of the Indic-origin story collection *Kalila wa Dimna*)."[212] The pre-Islamic Sanskrit animal fables of Bidpai, put, before the advent of Islam, into Pahlavi Persian, then re-cast into Arabic in the newly-built city of Baghdad by the eighth-century ʿAbbāsid vizier, Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (d. 759), and centuries thence imaginatively re-elaborated back into Persian by al-Ḥusayn Vāʿiẓ-i Kāshifī (d. 1504, who is also the author of one the most widely circulated Persian language commentaries on the Qur'ān)[213] serves as the narrative fictional means by which for a twentieth-century rural Afghan scholar to teach Islamic values and meanings to his congregation (and I can attest from my personal experience of collecting early Indian printed books that the *Anvār-i Suhaylī* was a regularly pub-

[210] Nazif Shahrani, "Local Knowledge of Islam and Social Discourse in Afghanistan and Turkistan in the Modern Period," in Robert L. Canfield (editor), *Turco-Persia in Historical Perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 161–188, at 164, 177.

[211] Shahrani, "Local Knowledge of Islam," 167.

[212] Margaret A. Mills, *Rhetoric and Politics in Afghan Traditional Storytelling*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991, 88.

[213] On him, see Maria E. Subtelny, "Husayn Vāʿiz-i Kashifi: Polymath, Popularizer and Preserver," *Iranian Studies* 36 (2003) 463–467; on his Qur'ān commentary, see Kristin Zahra Sands, "On the Popularity of Husayn Vaʿiz-i Kashifi's *Mavāhib-i ʿaliyya*: A Persian Commentary on the Qur'an," *Iranian Studies* 36 (2003) 469–483; on the *Anvār-i Suhaylī*, see Christine van Ruymbeke, "Kashifi's Forgotten Masterpiece: Why Rediscover the *Anvār-i Suhaylī*?" *Iranian Studies* 36 (2003) 571–588.

lished—and thus, presumably, widely-read—book in nineteenth-century India).[214] In a vivid illustration of the foregoing environment, the Tajik national poet, Ṣadr-ud-Dīn ʿAynī (1878–1954), tells how, as a child in the 1880s in a small village some forty miles from the great city of Bukhara, "in the school run by the imam's wife I read Hafiz, something of Bedil and some of the lyrics of Sa'ib,"[215] and recounts how the *ghazal*s of that most metaphorically complex of poets, Mīrzā ʿAbd-ul-Qādir "Bīdil" of Delhi (1642–1720), were sung by the peasants of the local countryside as they laboured in their fields;[216] while the young Swiss traveler, Nicholas Bouvier, recorded in 1953 that "the beggars of Tabriz knew hundreds of stanzas by Hafiz or Nizami, which spoke of love, of mystical wine, of May sunshine through the windows."[217] The eminent scholar of Ottoman literature Walter Andrews is right to argue in a work instructively entitled *Poetry's Voice, Society's Song* that we should "look at the *gazel* as a part of a continuing spectrum of poetry, including both *divan* [literally, "court"] and folk poetry, emerging from the needs and motivations of a single cultural entity."[218]

A relatively economical means by which to encapsulate the way in which poetry-as-song functioned as the prodigious recitatory and performative vehicle for the circulation in society-at-large of concepts, values, meanings and *norms* that we might otherwise consider to be restricted to the high intellectual culture of elites is *via* the Indus valley genre of *kāfī*. A *kāfī* is a Sufi poem composed expressly to be sung. The following *kāfī* is by the most celebrated poet of the Sirā'ikī language (spoken today by close to 20 million people),

[214] A project that I have undertaken over several years of collecting early Indian printed books for Widener Library (Harvard University) has uncovered several nineteenth-century Indian editions of the *Anvār-i Suhaylī*. The work is so well-known to nineteenth-century Indian readers that the title-page of some editions does not bother to mention the author's name. See, for example: Ḥusayn Kāshifī, *Anvār-i Suhaylī*, Bombay: n.p., 1261 *h* [1845]; al-Ḥusayn Vāʿiẓ-i Kāshifī, *Anvār-i Suhaylī*, Kanpur: Niẓāmī, 1281 *h* [1864]; al-Ḥusayn Vāʿiẓ-i Kāshifī, *Anvār-i Suhaylī*, Lucknow: Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Khān, 1295 *h* [1876]; *Anvār-i Suhaylī*, Kanpur: Naval Kishōr, 1885; *Anvār-i Suhaylī*, Lucknow: Munshī Gulāb Singh, 1898. The importance of the work in the Indian environment made it required reading for officers of the East India Company, hence the edition: al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī Vāʿiẓ-i Kāshifī, *Anvār-i Suhaylī* (edited by J.W.J. Ousely), Hertford: Hon. East-India Company, 1851.

[215] Sadriddin Aini, *Pages from My Own Story: Memoirs*, Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1958, 4.

[216] Sadriddin Ayni, *The Sands of Oxus: Boyhood Reminiscences of Sadriddin Ayni* (translated by John R. Perry and Rachel Lehr), Costa Mesa: Mazda, 1998, 176. The other poet mentioned by Ayni, Ṣā'ib of Tabrīz (d. 1676) is, similarly, one the more metaphorically difficult Persian poets; on him see Paul Losensky, "Ṣā'eb Tabrizi," www.iranicaonline.org/articles/saeb-tabrizi.

[217] Nicholas Bouvier, *The Way of the World*, New York: New York Review of Books, 1992, 118.

[218] Walter G. Andrews, *Poetry's Voice, Society's Song: Ottoman Lyric Poetry*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985, 179–180.

Khwājah Ghulām Farīd of Multān (1845–1902). Khwājah Ghulām Farīd was heir to a line of Chishtī *pīrs* (custodians of a shrine and *ṭarīqah*) at Miṫhankōṫh in the district of Ḍērā Ghāzī Khān in the very heart of the Indus valley, who himself had a thorough formal education, and whose leading disciple and patron was the ruler of the state of Bahāwalpūr, Amīr Ṣādiq Muḥammad Khān IV (*r.* 1866–1899). The poetry of Khwājah Ghulām Farīd, however, was (and is to this day) widely sung to popular (and, often, illiterate) audiences at Sufi shrines throughout the Indus valley (and is now readily accessible in song on YouTube). The following is one of Khwājah Ghulām Farīd's most famous and widely-sung *kāfī*s, the content of which is highly instructive to the present demonstrative purpose.

Oh! Real-True Beauty, Beginning-less Light!
Shall I call you "Necessary," or shall I call you "Contingent-Possible"?
Shall I call you "Creator," "Pre-Eternal Self-Essence"?
Shall I call you a "New Event"? Shall I call you a "Creation in this World"?
Shall I call you "Absolute Pure Existence"?
Shall I call you the "Becoming Known of the Originary Archetypes"? . . .
Shall I call you the "Essence of the Reality of Quiddity"?
Shall I call you the "Display of Attributes and Acts"?
Shall I call you "Species"? Shall I call you "Positions"?
Shall I call you "Modes"? Shall I call you "Measures"? . . .
Shall I call you "Highest Heaven"? Shall I call you the "Celestial Spheres"?
Shall I call you "Grace" and "Blessing" and "Wisdom"?
Shall I call you "Spirit"? Shall I call you "Matter"?
Shall I call you "Vegetable," "Animal," or "Human"?
Shall I call you "Mosque" or "Temple" or "Convent"?
Shall I call you Pōthī, or shall I call you Qurʾān?
Shall I call you "Rosary"? Shall I call you "Caste-String"?
Shall I call you "Unbelief"? Shall I call you "Faith"?
Shall I call you "Rain-Cloud"? Shall I call you "Thunder"?
Shall I call you "Lightning"? Shall I call you "Downpour"?
Shall I call you "Water"? Shall I call you "Earth"?
Shall I call you "Wind"? Shall I call you "Fire"?
Shall I call you Dasrat, Bichhman, or Rām?
Shall I call you "Sītā, my Darling One"? . . .
Shall I call you Mahā Dēv? Shall I call you Bhagwān?

