clothes publicly with the approval of the Queen-Mother, Shaghāb. And some Sufi witnesses, Qannād and Shībīl, acknowledged his death as the seal of a most saintly vocation.

Though it was proclaimed after the year 309/922 that al-Hallāj had been executed in compliance with the unanimity (imāma) of the jurists (qādīhā)", yet a respected lawyer, his friend ibn ‘Aṭā, had objected to this verdict and was killed for that. Ibn ‘Aṭā’s death nullifies this so-called imāma. The memory of al-Hallāj slowly spread afloat with beauty. Among the Shābīyiyyah, ibn al-Muslimah, the very day he was appointed as vizier (437/1045), was seen coming to al-Hallāj’s place of crucifixion (maṣfūl al-Hallāj) and praying—a silent act of rehabilitation. Sufis have kept his creed (‘aṣbāḥ) as a motto in their exoteric books (e.g., Kalābāḏī and Qushairī); and they have his name “understood” in their esoteric isma’īl (with his friend Shībīl and Naṣr-ābāḏī). Farīd al-Dīn ‘Aṭṭār celebrated al-Hallāj’s martyrdom as the “apex” of Sufism, and the great painter Behzād painted it for Sārāqī in Herāt. Independent Muslim philosophers, Baḥkāh, Manṭūqī, abu Ḥasyān Tawhīlī, and abu al-Ḥasan Dālīmī, set off the metaphysical originality of al-Hallāj’s spiritual experiences. In spite of his adversaries classifying him among the adepts of existential unity (wahdāt al-wujūd), al-Hallāj has been proved to be a vindicator of cognitive unity (wahdāt al-‘aḥwāl). ‘Abd al-Qādir Jilānī, Rāhīn Bāqīlī, and Fakhr al-Dīn Fārisī have given convincing explanations of and comments on the doctrine of Unity, in spite of the subtleties of ibn ‘Arabi’s school. Jālāl al-Dīn Rūmī, and after him the great mystics of India, Sūmmānī, ‘Alī Hamadānī, Makhālīḏī-ī Jahān-nāyīñ, Gūshārāsī, Ahmad Sīrīhīnī, and Bedil have considered al-Hallāj to be a believer in cognitive unity (ḥuḥūdī). In his Jādī Nāmeh, the great poet-philosopher of Pakistan, Iqbāl, stated that al-Hallāj was a kind of “Promethean” personality. L. Massignon also heard him say this when Iqbāl gave him the privilege of a visit to him in Paris in 1351/1932.

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Chapter XVIII

‘ABD AL-QADIR JILANI AND SHIHBAL AL-DIN SUHRAWARDI

A

‘ABD AL-QADIR JILANI

Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir Jilānī (470–561/1077–1166) was born at a period when Malikhāsh the Saljūq (465–485/1072–1091) ruled over a vast Muslim Empire. This period is famous for great patronage of learning. It was during this period that the great Niẓāmiyyah University was founded in Baghdād by Niẓām al-Mulk. But after Malikhāsh’s death in 485/1092, fight for succession started which brought about anarchy and disorder in the country. In 513/1119 Sanjar succeeded in securing the throne and was crowned at Baghdād. But after his death in 552/1157, there was once again the same anarchy and disorder. Constant wars between the different factions of the Saljūqs destroyed the peace and security of the Empire.

But there are two events which stand out prominently. They contributed much towards the disintegration of the social and political structure of the Muslims of this period. The first was the rise and gradual spread of the group of people called Assassins under the leadership of Hasan bin Šabbāḥ. Thousands of people, great and small, fell to the dagger of these fanatics. The second was the starting of the Crusades. The first Crusade lasted from 488–490/1095 to 493/1099. The Christian hordes succeeded in occupying
Jerusalem in 492/1099, and putting to death thousands of innocent Muslims and Jews. News of the disaster and huge processions of refugees entered Bagdad where people clamoured for revenge. But the Saljuq rulers were too busy in their wars to take up the challenge. The Christian invaders were allowed, for a long time, to rob and destroy the country. Life became unsettled and there was no peace or security.

It was amid such circumstances that Shaikh 'Abd al-Qadir lived at Bagdad where he had come from far off Jilân. Being a man of great intelligence he was soon able to acquire what the usual system of education had to offer. He then became a pupil of a Sunnite saint 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ismail whose spiritual care he acquired great proficiency in the mystic lore. For eleven years he spent his life in total seclusion from worldly affairs. After this period of retirement and spiritual discipline he came back to Bagdad and adopted the career of a preacher to the people in response to what he calls the “inner command.” The students and the people in large numbers began to gather round him and within a short time the premises where he had started lecturing had to be enlarged and expanded. At the age of 51, he got married, and died at the ripe age of 91. He was a man of charming personality and by his eloquent speech exerted great influence on the people. He stands in the forefront of the Muslim mystics of all ages, and is the founder of the Qadiriyyah school of Sufism which includes within its fold many renowned Sufis of the Muslim world.