Shall I call you Gita, Granth or Veda? . . .
Shall I call you Noah, or shall I call you "Flood"?
Shall I call you Abraham? Shall I call you "Friend"?[219]
Shall I call you Moses, son of ʿImrān?[220]. . .
Shall I call you Aḥmad of the High Office?[221]. . .
Shall I call you the "Beloved of Every Heart"?
Shall I call you "Houri," "Fairy-Lass," or "Handsome Lad"? . . .
Shall I call you "Blush"? Shall I call you "Kohl"? Shall I call you *pān*?[222]
. . . Shall I call you "Beauty"? "Embellishment and Adornment"? . . .
Shall I call you *ṭablah* or "Tambour"?
Shall I call you *ḍhōlak*?[223] Shall I call you "Metre" or "Note-Beat"?
. . . Shall I call you "Love"? Shall I call you "Science"?
Shall I call you "Suspicion-Prehension"?[224] "Conviction"? "Notion"?
Shall I call you "Sensing"? Shall I call you "Faculty of Discernment"?
Shall I call you "Tasting"? Shall I call you "Rapture"?
Shall I call you "Submission"? Shall I call you "Variegation"?
Shall I call you "Fixity"? Shall I call you "Knowing-By-Self"?
Shall I call you "Hyacinth"? "Iris"? "Cypress"?
Shall I call you the "Ungovernable Narcissus"?
Shall I call you the "Scarred Tulip"? Shall I call you "Garden"?
Shall I call you "Rose-Garden"? Shall I call you "Flower-Garden"?
Shall I call you "Drunkeness" or "Drunk"?
Shall I call you "Bewilderment" or "Bewildered"?
Shall I call you "Without Colour"? Shall I call you "Without Any Likeness"?
Shall I call you "Without Form"? Shall I call you "Every-Every Moment"?[225]

[219] The Qur'ān refers to Ibrāhīm (Abraham) as the *khalīl* or "friend" of God, Qur'ān 4:125 al-Nisā.

[220] In the Qur'ān, Mūsā (Moses) is the son of ʿImrān.

[221] *Aḥmad-i ʿālī-shān*; i.e., the Prophet Mūhammad.

[222] *Pān* is a preparation of various condiments, usually including areca nut and slaked lime, wrapped in the leaf of the betel (*pān*) tree, widely consumed in the Indian subcontinent as digestive, narcotic and breath-freshner.

[223] The *ḍhōlak* is the large two-headed portable drum that is a standard instrument in rural and popular North Indian music.

[224] *Vahm* is a difficult concept to translate: in the Indus valley languages it carries the sense of "suspicion" (both positive and negative); "prehension" is the rendering for the Arabic philosophical concept, *wahm*, proposed by Parviz Morewedge, "Epistemology: The Internal Sense of Prehension (Wahm) in Islamic Philosophy," in Parviz Morewedge, *Essays in Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Mysticism*, New York: Global Scholarly Publications, 2003, 139–179.

[225] *aē ḥusn-i ḥaḳīḳī nūr-i azal / tēnūṅ vājib tē imkān kahūṅ // tēnūṅ kẖāliq ẕāt-i ḳadīm kahūṅ / tēnūṅ ḥadiṣ kẖalq-i jahān kahūṅ // tēnūṅ muṭlaḳ maḥż vujūd kahūṅ / tēnūṅ ʿalmiyah-i aʿyān*

Regrettably, space does not allow here for the full explication that this *kāfī* deserves. Suffice it here to observe that the poem—and thus its singer and its audience—addresses itself to God by asking *how a Muslim* (poet, singer, and audience) *should conceive of God*. It explores this question by invoking a wide compass of concepts, values, references, and images that range from Avicennan philosophy ("Necessary," "Contingent-Possible," "Pre-Eternal Self-Essence") and Neo-Platonic emanationism ("Highest Heaven," "Celestial Spheres," "Spirit," "Matter," "Vegetable," "Animal," "Human"), to Suhrawardīan Illuminationism ("Beginning-Less Light") to Akbarian intellectual Sufism ("Absolute Pure Existence," "Becoming Known of the Originary Archetypes," "Display of Attributes and Acts"), to the *madhhab-i ʿishq* ("Real-True Beauty," "Beloved of Every Heart," "Houri," "Fairy-Lass," "Handsome Lad," "Love," "Sītā, my Darling One"), to the textbook questions of *kalām*-theology and philosophy ("Essence of the Reality of Quiddity," "Species," "Positions," "Modes," "Measures," "Suspicion-Prehension," "Conviction," "Notion"), to Sufi experiential knowing ("Tasting," "Rapture"), to music and aural sensation (*ḍhōlak*, "Tambour"; *ṭablah*, "metre," "note-beat"), to the the natural phenomena of the Seen World ("Water," "Fire," "Narcissus," "Tulip"), to the narratives of Qurʾānic prophetology (Noah, Abraham, Muḥammad). The local Indian environment (both physical and cosmological) furnishes a meaningful vocabulary for the universal register of Akbarian/Suhrawardian exploration of the possibilities of pantheism and truth-relativism: "Shall I call you Pōthī, or shall I call you Qurʾān? Shall I call you Gita, Granth, or Veda?" The fundamental Akbarian question of the relationship between Divine Transcendence and Divine Immanence (*tashbīh* and *tanzīh*) is here couched in an Indic vocabu-

*kahūṅ // . . . tēnūṅ ʿayn-i ḥaḳīḳat-i māhiyyat / tēnūṅ ʿarż-i ṣifat tē shān kahūṅ // anvāʿ kahūṅ awżāʿ kahūṅ / aṭwār kahūṅ awzān kahūṅ // tēnūṅ ʿarsh kahūṅ aflāk kahūṅ / tēnūṅ nāz naʿīm janān kahūṅ // tēnūṅ tat jamād nabāt kahūṅ / ḥayvān kahūṅ insān kahūṅ // tēnūṅ masjid mandir dēr kahūṅ / tēnūṅ pōthī tē ḳur'ān kahūṅ // tasbīḥ kahūṅ zunnār kahūṅ / tēnūṅ kufr kahūṅ īmān kahūṅ // tēnūṅ bādal barkhā gāj kahūṅ / tēnūṅ bijlī tē bārān kahūṅ // tēnūṅ āb kahūṅ tē <u>kh</u>āk kahūṅ / tēnūṅ bād kahūṅ nīrān kahūṅ // tēnūṅ Dasrat Bi<u>ch</u>hman Rām kahūṅ / tēnūṅ Sītā-jī jānān kahūṅ // . . . Mahā Dēv kahūṅ Bhagvān kahūṅ // tēnūṅ Gīt Garanth tē Bēd kahūṅ . . . // . . . tēnūṅ Nūḥ kahūṅ ṭūfān kahūṅ // tēnūṅ Ibrāhīm <u>Kh</u>alīl kahūṅ / tēnūṅ Muṣā bin ʿImrān kahūṅ . . . tēnūṅ Aḥmad-i ʿālī-shān kahūṅ // tēnūṅ har dil dā dildār kahūṅ / . . . / tēnūṅ ḥūr parī <u>gh</u>ilmān kahūṅ // . . . tēnūṅ sur<u>kh</u>ī kajlāh pān kahūṅ / . . . tēnūṅ ḥusn tē bār siṅgār kahūṅ / . . . tēnūṅ ṭablah tē taṅbūr kahūṅ / tēnūṅ ḍhōlak sur tē tān kahūṅ // tēnūṅ ʿishḳ kahūṅ tēnūṅ ʿilm kahūṅ / tēnūṅ vahm yaḳīṅ gumān kahūṅ // tēnūṅ ḥiss quvāy-y idrāk kahūṅ / tēnūṅ <u>z</u>awḳ kahūṅ vujdān kahūṅ // tēnūṅ sakr kahūṅ sakrān kahūṅ / tēnūṅ ḥayrat tē ḥayrān kahūṅ / taslīm kahūṅ talvīn kahūṅ / tamkīn kahūṅ ʿirfān kahūṅ // tēnūṅ suṅbul sawsan sarv kahūṅ / tēnūṅ nargis-i nāfarmān kahūṅ // tēnūṅ lālah dā<u>gh</u> tē bā<u>gh</u> kahūṅ / gulzār kahūṅ bustān kahūṅ // . . . bē-rang kahūṅ bē-miṣl kahūṅ / bē-ṣūrat har har ān kahūṅ*; <u>Kh</u>wājah <u>Gh</u>ulām Farīd, *Divān-i <u>Kh</u>wājah Farīd (ba-muṭābiḳ ḳalamī nus<u>kh</u>ah-hāy-'ē ḳadīm)* (edited by <u>Kh</u>wājah Ṭāhir Maḥmūd Kōrījah), Lahore: Fayṣal, 2006, 374–378.

lary as the question of the relationship between the Supreme Deity (Mahā Dev, Bhagwān) and specific deities (Dasrat, Bichhman, Rām).[226]