_Futuh al-Ghawb_ (Revelations of the Unseen), a collection of eighty sermons which he delivered on different occasions, reflects the unstable condition of the times. He emphasizes in almost every sermon that social ruin and instability is the result of excessive materialistic outlook on life; true well-being is the result of a harmonious outlook on life, where material needs are being properly looked after. But as a reaction against the prevalent materialism he emphasizes religious values to an extent which seems to be exaggerated. In the fifty-fourth Discourse, for instance, he advises people in general to adopt an attitude of total and complete indifference towards the world, to kill desires and ambitions of all kinds. In order that his indifference in worldly life may become complete and unalloyed, it is proper for an individual to remove all things from his heart and cultivate pleasure in annihilation, abiding poverty, and want, so that there may not remain in his heart even so much pleasure as that of sucking the stone of a date.1

With regard to the question of free will he adopts an attitude of determinism, though sometimes he tries to avoid the extremes of deterministic position by resort to what has come to be known in Muslim scholastic circles as acquisition (ka'b). He says, “Do not forget the position of human efforts so as not to fall a victim to the creed of the determinists (Jahrbtyyah), and believe that no action attains its fulfilment but in God. Nor should you say that actions

1 _Futuh al-Ghawb_, Discourse 54, pp. 102-04.
A History of Muslim Philosophy

godliness. In that case you shall be following in the honourable footsteps of the prophets. The second category includes people who have tongue but no heart. They are people of great learning and knowledge and possess eloquent tongue with which they exhord people to live a life of piety and righteousness. But they themselves lead a life of sensuality and rebellion. Their speech is charming but their hearts are black. To the third category belong people who have a heart but no tongue. They are the faithful and true believers. They are aware of their own shortcomings and blemishes and are constantly engaged in purifying themselves of all dross. To them silence and solitude are far safer for spiritual health than talking to and mixing with people. To the last category belong people who have heart as well as tongue. They are in possession of the true knowledge of God and His attributes and are able to reach and understand the ultimate truth. Equipped with this wisdom and truth they invite people to the path of virtue and righteousness and, thus, become true representatives of the prophets. They are at the highest stage, next only to prophethood, in the spiritual progress of mankind.

With reference to mystical states, he gives us four stages of spiritual development. The first is the state of piety when man leads a life of obedience to the religious Law, totally reliant on God and without any recourse to the help of other people. The second in the state of reality which is identical with the state of saintliness (wiilayah). While in this state, man obeys God’s commandment (amr). This obedience is of two kinds. The first is that an individual strives to satisfy his basic needs, but abstains totally from any luxurious indulgence in life and protects himself against all open and hidden sins. The second obedience is to the inner voice, to what is directly revealed to him. All his movements and even his rest become dedicated to God. The third is the state of resignation when the individual submits completely to God. The fourth and last is the state of annihilation (fanâ’) which is peculiar to Abbâl who are pure unitarians and gnostics.

The state of annihilation is the unitive state in which the individual attains nearness to God, which implies discarding one’s own desires and purposes and identifying oneself with the cosmic purpose of God. In this state man comes to realize that there is nothing in existence except God—a position which is characteristic of pantheistic mysticism, though we do not find in the Futûh al-Ghâib this statement associated with the usual metaphysical implications that we find, for instance, in ibn ‘Arabi and his followers. It is only an expression of psychological experience of the individual traversing the mystical Path. A man who reaches this stage acquires the creative power (takwûn) like God’s, and his ordering a thing to be (kûn) becomes as effective as God’s. 

Shaikh Jilâni holds that mystic intuition gives the recipient knowledge of reality that is not possible to gain through reason. Not only that; vision (bashîj) and experience (mushâkhah) overwhelm the reasoning power of man. This manifestation reveals two aspects of God: (A) His majesty (jalal) and (B) His beauty (janâl), both of which are revealed to one at different times. But in another Discourse he approaches the problem in a truly empirical way. He says that the only way to know Reality is to look to the self (nafs) as well as to observe nature (tâjûgh). It is only through this approach that we can arrive at a true conception of God. He quotes with approval the following statement of ibn al-‘Arabî, the famous Companion of the Holy Prophet: “Everything reflects one or other of the attributes of God and every name signifies one of His names. So surely you are surrounded by His names, His attributes, and His works. He is manifest in His attributes and concealed in His person. His person is concealed in His attributes and His attributes are concealed in His actions. He has revealed His knowledge through His will and His will is manifest in His continuous creative activity. He has concealed His skill or workmanship and has expressed it only when He has so willed. So He is hidden in His aspect of ghâib (unseen) and He is manifest in His wisdom and power.”

Mysticism, according to the Shaikh, is not the result of discussion and talk but of hunger and privation. It consists of generosity, cheerful submission, patience, constant communion with God through prayer, solitude, wearing of woolen dress, globe-trotting, and faqr, and also of humility, sincerity, and truthfulness.

B

SHIHÂB AL-DÎN SUHRAWARDI

Shaikh Shihâb al-Dîn Suhrawardi (539-632/1144-1234) was born at a time when the fate of the whole Muslim world was hanging in the balance. The last king of the Saltjâq, Sultân Sanjar, died in 552/1157. Soon after the Ghuzz came on the scene, and carried fire and sword wherever they went; peace was, however, restored by the Khwârizm Shâhs. But in 615/1218 started
the Mongol invasion under Chingiz Khan. One town after another was ravaged and people were indiscriminately massacred. There was nobody to check this advance. The people had lost all morale.

It was during this period of insecurity and fear that Shaikh Suhrawardi lived. He died in 634/1236 eight years after the death of Chingiz Khan. These events must have influenced the mind of the Shaikh; hence the note of pessimism often met with in his work 'Awrif al-Ma'ārif, in which he expresses with a sad heart the decline in moral character of his contemporaries. He passed the major part of his life at Bagdād where he now lies buried. He founded the school of mysticism which is known as Suhrawardyyah after his name. His work 'Awrif al-Ma'ārif is a standard treatise on mysticism extensively used in all mystic circles.

Origin of Sufism.—According to him, the word sufī is etymologically derived from "sūf," the coarse woolen cloth which, as he says, was worn by the Holy Prophet.20 He enumerates several other views: (i) The Sufis are those who stand in the first rank (sūfī) before God; (ii) the word was originally safī, and was later on changed into sūfī; (iii) it was derived from sūfah, the mound where a group of Muslims used to spend their time in religious learning and ascetic ways of life. According to Suhrawardi, these derivations are etymologically incorrect, though with regard to the third it may be said that the life led by the people of the sufah resembled the pattern of life adopted by the Sufis. He also refers to a particular group of the people of Khurṣān who used to live in caves far off from inhabited places. They were called Shagufiyah, from Shaguf, the name of the cave. The people of Syria used to call them Jān'iyah.

A detailed discussion about the origin of the word sufī has already been given in Chapter XVI, where, on the authority of Sarraj, it has been maintained that the word sufī was in use in Arabia even in pre-Islamic days. Suhrawardi, however, thinks that this word was not used in the time of the Holy Prophet. According to some people, it became current during the third generation after the Prophet (Taba' Ṭābi'īn). According to others, it came into use in the third century of the Hijrah. The titles of Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) and Ṭābi'īn (their Successors) were held in great esteem and, therefore, the word sufī—a title of honour, no doubt—did not make its appearance during their times. But when these peaceful times disappeared and gave place to turbulent periods of unrest and political intrigue, pious people found it convenient for their peace of mind to shun society and live in seclusion and pass their time in meditation and spiritual exercises.21

20 According to the tradition transmitted by Ans b. Malik; cf. 'Awrif al-Ma'ārif, Chap. 6.
21 Khurṣān had been one of the centres of Buddhist missionaries before Islam where, it seems, people adopted the practices of Buddhist Bhikhuha in later times.

What is Sufism?—Suhrawardi tries to establish a very intimate relationship between Sufism and knowledge. According to him, knowledge that is followed by moral behaviour is the main characteristic of Sufi life. Such knowledge is called by him Fīqā which is not used in the usual sense but for spiritual insight. It is used in the Qur'an. He refers to several Qur'ānic verses to prove this point. First, he quotes the verse, "He (God) taught man what he did not know,"24 and concludes that the spiritual status of man is based solely on knowledge.25 Secondly, he holds that Sufis are the people who acquire spiritual insight into religion and this helps them lead people to the right path. This spiritual perception, according to him, pertains to the sphere of the heart and not to the sphere of the head.26 He argues that, according to the Qur'an, knowledge and moral uprightness are the characteristics of the truly learned persons. He holds that knowledge is the consequence of taqwa, i.e., piety and moral integrity. In a verse it is said that "those of His servants only who are possessed of knowledge have taqwa."27 This verse is very significant in establishing the relationship between knowledge and moral behaviour, for, as Suhrawardi puts it,28 it excludes knowledge from those who are not characterized by moral integrity (taqwa).

But to what kind of knowledge does Suhrawardi refer? In this connection he enumerates different views. According to some, it is the knowledge of the psychological states of an individual, for, without this kind of knowledge, it is contended, it is not possible for a person to distinguish between different types of revelations and experiences.28 According to others, it is the knowledge concerning worldly matters, for, without proper information in some respect, a person is liable to be misled in his religious pursuits. According to Abu Taib of Mecca, it is the knowledge of the five religious duties of a Muslim. But, according to Suhrawardi himself, the knowledge which is incumbent on all Muslims is the knowledge of religious commandments and prohibitions. And yet true knowledge, which manifests itself in practice and moulds and informs the life of the individual possessing that knowledge, is not formal knowledge that is imparted in schools and colleges but a state of the heart that grasps the truth of things without thereby becoming the master of details. Such a person is called in the Qur'an the one firmly rooted in knowledge (rāsikāh fi 'ilm).

24 Qur'an, xxv, 5.
25 'Awrif al-Ma'ārif, Chap. 1, p. 17.
26 In another place he explicitly says that this knowledge is intuitional. Only he who experiences it can fully realize its import. You may describe the sweetness of sugar in any way you like, but it can be realized only by one who tastes it. Ibid., Chap. 3, p. 43.
27 Qur'an, xxxv, 28.
28 'Awrif al-Ma'ārif, Chap. 3, p. 46.
29 Reference is to what is theologicially called as interpolations of Satan in the revelations of saints. See the Qur'an, xxii, 51, and also 'Awrif al-Ma'ārif, Chap. 3, p. 36.
30 Qur'an, iii, 6.
A History of Muslim Philosophy

absolute majdhib. People belonging to these two categories do not deserve to be adopted as spiritual guides. The absolute ascetic retains the consciousness of self to the last. He starts with ascetic practices but, unfortunately, he is not able to ascend to the stage of ta’l." The absolute majdhib, on the other hand, receives through divine grace a little illumination, and some veils from the face of Reality (God) are removed for him, but he does not put in the requisite labour that forms an indispensable part of mystic discipline. (3) First allik and afterwards majdhib. Such a person is fit for becoming a guide. He starts with ascetic practices and reaches the goal of his endeavour, viz., spiritual illumination, which relieves him of the severity of his earlier discipline. He becomes the repository of divine wisdom. (4) But the most perfect stage, according to him, is the fourth, viz., first majdhib and afterwards allik. Such a person receives divine illumination in the beginning and veils are removed from his heart. His interest in the material world vanishes and he looks towards the spiritual world with eagerness and joyful expectations. This inner transformation affects his outward life and the antagonism between love and Law ceases for him. His outward and inward life, this world and the other world, wisdom and power, all become one. His faith is so deep that even if all the veils that hide the face of the Real were removed, he will gain nothing thereby.21