It is difficult, when confronted by this famous and widely-sung poem, to agree fully with the insistence of a most eminent of scholar of Sufism that "mystical folk poetry throughout the Islamic world has a strongly anti-intellectual bias."[227] Certainly, Sufi poetry is characterized by a privileging of knowing-by-the-heart over knowing-by-the-mind (and, certainly, the figure of the censorious, pettifogging mullah is a standard object of satire in the poetry of the Balkans-to-Bengal complex), but, as we can see from the above *kāfī*, Sufi knowing (especially in the post-Ibn ʿArabī and post-Suhrawardī centuries) is itself informed by intellectual theorization. This *representative* poem, composed to be sung in the regional vernacular, hurls at Indus valley folk audiences attending its oral performance, in Sufi shrines and in other musical gatherings, a gamut of the critical concepts and technical terminology of philosophy, theology, and intellectual Sufism and does so as the means by which to pose to those audiences a subtle and profound question the exploration of which is reiterated in its every recitation and audition: namely, whether cognition of God is "Submission" to "Fixity," or whether cognition of God is "Knowing-by-Self" of "Variegation"—and how the two modes relate in terms of *being Muslim*/in terms of *Islam*. As such, this poem demonstrates amply the acuity of Christopher Shackle's characterization of "the throwaway art . . . of the most profound genre of the Panjabi Muslim lyric, the Sufi *kāfī*."[228] It is the "throwaway-ness" of the *kāfī* that is precisely symptomatic of the social ubiquity and commonplace-ness of its *profound*-ness: we might say that the discourses of the society of the *kāfī* are littered with its profundities. Most people did/do not learn (or, at least, were/are not introduced to) the ideas and vocabulary of *waḥdat al-wujūd* or *ḥikmat al-ishrāq* by studying directly the texts of Ibn ʿArabī or Suhrawardī; rather they learn/ed these values, methods, and truth-claims from attendance of poetic-musical performances and from literary iteration.[229] The *kāfī* serves precisely as the ready

[226] Khwājah Ghulām Farīd's Akbarianism is repeatedly attested in his *Dīvān*; for example: "Put aside Law, Theology and Creed! Be of Ibn al-ʿArabī's people! [*ithap fiqah ūṣūl ʿaqāyid nūṅ / rakh millat Ibn-ul-ʿArabī dī*]," *Divān-i Khwājah Farīd*, 205, see also 405.

[227] Annemarie Schimmel, *As Through a Veil: Mystical Poetry in Islam*, Oxford: Oneworld, 2001, 139.

[228] Christopher Shackle, "Between Scripture and Romance: The Yūsuf-Zulaikhā Story in Panjabi," *South Asia Research* 15.2 (1995) 153–188, at 161.

[229] For an overview of the poeticization of the conceptual vocabulary of *waḥdat al-wujūd* across the Islamic world, see Haji Muhammad Bukhari Lubis, *The Ocean of Unity: Waḥdat al-Wujūd in Persian, Turkish and Malay Poetry*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1993; for a detailed study on its vernacularization in the Punjab, see ʿAlī ʿAbbās Jalālpūrī, *Vaḥdat-ul-vujūd tē Panjābī shāʿirī*, Lahore: Panjābī Adabī Bōrd, 1977; for a series of important studies on the

means of circulation and mobilization of the ideas, values and norms of high intellectual culture for instruction, contemplation and criticism in society-at-large where, to reiterate Shahrani's felicitous phrase, "when this body of local Islamic knowledge and understanding is acquired and sustained through life-long exposure to elements of textual materials and the day-to-day interactions of the member of a community, it *becomes a part* of the individual Muslim practitioner."

This brings us nicely to a second pertinent socio-historical fact: namely, that education in and acquisition of the norms, ideas and values of the high culture of elites was an important component for upward social mobility—by fact of being elite norms they were desirable cultural capital which people sought to obtain for themselves. Thus, the main mechanism of social mobility in the Ottoman context, for example, was precisely the acquisition of the norms and values of the Ottoman social class through a shared education—to be an Ottoman, as noted above, was not to share an ethnicity, but rather a formative *paideia* and its constellation of language(s), norms and values. The proliferation down the centuries in the urban centers of the Balkans-to-Bengal complex of *madrasah*s—independently endowed and thus self-funding institutions of education—provided social access for a growing sector of the population to the educational means to this social mobility.[230]

Third, the vast majority of the population of pre-modern societies of Muslims participated in the normative truth-claims and vocabulary of the hierarchical cosmologies of Sufism by means of their oath-sworn-membership in, and fealty to, the truth-hierarchy of Sufi orders, and their participation in the weekly Sufi rituals that enacted these hierarchical cosmologies of differentiated truth: exemplarily, the *samāʿ*, or auditory communion with Real-Truth, and *ziyārah*, or visitation of saint-tombs to benefit from the cosmic economy of their *barakah* or spiritual power. The idea of the cosmic economy of *barakah* proceeds directly from the Neo-Platonic logic of emanation that underpins the Avicennan cosmos—indeed, an ordinary Muslim's *ziyārah* to obtain the *barakah* that emanates from the tomb of a Sufi in a village or mountain pass in Morocco, India or Indonesia is precisely a *de facto* acknowledgment of and active participation in a cosmos organized and structured and experienced in Neo-Platonic, Avicennan, and Akbarian terms.[231]

shared vocabulary of elite and popular Turkish literary discourses including many elements of intellectual Sufism, see Cemal Kurnaz, *Halk ve Divan Şiirinin Müşterikleri Üzerine Denemeler*, Ankara: Akçağ, 1990; Cemal Kurnaz, *Türküden Gazele: Halk ve Divan Şiirinin Müşterikleri Üzerine Bir Deneme*, Ankara: Akçağ, 1997; and Cemal Kurnaz, *Halk Şiiri ve Divan Şiirinin Müşterikler*, Ankara: Gazi Kitabevi, 2005.

[230] See Ahmed and Filipovic, *Neither Paradise nor Hellfire*.

[231] In this book, I am primarily treating in the circulation in societies of Muslims of ideas and

Finally, while we might imagine the pre-modern Muslim masses to have been scrupulous, puritan observers of legal norms (along the lines of proto-Salafis, or like a medieval vote-bank for the Muslim Brotherhood) we should remember that this is not at all how the pre-modern jurisprudential elites (whom too many of us are altogether too disposed to view as a medieval Muslim Brotherhood leadership) viewed them. Rather, these jurisprudential elites regarded the beliefs and practices of the majority of relatively uneducated and illiterate Muslims to be characterized by ignorance, misunderstanding and deviation from Islam, and thus in constant need of normative restoration by means of corrective elite intervention.[232] The primary instrument of this elite intervention was the prescriptive discourse of the law—which is a discourse *par excellence* of an educated, specialized scholarly elite. This historical reality is well exemplified in the *Book of Following the Straight Path* by the obstreperous thirteenth-century Damascene scholar and public intellectual, Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328), which is a lengthy sermon dedicated to the identification and correction of a prolific list of popular malpractices and concomitant misbeliefs—not least, *samāʿ*, the visitation of tombs, and the observance by Muslims of Jewish and Christian customs—the profusion and variety of which are a vivid testimony to the historical failure of the Muslim commons to cleave to the jurist's straight and narrow path.[233]

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norms originating amongst educated and cultural elites; however, I am not suggesting that the movement of norms and ideas has been unilaterally from "high" to "low" culture (or from Robert Redfield's "Great Tradition" to "Little Traditions" where "Great" denotes urban elite culture, and "Little" denotes village folk culture; see Robert Redfield, *The Little Community and Peasant Society and Culture*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960)—rather, there is a dynamic of circulation in regard to which we, as historians and analysts, should keep our eyes open not only for "trickle down" but also for "trickle up," and not only for "absorb in" but also for "diffuse out." One of the most prodigious social sites of conceptual and praxial contact between elites and commons is Sufi tomb-shrines which were financially patronized by elites and frequented by both elites and commons seeking the *barakah* of the saint: a revealing instance of this is the shrine of Muʿīn-ud-Dīn Chishtī at Ajmer to which various Muslim ruling dynasties of India have been especially devoted, and which is the locus of widespread popular veneration (see P. M. Currie, *The Shrine and Cult of Muʿīn al-Dīn Chishtī of Ajmer*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989, 97–184).

[232] For a more detailed treatment of these themes in the context of a specific historical society of Muslims, that of the Ottomans, see Ahmed and Filipovic, *Neither Paradise nor Hellfire*.