Suhrawardi makes a distinction between a person of the third rank and a person of the fourth rank. The former who follows the path of a lover (mawlid) is freed from the bonds of the lower self (nafs) but is tied down in the bondage of the heart. The latter who traverses the way of the Beloved (Majdhib) is freed both from the lower self and the heart.22 Again, the former follows the forms of action (muwak al-ma’al) and thinks that just as a man cannot do without a body so long as he is alive, so action of one sort or other is indispensable for him. But the man belonging to the fourth category passes beyond all these. He leaves behind everything—lower self (nafs), heart, states, and actions—and achieves complete unity with God to the extent that God becomes his ears and eyes so that he hears with God’s ears and sees with God’s eyes.23

Sufism covers both poverty (furq) and continence (zuhd), but is identical with neither. Furq is a difficult term to translate. Usually it means poverty, but in mystic morality it signifies the positive attitude of total independence from worldly needs. Suhrawardi quotes different definitions and descriptions of furq in Sufism given by several eminent mystics. Rumi says that Sufism is based on three principles, the first of which is attachment to poverty. Ma’riff of Karhah says that he who does not possess furq is not a Sufi. Furq, according

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21 Aḍwâr al-Ma’rîj, Chap. 9, p. 21; Chap. 6, p. 14; Chap. 25, p. 50.
22 Ibid., Chap. 3, p. 54.
23 Ibid., pp. 81-86. He adds that any recollection or ecstatic experience (khaq) or simul) which is contrary to the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet is unacceptable to the Sufis.

356

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23 He defines nafs as a dark earthly veil and gabi as a veil of heavenly light.

24 Aḍwâr al-Ma’rîj, Chap. 10, pp. 103-07.
A History of Muslim Philosophy

to Shibli, is indifference towards all except God. According to usage of the terms in Syria, there is no difference between Sufism and faqir. They argue on the basis of the Qur'anic verse that "alms are for" the poor (fugard) who have devoted themselves to the way of God, which, according to them, is the description of the Sufis. But Suhrawardi disagrees with this view. He thinks that a person's constant attachment to poverty and fear of riches is a sign of weakness; it amounts to reliance on external causes and conditions and dependence on expected reward. But a true Sufi is above all these things. He is motivated neither by fear nor by rewards; he is above all such limitations. Again, adoption of poverty and avoidance of riches imply exercise of personal will and freedom of choice which is contrary to the spirit of Sufism. A true Sufi has subjected his will to the will of God and, therefore, he sees no difference in poverty or riches.

Sufism is, thus, distinct from faqir, though the latter forms the basis of the former in the sense that the way to Sufism passes through faqir, not in the sense that both are identical or indispensable to each other. The same is the case with asceticism (zuhd), which may be a preparatory stage for Sufism but cannot be identified with it at all. There is a Qur'anic verse which says to the believers, if he be "upright (qawmas) for Allah and bearer of witness with justice". This uprightness (qawmas), according to Suhrawardi, is the essence of Sufism. There are three stages in the mystic process: first, faith (iman); secondly, knowledge (ilm); and thirdly, intoxication (dhaq). When a person is at the first stage, he is called "one who is like a true Sufi in appearance and dress (mutashabih)." When he attains to the second stage, he is called "one who pretends to be a Sufi (mutaqawwaf)." Only he who reaches the last stage deserves to be called a true Sufi. Suhrwardi again refers to a Qur'anic verse where three different kinds of persons are mentioned who have been chosen by God as the repositories (waqith) of the knowledge of the Book: "Of them is he who makes his soul suffer a loss, of them is he who takes a middle course, and of them is he who is foremost in deeds of goodness." The Qur'an uses the word zālim for the first, mutaqasid for the second, and sābiq for the third. According to some, zālim is the ascetic (zāhid), mutaqasid

is a gnostic ('arif), and sābiq is the lover (muhabb). According to others, the first is one who cries when any calamity befalls him, the second is one who patiently bears it, while the third feels positive pleasure in it. According to another version, the first are those who worship God carelessly and as a matter of routine, the second do it with hope and fear, while the third are those who do not forget God at any time. These three categories of people according to Suhrwardi are identical with the three types of mystics: Mutashabih, Mutaqawwaf and the Sufi, respectively.

He refers to two other groups. The first are Malkumitiyah who do not manifest good deeds and do not hide evil. But they are inferior to a true Sufi who is so engrossed in his experiences and illumination that he does not know what to hide and what to manifest. The second are Qandaritiyah who are people of integrity but who do not subject themselves to full ascetic discipline. They have no ambition for further spiritual progress and lead a life of happiness and contentment.

He mentions a group of people who claim that Shari'ah (the religious Law) is binding only up to a certain stage. When reality manifests itself to a gnostic, the bonds of the Law disappear. Suhrwardi holds that these are misguided people, for Law and reality (Shari'ah and Haqiqah) are not antagonistic but interdependent. He who enters the sphere of reality (Haqiqah) becomes bound to the rank of slavehood (ubadaq). Those who subscribe to the doctrine of incarnation (balili) and employ the Christian terms lakhū and nasūh without understanding their real significance are all misguided people. He holds that the saying attributed to Bāyāzid, viz., subhānā, ma' a'zamshī (all praise to me, how exalted is my position), if spoken by him at all must have been said about God and not about himself as is commonly held. The ana al-Haq (I am the Truth) of Hallaj must be similarly interpreted according to the true intention of the statement. Suhrwardi adds that if it were known that Hallaj by this statement implied incarnation (balili), he would condemn him outright.