[233] See the excellent study by Muhammad Umar Memon, *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle against Popular Religion with an Annotated Translation of the Kitāb iqtiḍā' aṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm mukhālafat aṣḥāb al-jaḥīm*, The Hague: Mouton, 1976. A study of the culture of shrines in eleventh- to sixteenth-century Syria is Josef W. Meri, *The Cult of Saints among Muslims and Jews in Medieval Syria*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. An equally rich picture of a different time and place is presented in F. W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929; see now also H. T. Norris, *Popular Sufism in Eastern Europe: Sufi Brotherhoods and the Dialogue with Christianity and "Heterodoxy,"* London: Routledge, 2006. On the debate over the legal status of tomb visitation, see Christopher S. Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous:* Ziyāra *and the Veneration of Muslim Saints in Late Medieval Egypt*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999.

The development in modern scholarship of Sufism as a compartmentalized or specialized "field" of scholarly study, and its relative neglect by non-specialists, has led to the tendency toward a compartmentalized and specialized view of the history of societies of Muslims in which Sufism is treated as a compartmentalized or specialized activity by Muslims—rather than as seen as an integral and integrated element in the lives of Muslims. As such, even while scholars of Islamic history recognize Sufism as a socially-prolific phenomenon, there is widespread non-recognition of the normativity in historical societies of Muslims of the truth-claims of Sufi discourse. Rather than being regarded as normative and representative, Sufism is seen as alternative and particular. One symptom of this is the fact that when scholars speak of the relationship between Sufism and law in societies of Muslim in terms of "contestation" (as they often do),[234] many of them tend reflexively to assume and present a historical picture in which it is Sufism alone that is the contested discourse, and that is necessarily on the defensive against the authority of the law. In the normative picture presented by historians, it is Sufism that is in the dock and it is the discourse of the law that is invariably the ultimate judge and juror. In contrast, the foregoing presentation of Sufi discourses shows a historical picture where the practitioners of Sufi epistemology are making "normative" and "authoritative" claims that contest, undermine and put on the defensive legal epistemology and discourse.

The social actualization of these claims is nicely illustrated in the following description by a historian of Sufism of the society of the town of Zabid in fourteenth-century Yemen where the anthropocosmic/cosmoanthropic theory of the Perfect Man (*al-insān al-kāmil*), abstracted and eternalized in the essence-ideal of the Muḥammadan Real-Truth (*al-ḥaqīqah al-Muḥammadiyah*), was published in a scholarly treatise by ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jīlī. In a milieu permeated by the social and imaginal structures of Sufism, al-Jīlī applied the concept to his own living Sufi master, a gentleman of Eritrean extraction by the name of Ismāʿīl al-Jabartī (d. 1403):

> In discussing the central topic of his work, the manifestation of the essence of Muhammad in the personality of the Perfect Man of the age, al-Jili wrote ". . . I encountered him in the form of my master Sharaf al-din Ismaʿil al-Jabarti" . . .
>
> The lack of a clear-cut boundary between abstract metaphysical separation and personal mystical experience . . . characterizes Ibn ʿArabi's entire worldview . . .

[234] See Frederick de Jong and Bernd Radtke (editors), *Islamic Mysticism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999.

> al-Jili . . . drew no sharp line between the Perfect Man as an abstract manifestation of the universal *al-ḥaqīqa al-muḥammadiya*, and its quite concrete embodiment in the personality of his Yemeni master . . . Since al-Jīlī was one of the most well-educated mystical thinkers of his age, one cannot even fathom what exuberant forms the veneration of al-Jabartī should have assumed among his less sophisticated followers . . . Emboldened by the sultan's support, the Sufis of Zabid began to openly defy their detractors among the *fuqahā'*, who continually attacked the noisy Sufi gatherings in the mosques that were accompanied with much drumbeat, singing and dancing. Ecstatic behaviour was not uncommon among the participants . . . Such scandalous goings-on in the city mosques alarmed many *'ulama'*, who felt they were losing ground to al-Jabartī's followers. Yet with the sultan's sympathy squarely on the latter's side, the *'ulama'* had to toe a fine line.[235]

Here we have a historical situation where definitive and emblematic ideas of the Sufi-philosophical amalgam, namely the concepts of the Muḥammadan Real-Truth and Perfect Man, are mobilized and asserted as a normative value against and above the values of the law at all levels of society—from the sultan to common people participating in Sufi rituals—and where the proponents of legal values find themselves deferring to this normative claim, not least because the claim is subscribed to by the ruling institutions and social strata of the state itself. This is not at all an uncommon historical scenario in the history of societies of Muslims.[236]

The assertion of non-legal values as *norms* is straightforwardly presented in the "Dispute Between Love and Law [*'ishḳ shara' dā jhagaṙā*]," a *kāfī* at-

[235] Knysh, *Ibn Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition*, 251–252.

[236] For a study of two important cases of unsuccessful attempts by prominent members of the *'ulamā'* at legally proscribing practices and discourses of Sufi knowing in Mamlūk Cairo, see Th. Emil Homerin, "Sufis and their Detractors in Mamluk Cairo: A Survey of the Protagonists and Institutional Settings," in de Jong and Radtke, *Islamic Mysticism Contested,* 225–247. For the case of a scholar who was judicially executed in Ottoman Damascus for calling Ibn 'Arabī a heretic nearly 250 years after the latter's death, see Éric Geoffroy, *Le Soufisme en Égypte et en Syrie sous les derniers Mamelouks et les premiers Ottomans: Orientations spirituelles et enjeux culturelles*, Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1995, 134. For a schematic sense of the historical recognition by ruling elites of the factual reality of the veridical power of living Sufi *shaykh*s and the social and political consequences thereof, see the studies by Simon Digby, "The Sufi *Shaykh* and the Sultan: A Conflict of Claims to Authority in Medieval India," *Iran* 28 (1990) 71–81; and Simon Digby, "The Sufi *Shaykh* as a Source of Authority in Mediaeval India," *Puruṣârtha* 4 (1986) 55–77. See also the remarkable latitude and discursive space allowed to the political maverick and doctrinal eccentric Ottoman Sufi Niyāzī Miṣrī, analyzed in Terzioglu, "Sufi and Dissident in the Ottoman Empire." Many more examples could be cited.

tributed to (but probably not actually authored by) the most widely sung Sufi poet of the Panjāb, Bullhē Shāh of Ḳaṣūr (1680–1758), in which

> Law says, "Go to the *Mullā* and learn the rules and regulations!"
> Love says, "A single word is enough: shut and put away all other books!" . . .
> Law says, "Have some shame and decency: put out this light!"
> Love says, "What is this veil for? Let the visions be open!"
> Law says, "Come into the mosque and perform the obligatory prayer!"
> Love says, "Go to the wine-tavern, and having drunk, peform the superogatory prayer!" . . .
> Law says, "O, Believer! go for Ḥajj—for you will have to cross the Ṣirāt Bridge!"[237]
> Love says, "The door of the Beloved is the Kaʿbah, don't move from there!"
> Law says, "We strung Shāh Manṣūr up on the cross!"
> Love says, "Then, you did well; for you sacrificed him at the Beloved's door!"[238]

The scholar, Lajwanti Rama Krishna, writing in 1938, notes revealingly that "this *kāfī* was kindly given to me by the late Mīrāsī [that is, *musician* and *singer*] Maula Bakhsh of Lahore."[239]

Once more, we can see in the text and performance of this *kāfī* (and in its popular attribution to the most recited Sufi poet of the language of 100 million Muslims) the confident assertion and widespread social circulation of the self-confident *norms* of the Sufi-philosophical amalgam posited opposite and above the norms of the law. While the existence of what are generally called "anti-nomian Sufi" trajectories in the history of Islam is recognized, the analytical tendency is to view such "anti-nomianism" as *anti*-normative and thus as non-representative of Islamic norms. I suggest that to obtain a better sense of the dimensions and complexities of the social and discursive phenomenon

[237] This is the bridge over the fires of Hell, of the width of a hair.

[238] *sharaʿ kahē chal pās mullā dē sikkh lay adab adābāṅ nūṅ / ʿishḳ kahē ikkē ḥarf bathērā ṯhapp rakhh hōr kitābāṅ nūṅ // . . . sharaʿ kahē kujh sharam ḥayā kar band kar is chamkārē nūṅ / ʿishḳ kahē ēh guṅghaṯ kaysā khullan dē naẓẓārē nūṅ // sharaʿ kahē chal masjid andar ḥaḳḳ namāz adā kar lay / ʿishḳ kahē chal maykhānē vichch pīkē sharāb nafal parh lay // . . . sharaʿ kahē chal ḥajj kar mōman pul-sarāṭ laṅganā rē / ishḳ kahē būʾā yār da kaʿbah uṯhthhō mūl nā hilnā rē // sharaʿ kahē Shāh Manṣūr nūṅ sūlī uttē chāriyā sī / ʿishḳ kahē tusā chaṅgā kītā bū-ē yār dē vāriyā sī*, cited in Lajwanti Rama Krishna, *Panjābī Sūfī Poets*, London: Oxford University Press, 1938, 65–66 (I have occasionally emended both Rama Krishna's translation and transliteration).

[239] Rama Krishna, *Panjābī Sūfī Poets*, 66.

at stake here, we should conceive of the self-conception of these trajectories not as *anti*-nomian—*against* the law, but as *para*-nomian—that is, *beside* the law, or as *supra*-nomian—that is, *above* the law. What emerges clearly from the foregoing poem is a social reality of a plurality of norms (and proponents of those norms) disputing with each other over what it means to be Muslim—arguing over "what is Islam?" It would be a symptom of analytical good health were modern scholars of Islam reflexively to conceive of historical societies of Muslims as discursive fora in which, at the center of life, the epistemological authority of the law is continuingly "contested" and negotiated by the epistemologies of Sufism and philosophy in the thinking and consciousness of Muslims.

And lest it be argued that my characterization of the foregoing ideas and behaviours—which run directly counter to Islamic legal norms—as normative to Islam is somehow like arguing for the normativity to Islam of murder, theft and adultery (since these were also presumably common enough practices in societies of Muslims which run directly counter to Islamic legal norms), it should be emphasized that there is a fundamental distinction between these two sets of legally-transgressive practices: namely, that Muslims never valorized murder, theft and adultery (or, for that matter, eating pork) as *positive* and *meaningful* acts that in any way approximated or expressed the meaning of Divine Truth, whereas this was precisely the claim made in regard to para-nomian or supra-nomian philosophical and Sufi thought, as well as to wine-drinking and figural painting.

The foregoing discussion has presented a historical scenario of significant societies of Muslims who *thought* and *lived* in a manner that destabilizes any reflexive conceptualization we might have of Islam having been constituted by the overweening or unmediated supremacy of those sources of Revealed Truth that we moderns are intellectually conditioned to regard as primary: the Qur'ān, Hadith or Islamic law (to which common conceptualization I will return in Chapter 2, below). We have seen, rather, that Islamic philosophy *subordinates the Qur'ān* to the supremacy of reason—which is to say not merely that the *text* of the Qur'ān is read rationally; rather, the *concept* of the Qur'ān as the text of divine revelation is constructed and read subject to the demands of a total Truth-matrix elaborated by reason in which reason/philosophy is the higher truth and the text of revelation the lower. Simply, not enough emphasis is placed on the recognition of this fact when thinking about the human and historical phenomenon of Islam—although it is what

Michael Marmura is grasping at when he says of the philosophers' concept of Islam, "In the final analysis, it is religion that must accommodate itself to philosophy and not the other way around";[240] and is also what Peter Heath is alluding to when he says of the philosophers' hermeneutics of the Qur'ān, "Here the *Qur'ān* has lost its position of textual privilege."[241] Yet, when Heath goes on to say that the philosophers' "hermeneutic approach remained a minority opinion . . . even among the intellectual elite," he is committing a near-universal error amongst scholars of Islam of omitting to consider the translation, transposition and circulation of the orientating concepts of philosophy into the formulation of theology, into Sufism, into cosmology, into fundamental conceptualizations of the nature of the human being—and thus into the *larger modes of thinking and hermeneutics of Islam* that is the self-expressive poetical and narrative tradition of the literary canon of the Balkans-to Bengal complex.

As with philosophy, it is not merely that Sufism reads the text of the Qur'ān esoterically: rather, Sufism *subjects the concept* of the Qur'ān to the demands of a total Truth-matrix elaborated by gnostic discipline and experience wherein experiential *ḥaqīqah* is the higher truth, and prescriptive *sharīʿah* the lower truth. The respective projects of Suhrawardīan Philosophy of Illumination and the Akbarian Unity of Existence both read the Qur'ān (and, in the latter case, also the Hadith) in a manner in which the text of the revelation is made subject to the demands of a cosmology so apparently counter-intuitive to the text as to make the meaning of the text of the Qur'ān appear dependent on that cosmology—rather than that cosmology dependent on the text of the Qur'ān. It is not that this hermeneutic ignores Divine and Prophetic texts, but rather that it *appropriates* them by reading them against the apparent Divine grain—the *locus classicus* being Ibn ʿArabī's exegesis of the Qur'ānic narrative of the idols of Noah's people.

Similarly, the poetical and narrative fiction texts—such as the *Dīvān* of Hāfiẓ—which we are conditioned to think of as *not* constructive of normative Islam also actively engage with and make normative claims by their own hermeneutical engagement with the phenomenon and language of Muḥammadan Revelation: Ḥāfiẓ is (like Muḥammad) the "Tongue of the Unseen," his *Dīvān* is the image of the Qur'ān, his book is a source of prophecy. The social institutionalization of figural painting and wine-drinking must then be un-

[240] Marmura, "The Islamic Philosophers' Conception of Islam," 97.

[241] Heath, "Creative Hermeneutics," 193. Heath's excellent article compares the ways in which the Qur'ān was read in different "hermeneutical methods" respectively by "the historian and Qur'ānic commentator, Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (224/838–310–922); the philosopher, Abū ʿAlī Ḥusain ibn Sīnā (Avicenna, 370/980–428/1037); and the mystic Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-ʿArabī (560/1165–638/1240)."

derstood as the conceptual and practical subordination of the normative value-rulings of the hermeneutic of Islamic law to the normative value-rulings of these *other* hermeneutics: other hermeneutics that allow for the enactment on earth of God's order to be symbolized on the coin of the realm by a wine-cup clasped in the hand of God's Vicegerent on Earth. There would appear, indeed, to be much to recommend Giorgio Levi Della Vida's pungent remark, "The *Leitmotiv* of the religious history of Islam is the desperate attempt to get rid of the rigid literalism of the Koran."[242] But Levi Della Vida is off-target in attributing literalism to the *text* of the Qur'ān: rather, it is more accurate to say that the history of Islam is characterized by the development of a range of complex hermeneutical apparatuses and trajectories whereby more-or-less literal modes of reading have developed, emerged, and presented themselves in social and intellectual array to be taken up by Muslims as means and terms of engagement with the Truth(s) of revelation. For it is important to note that the range of hermeneutical opportunities and their contrary constructions of Islam described above were socially alive and active: they presented themselves constantly to Muslims in the people they met, the texts they read, the practices they enacted, and the ideas they encountered from those people and texts and practices. The historical challenge for Muslims has been in engaging relationally—that is *inter-textually and inter-epistemologically*—with themselves and each other across this hermeneutical array. Thus the great Ibn Rushd / Averroës (1126–1198) was, on the one hand, the Chief Judge of Cordoba administering the Revealed law, and on the other hand, a philosopher writing on the hierarchy of T/truth (where law, as we have seen, ranked down the scale); the Istanbuli intellectual Kātib Çelebī called himself a Ḥanafī by legal *madhhab* but an *ishrāqī* (that is, Suhrawardīan Illuminationist) by disposition (*mashrab*);[243] while the *nonpareil* nineteenth-century Urdu and Persian poet of Delhi, Mīrzā Asad-Allāh Khān "Ghālib" (1797–1869, who stands in canonical relation to Urdu literature as does Shakespeare to English) proclaimed with blithe irony:

> These, the conundra of Sufism; and these—O! Ghālib—your solutions for them;
> We would have acknowledged you a saint –were it not for your wine-drinking![244]

[242] G. Levi Della Vida, "Dominant Ideas in the Formation of Islamic Culture," *Crozer Quarterly* 21 (1944) 207–216, at 212.

[243] Adnan Adıvar, *Osmanlı Türklerinde İlim*, Istanbul: Maarif Matbasi, 1943, 118 (citing a manuscript of Kātib Çelebī's autobiography, the *Sullam al-wuṣūl*).