There are some people who think that they receive words from God and often converse with Him, and, as a result of this conversation, they claim to receive messages which they attribute to God. Such people, according to Suhrwardi, are either ignorant of the true nature of their experience or are deceived by their intellectual conceit. The words they hear are mere words which appear in their mind and in no way can be attributed to God. Such things

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34 One mystic, Abu al-Mu'asaffar Fārānisi, said that faqir is one who is independent even of God. Such a saying is, of course, a blasphemy, but almost all mystics have tried to explain away its sting. Quṣairi in his Risālah and Suhrwardi in his book both try to justify this saying, but Ibn al-Qayyim is not satisfied with any of these explanations and rejects this definition in full. See Jāmī's Tahāwī, al-Hilāl Book Agency, Lahore, pp. 124-26.
35 Syria here does not stand for the geographical area which is now called Syria. Previously, nearly all the land now including Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, etc., was called Syria.
36 Qur'an, ii, 273.
37 Ibid., v, 8.
38 Qur'an, ii, pp. 80ff.
39 'Ashūrī, 'Abbās, Chap. 1, p. 82.
40 Ibid., Chap. 8, pp. 88-90.
41 Ibid., Chap. 9, pp. 90-92.
42 Lakhū and nāsūh are terms for the divine and human aspects of Christ's personality. This doctrine became the basis of many controversies in the Christian Church and made sects like the Nestorians and Monophysites (or Jacobites) appeared in Syria and Egypt respectively. But in spite of Suhrwardi's protests, these terms were used first by Hallaj and then by Ibn 'Arabi and even Ghezâli, after which they were accepted by almost all later mystics.
defending both these principles in spite of his view that they are not in complete accord with the Islamic way of life, as enunciated by the Qur'an and sanctioned by the Holy Prophet. While discussing begging, he refers to several traditions which prohibit a man from begging and yet he insists that a Sufi who is engaged in a life of total dedication to Zakah-Alms (remembrance of God) is compelled to satisfy his minimum physical needs of hunger and thirst by resort to begging. For justifying his point of view he misinterprets the traditions. There is a saying of the Prophet that the most lawful of foods for a Muslim is what he earns by his own hands. Many mystics tried to explain it away by holding that "earning by hand" means stretching hand in prayer to God for sending them food through other persons. He refers to Abu Zahih of Mecca who rejected this misinterpretation and still clings to it. There is another tradition according to which the upper hand (of the giver) is better than the lower hand (of the beggar). But Suhrawardi, following Hajwiri, interprets it again in his own way. According to him, the upper hand is the hand of the beggar who by receiving alms gives blessing to the alms-giver. Similarly, discussing the question of celibacy, he waves between the two positions. On the one hand, he feels inclined towards celibacy as a logical consequence of the conception of mystics that he holds. On the other hand, there are many traditions to the effect that he who does not marry does not belong to the Muslim community. Ultimately, he leaves the question to the discretion of the individual mystic or to the advice of the spiritual guide. On the question of listening to music, again, his attitude is non-committal. On the one hand, he quotes several eminent Sufis who were fond of music and who referred to several traditions in their support. On the other, there were several eminent persons who did not like it because, according to them, there was no scriptural support for it. While discussing the question of musical assemblies, he points out that some people look upon these assemblies as innovations. But he adds that not all innovations are religiously blame-worthy and, therefore, the question under discussion cannot be decided on this ground. Again, he quotes a tradition in support of the mystic dance (uswad) and tearing of the mystic robe (jihapak) in these assemblies and yet adds that traditions invariably respect them as unlawful and, therefore, the matter stands where it is. But on the whole he seems to be in favour of music. With regard to travel, Suhrawardi thinks that a Sufi cannot be expected to conform to any particular pattern of life. He divides Sufis into four classes

44 'Avdul al-Maqari, Chap. 9, pp. 93-96.
45 Qur'an, iii, 109.
46 He quotes the story of two brothers, one of whom was a Sufi and the other a soldier. The latter wrote to his brother inviting him to join war against the enemy because the times were critical. The Sufi brother refused to accept his advice for he preferred his way of life to that of his brother's, with the remark: "If all people were to follow my path and remember Allah sitting on their prayer-carpets, they would have conquered Constantinople." 'Avdul al-Maqari, Chap. 12, pp. 135-36.
47 Qur'an, xxiv, 36-37: "In whose which Allah has permitted to be seated so that His name may be remembered in them; they glorify Him therein in the morning and evening, men whom neither merchandise nor selling divers from remembrance of Allah . . . ."

360
in this respect: First those who start their mystic career as travellers but then change into stays-at-home. Their travelling is for several purposes—
for acquiring knowledge, which, as the Shaikh quotes different traditions, is incumbent on all Muslims; for visiting people versed in knowledge (vidéshen fî’îlim) and benefiting from their company; for observing the various forms of natural phenomena, for, according to the Qur’ān, God shows “His signs in the objective world and in the subjective world of the self till the truth is clear to them”54; for moral and spiritual discipline which will season them and train them to achieve self-control and other virtues. The second are those who start their mystic life with a retreat to solitude and end up with travelling. Such persons happen to enjoy the company of a perfect saint and under his guidance cover several stages of the mystic discipline and then after maturity try to consolidate their position by travelling from place to place. To the third category belong people who start their mystic life in solitude and retirement and end with it. “Such people keep their heads on the knees and find therein the Mount of Sinai.” In other words, they enjoy the nearness and see the light of divine illumination. It is said that water if stationary begins to stink. To this the mystics reply that one should become as vast as an ocean and thereby become protected from stagnation and nasty smell. To the fourth category belong people who are always on the move and with them travelling is the beginning and end of mystic discipline.