[244] *yih masā'il-i taṣavvuf yih tērā bayān Ghālib / tujhē ham valī samajhtē jō nah bādahkhwār*

Ghālib's irony in this couplet (which is appreciated by the audience of his peers) is, of course, directed at those who are unable to reconcile the apparent contradiction of his capacity (on the one hand) to resolve the conundra of Sufism in the genius of his verse—something that only a *valī* (a friend of God, a "saint") should be able to do—while (on the other hand) being a notorious wine-drinker. Ghālib's point is that there is no real contradiction here—something that had been bluntly stated by Jalāl-ud-Dīn Rūmī himself six centuries earlier, when he was asked about the wine-drinking of his beloved Shams-i Tabrīz:

> One day the jealous jurists, out of stubbornness and denial, asked Mawlānā whether wine is permitted [*ḥalāl*] or forbidden [*ḥarām*]. They were targeting the pure honour of Shams al-Dīn. Mawlānā answered with a metaphor, saying, "It depends on who drinks it. For, if a wine-skin is poured into the river, the river remains unchanged and will not be polluted—and it is permitted to perform ablutions for prayer with that water, and to drink it. But in the case of a small basin, even a drop of wine will certainly render it impure. In the same way, whatever falls into the salty sea is overcome by the rule of salt. The straightforward answer is that if Mawlānā Shams al-Dīn drinks it, for him everything is permitted [*mubāḥ*], since the rule of the river applies. Whereas, if it is someone like you—your sister's a whore!—even barley bread is forbidden [*ḥarām*]."[245]

Rūmī's point (and I ask the reader to forgive Our Sovereign Master's tendency to the occasional expletive when asserting his arguments) is that there

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*hōtā*, Mīrzā Asad-Allāh Khān Ghālib, *Dīvān-i Ghālib* (edited by Imtiyāz ʿAlī Khān ʿArshī), (2nd edition), Lahore: Majlis-i Taraqqī-yi Adab, 1992, 2:187.

[245] *rūzī fuqahā-yi ḥussād az sar-i inkār va ʿinād az haẓrat-i Mawlānā su'āl kardan kih sharāb ḥalāl-ast yā ḥarām va gharaż-i īshān ʿirż-i pāk-i Shams-ud-Dīn būẓah bi-kināyat javāb farmūẓ kih tā kih khwuraz chih agar mashkī sharāb rā dar daryā rīzand mutaghayyir na-shavaẓ va ū-rā muqaddar nagardānaẓ va az ān āb vużūʿ sākhtan va khwurdan jāyiz bāshaẓ ammā ḥawżaki kūchak-rā qaṭrah-'i sharāb bīgumān kih najas kunaẓ va hamchunān har-chih dar bahr-i-namaklān uftaẓ ḥukm-i namak gīraẓ va javāb-i ṣarīḥ* [reading *ṣarīḥ* for *ṣarīkh*] *ān ast kih agar Mawlānā Shams-ud-Dīn mīnūshaẓ ū rā hamih chīzhā mubāḥ ast kih ḥukm-i daryā dāraẓ va agar chwun tu ghar khwāharī kunaẓ nān-i juvīnat ham ḥarām ast*, Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Aflākī al-ʿĀrifī, *Manāqib-i ʿārifīn* (edited by Tahsin Yazıcı), Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 1959, 2:639–640. Compare the translation in Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad-e Aflākī, *The Feats of the Knowers of God* (translated by John O'Kane), Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2002, 441; and in Jawid Mojaddedi, *Beyond Dogma: Rumi's Teachings on Friendship with God and Early Sufi Theories*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, 91. For the famous story where Shams-i Tabrīz rejects the application of the Sufi poet, Shaykh Awḥad al-Dīn (d. 1298), to be his disciple because Awḥad al-Dīn will not drink wine with him, see al-Aflākī, *Manāqib-i ʿārifīn*, 2:617–618, translated by O'Kane in Aflākī, *The Feats of the Knowers of God*, 423–424.

is a hierarchy of truth and of the knowers of truth whereby the claims to universal authority of the legal discourse of *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* simply do not apply *universally*: the value-rule of the small basin does not apply to the flowing river. In Rūmī's conception, two opposite truths obtain here at the same time in spatial and social differentiation—*and both are Islam*: for Rūmī, and for all those who invoke him as "Mawlānā," Shams-i Tabrīz (who is, effectively, Rūmī's "Mawlānā") is certainly no less a Muslim than is the jealous jurist.

It is in such vivid and intimate terms as the foregoing *personal engagements with the contradictory possibilities of truth and meaning* that we must try to understand what Alexander Knysh has (with an awareness all too rarely in evidence both in modern Western scholarship and in the discourses of modern Muslims) rightly called "the dazzling diversity of Muslim religious life . . . the intrinsic pluralism and complexity characteristic of the religious life of the Muslim community" where "disparate ideas and concepts, bits and pieces of creeds and doctrines circulated freely and were thus easily available to individual believers who patched them into a ragtag whole of *Weltanschauung*"[246]—although I prefer the image of a rich, complex, but coherently patterned carpet to that of a rag-tag patchwork.

Whether we characterize the making of a Muslim's *Weltanschauung* as an act of patching, weaving, or knotting, the point is that *islām* is, of course, in the first semantic instance, *action and activity* by the individual human being. The word *islām*, as straightforwardly stated in the quotation from the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* cited at the outset of this chapter, is the *maṣdar*—that is, a verbal noun, or noun of action—"of the IVth form of the root *S L M*,"[247] which connotes "to submit" or "to surrender." Islam is thus, in the first semantic instance, an *action*: it is something a person *does*, and it is by doing *islām* that a person makes himself or herself, in terms of that act—or, more properly, array of acts; including, of course, thought-acts—a Muslim.[248]

We have seen in our treatment of the foregoing six diagnostic questions, as well as in the sundry examples presented above, that the history of Islam

[246] Alexander Knysh, "'Orthodoxy' and 'Heresy' in Medieval Islam: An Essay in Reassessment," *Muslim World* 83 (1993) 48–67, at 57, and 62.

[247] Gardet, "Islām," 171.

[248] The scholar who has sought most actively to draw our attention to the significance of this fact is Wilfred Cantwell Smith: "'*Islām*' . . . is a verbal noun: the name of an action, not of an institution: of a personal decision, not a social system," Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion*, 112.

in its most mature, expansive, and powerful phase has been dominated by societies in which Muslims made themselves Muslims, thought of themselves as Muslims, and lived as Muslims in quite contrary ways. In other words, these Muslims made Islam, thought Islam, and lived Islam in quite contrary ways. These were societies in which Muslims who took *ḥikmat al-ishrāq* and *waḥdat al-wujūd* as the means to the meaning of Divine Truth, and Muslims who condemned *ḥikmat al-ishrāq* and *waḥdat al-wujūd* as rank heresy; Muslims for whom to be a Sufi was to subordinate the *sharīʿah* to the *ḥaqīqah* and Muslims for whom to be a Sufi was to subordinate the *ḥaqīqah* to the *sharīʿah*; Muslims who prohibited the consumption of wine and the production of figural images, and Muslims who celebrated both the consumption of wine and the production of figural images, lived face-to-face and side-by-side. The foregoing examples of contradiction are all instances of workings-out—and, indeed, workings-*in*—of the act of *islām*: that is, of articulating the act, state, condition and *meaning* of being Muslim. Clearly, simply honing in on the dictionary definition "of the IVth form of the root *S L M*"—namely, submission to God—does not in and of itself get us very far in helping us to conceptualize this contradictory range of articulated meanings and self-constitutions as Islam.[249]

But even as we attend to the (often neglected) fact that the object-phenomenon "Islam" we are seeking to conceptualize is, in the first instance, action by the individual human subject and agent, we must also recognize that Islam is also something that exists beyond and outside the individual human agent as an external and extra-personal phenomenon. Out there in the world beyond the individual Muslim is something that this Muslim recog-

[249] Neither is it entirely clear that the early seventh-century West Arabian community into which Muḥammad proclaimed the Qur'ān themselves understood Islam to mean "submission": the formidable Semitic philologist, M. M. Bravmann, argued on the basis of pre- and early Islamic Arabic literary sources that "the original sense of the term as a designation for the religion of Muḥammad is 'defiance of death, self-sacrifice (for the sake of God and his prophet),' or 'readiness for defiance of death,'" M. M. Bravmann, *The Spiritual Background of Early Islam: Studies in Ancient Arab Concepts*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972, 8; while D. Z. H. Baneth proposed that *islām* was understood in the sense of "to devote [or be devoted exclusively] to" and thus originally connoted "the unimpaired monotheism of the [Hebrew] prophets" as opposed to "the polytheism of the Meccans," D.Z.H. Baneth, "What did Muḥammad Mean When He Called His Religion 'Islam'?" *Israel Oriental Studies* 1 (1975) 183–190, at 188–189. Fred M. Donner has argued that "as used in the Qur'ān . . . *islam* and *muslim* do not yet have the sense of confessional distinctness that we now associate with 'Islam' and 'Muslim'; they meant something broader and more inclusive and were sometimes applied to some Christians and Jews," and that Muḥammad initially founded a broader Community of Believers (*mu'minūn*) which only over the course of the century after his death "evolved into the religion we now know as Islam through a process of refinement and redefinition of its basic concepts," Fred M. Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010, 71, 194–195.

nizes as Islam, and to do *islām*—to make him/herself a Muslim—the individual must engage with that received external something that s/he recognizes as Islam. This Islam-beyond-the-individual is reposed in the variegated discourses and practices of the Community of Muslims (*ummat al-muslimīn*)—and by identifying him/herself as a Muslim, and by engaging with this external Islam when making his/her internal *islām*, the individual Muslim is also establishing a more-or-less negotiated relationship of his/her *communal* identity and his/her belonging with the Muslim *ummah*.

In a yet further, third, dynamic, Islam-beyond-the-individual or Islam-in-the-*ummah* is, of course, precisely the cumulative, variegated, integrated and differentiated product of the *islām*-acts of innumerable Muslim individuals. In the process of making himself/herself Muslim, the individual makes a discursive and praxial statement of *islām* that is that individual's answer to the question "What is Islam?"—an answer that partially or wholly conforms to or dissents from some previous answer that is available "out there." With that interpretative action and statement of endorsement or disagreement the individual Muslim adds to the admixture of variegation-integration-differentiation that is out there as "Islam." Simply put, in making him/herself Muslim, the individual Muslim is not just making *islām* but is also making Islam.

All of these three elements—namely, personal Islam, the elaboration of the discursive and praxial content of Islam, and the identification with the community of Islam—are *co-constitutive* of the human and historical phenomenon of Islam. In seeking to conceptualize Islam we must, therefore, come to conceptual terms with the structural relationship and processual dynamic between personal acts of *islām*, the assembly of these individual acts in the community of Islam, and the diverse elaborations by individuals and communities of the content and meaning of Islam.[250]

I stated at the outset that to conceptualize any theoretical object is necessarily an attempt at identifying a general rule to which all phenomena that affiliate

[250] The difficult nature of our analytical task is indicated in Jane I. Smith's observation in her valuable study of the history of the meaning of the world *islām* in Qur'ānic exegetical literature, "In reality any attempt to distinguish between the communal and the personal aspects of this term, between Islam and islām, will be inadequate unless it takes into account the very fact that for the Muslim they have been traditionally indistinguishable . . . Islam originally meant at once the personal relationship between man and God and the community of those acknowledging this relationship," Jane I. Smith, *An Historical and Semantic Study of the Term 'Islām' as Seen in a Sequence of Qur'ān Commentaries*, Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975, 1–2.

themselves with that object somehow cohere. As Henri Lefebvre said in addressing another capacious and elusive concept:

> For mental and social to be reconnected, they first have to be clearly distinguished from one another, and the mediations between them reestablished. *The concept of space is not in space.* Likewise the concept of time is not a time within time. Of this the philosophers have long been aware. The content of the concept of space is not absolute space or space-in-itself; nor does the concept contain a space within itself . . . Rather, the concept of space denotes and connotes all possible spaces, whether abstract or "real," mental or social.[251]

Similarly, a valid concept of "Islam" must denote and connote all possible "Islams," whether abstract or "real," mental or social.[252] And while, in this book, I have deliberately chosen the bulk of my historical examples from the demographic and intellectual center of the societies and discourses of demographically major Sunnī Islam, rather than from the societies and and discourses of demographically minor Shīʿī Islam or from smaller sects and movements, I have done this simply for the pragmatic reason that I do not want to facilitate the facile objection that I am conceptualizing Islam on the basis of marginal or non-representative phenomena. In principle, however, adducing non-Sunnī historical examples is no way antithetical to my project since my basic point is that a valid conceptualization of "Islam" must denote and connote all possible "Islams."

Such a conceptualization seems to inform the other quotation cited at the outset of this chapter—which is the statement with which the ninth-/tenth-century eponymous founder of the largest theological school of thought in Islamic history, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī, prefaced the book that he entitled *The Professions of the Islamic People* (*al-islāmiyyīn*)*, and the Disagreements among Those Who Perform the Prayer*: "After their Prophet, the people disagreed about many things; some of them led others astray, while some dissociated themselves from others. Thus, they became distinct groups and disparate parties—except that Islam [*al-islām*] gathers them together and encompasses

[251] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1991 (translated from the French by David Nicholson-Smith, first published as *La production de l'espace*, Paris: Éditions Anthropos, 1974), 299.

[252] As Reza Pirbhai says, "Unless a value judgement is imposed on such multiplicity, essentialising one or another Path or Way as 'orthodox,' any valid conception of doctrinal Islam must include them all and their particular brands of hostility and hospitality," M. Reza Pirbhai, *Reconsidering Islam in a South Asian Context*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2009, 338.

them all."[253] Al-Ashʿarī's monograph contains a detailed account of the prodigious range of often radical creedal differences that obtained in his day (some three centuries after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad) amongst those whom he calls *Islāmīyyīn*—literally, "the Islamic persons," a plural noun of ascription, affiliation, association, or attribution that denotes "those affiliated/associated with, or ascribed/attributed to Islam." While, regrettably, al-Ashʿarī does not spell out for us how he is here constituting the term, he clearly conceived of the object-phenomenon *Islam* as the rule and category that, in spite of the catalogue of disagreements and differences among the *Islāmīyyūn*, "gathers them together" and "encompasses them all."

The six questions that I have raised in this chapter, similarly, all contain what al-Ashʿarī calls *Professions of the Islamic People*: that is to say that they all contain statements of what it meant to various historical groups of people to *be Muslim*, each of which statements is a response to the question "What is Islam?"[254] The six questions also reveal disagreement among *Islamīyyūn*/Islamic persons—since each of these statements of *being Muslim* is the object of disagreement by other Muslims. I have raised these specific examples because they are particulary thorny instances of disagreement: thorny not only because they are instances of outright contradiction, but also because they are socially prodigious and intellectually central to the history of societies of Muslims, and thus must be accounted for in the conceptualization and definition of Islam and the Islamic.

These thorny questions enable us clearly to see the extent to which human and historical Islam is a rich complex of often contradictory truth-claims put forward by various proponents, all of whom have, nonetheless, to their own satisfaction made sense of themselves as Muslims—meaning that all have made sense of their own truth claims *as Islam*—some of whom/which have been able also to make sense of all or many *other* of those claims *as Islam*, and most of whom/which have managed, for most of the time, to co-exist with each other despite these contradictions. It is this range of differences between those societies, persons, ideas, and practices that identify themselves with

[253] al-Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn wa ikhtilāf al-muṣallīn*, 34.

[254] Wilfred Cantwell Smith once wrote that "the fundamental rewarding task would be to make a study of the history of the word 'Islām': to discover the evolution of its usage and meaning over the centuries and the variety of connotations that it has evinced in the course of its historical development." However, and as Smith might agree, the history of Muslims' conceptualizations of Islam is not exhausted by the history of stated definitions of the word, but encompasses the history of the full gamut of actions and self-expressions of Muslims acting as Muslims (Wilfred Cantwell Smith, "The Historical Development in Islam of the Concept of Islam as an Historical Development," in Bernard Lewis and P. M. Holt (editors), *Historians of the Middle East*, London: Oxford University Press, 1962, 484–502, at 487).

Islam that poses the fundamental analytical challenge to attempts at conceptualizing Islam/Islamic.