Psychology: Soul, Appetitive Self, Heart.—The Shaikh bases his account of the soul (rūḥ) on two verses of the Qur’ān. In the first it is held57 that man was created by God from fine clay, then it successively changed into a moist germ, a clot of blood and flesh, till all of a sudden this compound of apparently chemical changes assumed a form beyond the material plane, acquired the new spiritual dimension and became a new creation (khulqan ‘uben). Beginning as a piece of matter, man acquires at a certain stage of development characteristics which as if push him out of this plane into the plane of life. This stage, according to Suhrawardi, was reached when soul was breathed into him. But what is this soul which changes a piece of clay and matter into a being of a different dimension? He refers to the second verse: “They ask you of the soul (rūḥ). Say, the soul is from the command (amr) of my Lord.”58

On the basis of this verse, some mystics regard the soul as eternal—as being an emanation of God’s amr, which, as an attribute of God, is eternal. Suhrawardi, however, thinks that the soul is not eternal but created (hidîth), though it is the most subtle of all things and purer and lighter than all else.

The next question is to determine whether it is an attribute (‘ard) or a substance (fa‘brār). In a tradition it is mentioned that the souls have the capacity to move here and there, fly to different places, etc. On this basis some mystics are inclined to the view that soul is a substance characterized by some definite attributes. But Suhrawardi does not accept this interpretation. He holds that the account of the soul in the traditions is only symbolical and, therefore, cannot be taken in a literal sense. Soul is neither eternal nor is it a substance but created (hidîth) and is an attribute (‘ard). It is a created thing which acts according to its nature; it keeps the body alive as long as it is associated with it; it is nobler than the body; it tastes death when it is separated from the body, just as the body meets death when it is separated from the soul.

There are, according to him, two stages of the soul. The first is that of the animal soul (rūḥ al-bayyānî) which is a subtle body. It is the source of movement in the human body and produces in it the capacity of receiving sensations from the outside world. This soul is common to all animals and is intimately connected with the digestive organism of the body. The other grade of the soul is that of Suhrawardi calls the heavenly soul of man. It belongs to the world of command (‘ilam al-amr). When it descends upon the animal soul, the animal soul is totally transformed. Now it acquires the characteristic of rationality and becomes capable of receiving inspiration (ihām).59

The appetitive self (nafs) is the source of all undesirable activities. It has two dominant impulses, rage and avarice. When in rage, it is like a circular substance which is by its nature always on the move. When avaricious, it is like the moth which, being not satisfied with a little light, throws itself headlong into the flame of the candle and burns itself to death. A man is able to attain true rank of manliness when he tries to purify his self (nafs) of those gross characteristics by bringing into play reason and patience.

The self passes through three different stages of development. The first stage of the Self is evil-prompting (ammutrah), the second is repentant (kuwānīn), while the third is satisfied (nafa‘ir).60

Heart (qalb) is a spiritual principle (lafîsh) and has its locus in the heart of flesh. It comes into being as a result of mutual attraction between the human soul and the appetitive self. According to a tradition of the Holy Prophet (narrated by Hudbařah), there are four kinds of hearts. The first is like a pure soil free from all kinds of vegetation. It is illuminated as if by a shining lamp. It is the heart of a true believer (ma‘īn). The second is a dark, inverted heart which belongs to an unbeliever. The third belongs to a hypocrite and is enveloped in a veil. The last is a pure but many-faceted heart, with an inclination towards good as well as evil.61

Mystery (Sirr).—There is difference of opinion among the mystics with regard to the exact place which the secret occupies in the psychological make-up of man. According to some, it is prior to the soul (rūḥ) and posterior to the heart (qalb) as a spiritual principle. To others it is posterior to the soul, though higher and subtler than it. According to these mystics, sirr is the

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54 Qur’ān, xli, 53.
57 Ibid., xxxiii, 2-14.
58 Ibid., xvii, 85.
59 ‘Ashāri al-Ma‘ārif, p. 552.
60 Ibid., pp. 555-58.
61 Ibid., p. 553.
A History of Muslim Philosophy

locus of spiritual observation (maqārah), soul is the locus of love, and heart is the locus of gnosis (ma'rifah).

Suhrawardi, however, thinks that the secret (a'ir) has no independent being like the soul and heart. It refers to a particular stage in the spiritual development of man. When man is able to free himself from the dark prison of the appetite self, and learns towards the spiritual soul, his heart acquires a new characteristic which is called mystery (a'ir). Similarly, at this stage his soul also attains a special position which again is called mystery. At this stage, man acquires the satisfied self and he acts and wills what God wishes him to do or will; he loses his individual power of action and freedom of choice and becomes a perfect servant (abbāb).

Reason (Aql).—It is the essence of the heavenly soul, its tongue, and its guide. The Sufis quote the usual traditional account that reason was the first creation of God. God asked it to come forward, to turn back, to sit, to speak, to become silent in turn, and it obeyed God's orders to the very letter. At this God said, "I swear by My majesty and power that I did not create a being dearer or more honourable than you. I shall be known, praised, and obeyed through you. I shall give as well as take through you. My pleasure and wrath shall follow deeds through you. People shall be rewarded or punished in accordance with you.

Some people think that reason develops from the study of sciences (ilmān), especially those which are necessary and axiomatic. But Suhrawardi does not seem to agree to this, for, as he argues, there are many people who are not versed in any art or science and yet possess abundance of reason and common sense. It is the inherent capacity of man which helps him in acquiring different kinds of arts and sciences. There is placed in man a natural power which prompts him to acquire different kinds of knowledge. It is thus truly established that reason is the tongue of the soul which is the Word of God (fama Allah).