It is also precisely this range of differences between Muslims' answers to the question "What is Islam?" that requires us to come up with a conceptualization of Islam that goes beyond that offered by any one party of Muslims—and that encompasses precisely the variety of statements of being Muslim/*islām*/Islam that are in evidence across the foregoing questions.[255] Anthropologists are wont to distinguish between "emic" accounts (that is, accounts of acts that are meaningful to and expressed in terms used by the actors themselves) and "etic" accounts (that is, accounts that are meaningful to and expressed in terms used by anthropologists themselves). Similarly, a scholar of Islamic philosophy has distinguished between "actors' categories: that is the conceptual scheme in use among the historical protagonists themselves" and "historians' categories" which are the conceptual schemes produced by historians as analysts.[256]

In the present instance, though, we stand in need of a etic/historians' category that is external to Muslims' categorizations of Islam, in so far as it is not the same as any one such categorization (since some Muslims' conceptualizations of Islam differ from others) but that also coherently comprises and expresses the relationship of all emic/actors' categories to the larger category at stake (and thus to each other)—which is the category and phenomenon "Islam" with which all actors identify and affiliate their actions and themselves. In other words, to answer the question "What is Islam?," we really stand in need of an etic/historians' conceptualization of Islam that also functions satisfactorily as a "pan-emic" conceptualization in spite of—indeed, *because of*—the disagreements of Muslim actors.

Implicit in my project is the conviction that it is important to have an accurate and meaningful conceptualization of Islam as a human and historical

[255] As Mark Woodward straightforwardly points out, "Among the most controversial issues at stake for both Muslims and detached scholars is the seemingly simple question 'What is Islam?' For detached scholars trained in the social sciences and humanities, the question concerns the historical and textual roots of systems of belief, practice, and discourse; for the ethnographer the question concerns what Muslims consider to be properly understood as Islamic. Difficulties arise because professed Muslims differ sharply on what Islam is, and are often inclined to refer to their theological opponents as unbelievers," Mark R. Woodward, "Talking Across Paradigms: Indonesia, Islam and Orientalism," in Mark R. Woodward (editor), *Toward a New Paradigm: Recent Developments in Indonesian Islamic Thought*, Tempe: Arizona State University Program for Southeast Asian Studies, 1996, 1–45, at 7. The contemporary ethnographer Woodward is, however, somewhat overstating the historical case when he says that Muslims are "*often* inclined to refer to their theological opponents as unbelievers" (italics mine)—on the whole there has been a remarkable disinclination to *takfīr* or anathemization in the history of societies of Muslims.

[256] Wisnovsky, "Islam," 704.

phenomenon because *it matters how we use the word "Islamic"* to identify, designate, characterize and constitute given phenomena. How and when we use the word "Islamic" is important because the act of naming is a *meaningful* act: the act of naming is an act of identification, designation, characterization, constitution, and valorization. In saying that something is Islamic we are necessarily identifying, designating, constituting and valorizing that thing in terms of a *norm* that we believe we "know" to be Islam, or as a *value* that we assay on the basis of what we regard as sound method and criteria to be Islam. To constitute something as "Islamic" is thus necessarily an act of authorization, legitimation and inclusion: we are *authorizing* and *legitimating* that Islamic thing as being constituted by the *normative value* "Islam," and are *including* it with other things that we are similarly authorizing and legitimating in normative terms.

By the same token, how we use the word "Islamic" is also an act of *de*-authorization and *de*-legitimation: simply, by not labeling something "Islamic" (or by the stronger act of labeling it un-Islamic) we are *excluding* that thing from being representative of the normative value "Islam." While the significance of this act of naming is especially evident today in the fraught (and sometimes violent) disagreement among Muslims over what it is that constitutes the Islamic—whether Islamic state, Islamic law, Islamic finance, Islamic status of women, or whether over who is and is not a Muslim—the *political* nature of the act of naming is certainly not confined to Muslims' uses of "Islamic." Rather, the politics of authorization/de-authorization, of legitimation/de-legitimation, of inclusion/exclusion, and of *norm-construction* are very much operational in the ostensibly detached and putatively aseptic analytic discourse of the North American and European dominated international academy whose humanities and social sciences project it is to conceptualize, analyze and valorize people and phenomena in the world.

It is considerably the power of the discourse of the Euro-American academy that provides what Robert Orsi has called "the disciplinary vocabulary of modernity . . . a disciplinary nomenclature that tells us how the world *must be* or as some part of the world's populations wants and insists it to be,"[257]—which is the vocabulary by which we "Westernized" moderns speak about

[257] Robert A. Orsi, "The Disciplinary Vocabulary of Modernity," *International Journal* (Autumn 2004) 879–885; similarly Frédéric Volpi has spoken of how "in a Foucauldian vein . . . social science narratives about 'political Islam' do not so much produce a knowledge of the subject as illustrate the epistemic power of various disciplines to shape the academic, policy and media framings of social phenomena . . . the power to name what 'is,'" Volpi, *Political Islam Observed*, 198–199. In a way, all this is no more than than the extension of what Edward Said so momentously taught us with regard to the concept and name "Orient" in Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978.

and valorize the people and phenomena around us (and I am no less implicated in this vocabulary than is anyone else). In using the term "Islamic" we, modern Muslims and non-Muslims alike, are engaging in an act of ordering the world and making it *meaningful for ourselves* in terms of what we believe we know Islam to be.

Now, each of the statements of *being Muslim* embedded in the foregoing six questions puts forward a historically major answer by self-professed Muslims to the question "What is Islam?" that poses severe difficulties for the coherence of our ordering of the world in terms of Islam, and of Islam in terms of the world—and thus poses difficulties for our efforts at making Islam and the world meaningful and coherent for ourselves. In other words, a "part of the world's populations wants and insists" that Islam is something different to what our own "part of the world's populations wants and insists" Islam to be. Further, these Muslims are deeply conscious of the importance that their claim to constitute Islam be a *coherent* one: all of the foregoing claims are made in highly sophisticated and meaning-conscious discourse. We owe it, not only to the Muslims whose exertions and lives comprise the human and historical phenomenon at stake, but also to our own efforts of meaning-making for our own selves, to take seriously this claim of coherence—even if this means that we must call into question the coherence of our own assumptions and categories of meaning-making. Rather than readily exclude from the category "Islamic" such claims to Islam that do not cohere with our conceptual reckoning of "how the world *must* be" (and rather than take false comfort in the fact that our reckoning might overlap with how/what *some* Muslims believe Islam must be) we should be prepared to entertain the possibility that our incapacity to conceptualize Islam in a manner with which these "thorny" claims to Islam *cohere* is a testament only to the conceptual insufficiency of our own language and thought.[258] "We therefore need," as J.G.A. Pocock said in another context, "to understand both the linguistics of this situation and the linguistics of getting out of it."[259] My goal in this book is to provide *a new language for the conceptualization of Islam* that serves as a means to a more accurate and meaningful understanding of Islam in the human experience—and, thus, of the human experience at large.

[258] While I am not discounting outright the possibility that there may be convinced and sincere statements of *being Muslim* that are incoherent even on their own terms, or that are simply unconcerned with being coherent, I suspect they are few and far between.

[259] J.G.A. Pocock, "Verbalizing a Political Act: Towards a Politics of Speech," in J.G.A. Pocock, *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Method*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, 33–50, at 42.

Let me conclude this opening foray by reiterating that the question "What is Islam?" has regularly been presented in terms of the relationship between "universal" and "local," or in terms of "unity" and "diversity." In *any* given phenomenon, the most glaring expression of "diversity" or "difference" is outright contradiction. The main difficulty in conceptualizing Islam/Islamic lies in the *prolific scale* of contradiction between the ideas, values and practices that claim normative affiliation with "Islam"—which poses the demanding problem of how to locate *the coherence of an internally-contradictory phenomenon*. Thus, the opening lines of the first chapter of *The New Cambridge History of Islam* read: "Islam, like any major religion, is a complex phenomenon. Diverse, at times even contradictory, it resists summary and categorical description."[260] We are confronted with a range of apparently *contradictory* and mutually *non-commensurate* statements and actions—whether that *apparent* contradiction is between doctrine and doctrine, doctrine and practice, or practice and practice—all of which claim, to their own satisfaction, to be representative of and integral to a putative object, "Islam." In seeking to conceptualize that object in a manner that enables us to constitute and understand the human and historical phenomenon at play, we must locate (to the fullest degree possible) what it is that allows contradictory statements and actions to cohere to their putative object (what Louis Gardet once called "a complex unity" that requires "a clearer recognition of a unity of contrasts"[261])—which we might call the *logic of internal contradiction*; whether this lies in idea, practice, substance or process. My goal is precisely to formulate a conceptualization of Islam as theoretical object that, by identifying the coherent dynamic of internal contradiction, enables us to comprehend the integrity and identity of the historical and human phenomenon at play. I will propose just such a re-conceptualization of Islam in Part 3 of this book, entitled "Re-conceptualizations."

[260] Berkey, "Islam," 19.
[261] Gardet, "Religion and Culture," 603.