From this flows the light of reason which then leads to the discovery of knowledge, science, and art. Some people think that reason is of two kinds. By one, man looks to the affairs of this world, and its seat is brain. The other reason has its place in the heart (rūh) with which a man looks to the affairs of the other world. But, according to Suhrawardi, this division is meaningless and unnecessary. Reason as the vehicle of the soul (rūh) is one. When it is supported and supplemented by the light of the Ghūrūf and spiritual perception (būdhīn), it helps a man traverse the straight path of guidance and tread the middle course of the golden mean. Such a person gets knowledge of the heavenly sphere (ma'ālihā) which is the inmost secret ( ḥalqah) of the universe. This illumination is the peculiar characteristic of the elect. Such men are capable of looking to the affairs of both worlds, the world of matter and space and the world of spirit, the present world and the next world. When reason is not supported and supplemented by the Ghūrūf and būdhīn, a man may be

able to do well in this world, but he shall be deprived of the blessings of the world of spirit.

As the goal of the mystics is thoroughly practical, their exaction as novices into the psychological field is really for the purpose of securing a good ground on which to build an edifice of moral and spiritual development. Their aim is to attain a vision of God and enjoy communion with Him. This involves the necessity of the destruction of vices and elimination of imperfections, which often raise their head imperceptibly. The main cause is the wrong interpretation which a man puts on the revelations (hikmat), he receives after undergoing mortification. A true mystic is one who is able to discriminate between the sources of these experiences (mawāṣir). With regard to the sources, he divides these experiences into four kinds: (1) those that flow from the appetite self (nafs), (2) from God (Hāq), (3) from Satan, and (4) from the angels. There must be one of the following causes why a person cannot discriminate between the sources of experiences: (a) weakness in faith, (b) lack of proper knowledge with regard to the appetite self and morals, (c) following the dictates of the appetite self, and, lastly, (d) love of the world and material goals. Anyone who protects himself from all these causes will surely be able to distinguish between revelations from God and those from Satan. It is an established fact, according to Suhrawardi, that he whose source of livelihood is not pure cannot be safe from evil influences. An attitude of balanced detachment from the material world, mortification of flesh, and constancy in ascetic practices are essential for a true mystic, and it is only then that a mystic can hope to achieve the beatific vision.

State and Station (fādil wa maqām).—Suhrawardi thinks that most mystics confuse state with station because there is a great similarity between the two, and yet these must be distinguished, for otherwise there is a possibility of misunderstanding the true nature of the mystic experience.

State (fādil) as a technical term is indicative of a psychological condition which is implied in its etymology, viz., its liability to change and progress, while station (maqām) implies a psychological condition which is relatively permanent. A psychological attitude that a mystic adopts at a particular stage of his mystic experience may be called state because the mystic is not yet used to it, but when later on through practice it becomes a permanent feature of his mystic life, it becomes a station. Take, for instance, the attitude of critical examination (maqārah) of one's self from a moral point of view. When a mystic adopts this attitude first, it is a state which occurs at different periods; it comes and goes at intervals. By constant practice, however, he is able later on to make it a permanent feature of his normal life. Then it is a station. Again, the mystic tries to adopt the attitude of meditation or
contemplation (*muraqqah*) which becomes his state. Sometimes he is able to contemplate but, due to negligence and other distractions, he cannot find it possible to make it a permanent feature of his life. But steadily and gradually he gains his desired end and a day comes when contemplation becomes a station. Then he advances to the third stage, of observation (*mushkhalah*), where he perceives with his own eyes the secrets of the spiritual world. This, again, is first a state and only gradually by personal effort passes into a station. Thus it follows that “station” is a psychological state which is the result of personal effort, while “state” is the result of divine grace. Every moral attitude is characterized by both. Conti nence (*zuhd*), complete reliance on God (*tausukul*), and submission to God’s pleasure (*rida*), for instance, have both these aspects—at one stage, they are acquired after a constant and toil- some effort and, at another stage, they become a permanent feature of the life of a mystic due to divine grace.**

Among the states Suhravardi discusses love, feeling of nearness to God (*gurb*), bashfulness, reverence, union (*ittiṣār*), contraction (*gabd*) and expansion (*baqūl*), annihilation (*janā*), and abiding (*baqūl*), etc.

**Love.**—There is an instinctive love in man for wife, wealth, and children, but the love at which the mystics aim is not instinctive. It flows from the heart of an individual after he has reached a particular level of moral development where all his capacities and tendencies are directed towards the realization of union with God. It is then that the sentiment of love appears in him and all inclinations are subordinated to it. He begins to feel love for God with the full force of instinctive impulse as well as conscious purpose. There are four kinds of love, according to Suhravardi: (1) love of appetitive soul (*nafs*), (2) love of reason, (3) love of heart as a symbol of spiritual perception, and (4) love of soul (*rūḥ*). The love for God which is the ideal of the mystics combines all these loves.

When love appears in a mystic on the basis of the first three sources, it is called general love which is the result of direct apprehension (*muḥkhalah*) of God’s attributes. But when he passes from attributes to God’s essence (*dhāt*), his love assumes a new dimension; it flows from his soul, and he is thus enabled to attain his goal. At this stage the mystic acquires and appropriates all the divine attributes. His position becomes what God says: “When I love a person I become his eyes and ears, etc.”

**Nearness (Qurb).**—This is not physical nearness but only a psychological state in which the mystic feels a profound consciousness of intimacy with the Ultimate Reality. The Qur’an says: “And prostrate and draw near (to Him).”

On this basis Suhravardi thinks that attainment of nearness depends upon concentration on God which enables the individual to surpass levels of normal consciousness. There are two stages in this process. In the first place, the mystic falls as if into a trance and is overcome by intoxication (*sūr*); his consciousness of self (*nafs*) disappears in the spiritual light of his soul (*rūḥ*). The next phase begins when both *nafs* and *rūḥ* regain their separate identities and the individual feels the consciousness of nearness intimately and yet, in spite of it, the consciousness of otherness, which is involved in his relation of slavehood (*ubūdīyyah*) to God, is also conspicuously present. He quotes a mystic as saying: “By following the Sunnah one attains gnosis (*ma’rifah*) by observing the obligatory duties (*fard‘īd*) one reaches nearness, while by practising daily ‘extra’ prayers (*nawāfi‘l*), one attains love.”

**Bashfulness (Hayā).**—There is a saying of the Holy Prophet: “Be modest with God as it is due to Him.” Suhravardi explained it as follows: “He alone can be called modest in relation to God who is careful of his daily behaviour towards Him and remembers his death and the hereafter, with the result that his heart cools off towards this world and its entanglements.”

But this modesty or bashfulness, being acquired, is a station (*maqām*), while bashfulness of a special quality is a state. In order to define it, Suhravardi quotes certain sayings of some mystics. One says: “Bashfulness and attachment (*uns*) hover about the heart, and when they find that it is possessed of continence (*zuhd*) and piety (*tarīq*), they descend into it, otherwise they move away.” This bashfulness is the submission of one’s soul to God for maintaining the grandeur of His majesty (*jālāl*), while attachment is the soul’s experience of pleasure in the perfection of His beauty (*jamāl*). When both bashfulness and attachment combine, it is the end of a mystic’s ambition. According to Abu Sulaimān, there are four different motives of action: fear, hope, awe, and bashfulness, and that action is the best which is motivated by the last.

**Union (Ittiṣār).**—As Nūrī says, union is the revelation of the heart and the observation of secrets. There is a person who attains union through his personal efforts but loses this position as soon as there is slackness in his efforts. This is all but natural, for human efforts cannot be kept up at the same degree of intensity for a long time. Such a person is called *mafiṣqal*. But the union that Suhravardi commends is one which is the result not of personal effort but of divine grace. A person who receives it is called united (*waqīf*). But there are several grades of this union.

There is a person who receives illumination from divine actions. To such a person, actions, his own as well as those of others, cannot be attributed, for his role is only passive. It is God who does all actions through him and he loses all freedom of choice or independence of action. Secondly, there is illumination from divine attributes. Here the recipient through revelation of divine attributes of majesty and beauty stays at the stations of awe (*baṣāh*) and attachment (*uns*). Then there is the illumination of divine essence (*dhāt*) which is a stage towards annihilation (*janā*). A person at this stage is illumined with the divine light of faith and in the observation of God’s face loses his individuality. This is a further stage in union (*ittiṣār*). It
A History of Muslim Philosophy

is open only to a few, the wajibun, who enjoy nearness to God. Above it is the stage of spiritual perception (bagh al-‘ayn) which is vouchsafed to very few persons and that only for the twinkling of an eye. It is the complete permeation of divine light in the recipient, so much so that his self (nafs) and heart both feel overpowered by it. And, in spite of its being a very rare experience attainable by a few select persons, the recipient feels that he is perhaps at some preliminary stage of his journey towards union. It is a long and toilsome journey for which perhaps a life of eternity may not suffice.

Contraction and Expansion (Qabah wa Ba‘ti).—These two emotional states are dependent for their appearance on certain preliminary conditions. They are usually experienced by a mystic when he is traversing the early stages of what Subhawardi calls the states of special love.44 They appear neither at the stage of general love, nor at the termination of the stage of special love. There are some emotional experiences in the state of general love which seem to correspond to contraction and expansion, but which in reality are nothing more than fear (khust) and hope (naja‘), while at other times they are what he calls grief (hamn) and pleasure (nikab) which the exponents confuse with contraction and expansion. Grief and pleasure emanate from the self (nafs) which is yet at the appetitive stage (nafs-i-jamshedzad), a stage susceptible to the promptings of evil. Hamn is the feeling of dissatisfaction experienced at the failure of attaining the object of self-love while nikab is the crest of the wave when the self of insufficiency is all astir.

It is only when the mystic enters the next stage which is connected with the stage of special love and when his appetitive self becomes the repentant self (nafs-i-husnudmah) that the true moods of contraction and expansion make their appearance. The mood of contraction is the result of a psychological state when the self (nafs) is in ascendance, while the mood of expansion follows when the heart (as an organ of spiritual perception) is in ascendance. When the appetitive self becomes repentant (husnudmah), there is a constant up and down in the urges towards evil; sometimes the urge towards good has the upper hand, while at others there is a tendency towards the other pole. The appearance of contraction and expansion corresponds to these two poles of the life of the self. Nafs is the veil of darkness and heart is the veil of light, and as long as an individual is in the sphere of these veils, he continues to experience these two moods of contraction and expansion. But as soon as he comes beyond these veils, these moods also disappear. In the experience of annihilation (fana‘) and abiding (baqti‘), there is neither contraction nor expansion; they are intimately connected with the consciousness of selfhood.

According to some Sufis, the mystic first experiences contraction in his spiritual development and then it is followed by expansion. Subhawardi also holds the same opinion. But there are certain situations where this order is reversed. Under the mood of expansion, the expanse feels overjoyed and happy. This happiness then filters down to the self (nafs) which is by nature inclined to interpret it appetitively so that this mood of expansion degenerates into an attitude of pleasure. At this stage the mood of contraction of necessity makes its appearance to bring the self to the state of samity and equanimity. If the self were to be free from a tendency towards the extremes, the mystic would be in a perpetual state of expansion (baqti) and blessedness.

When the self passes into the last stage and becomes the satisfied soul, it attains complete harmony and passes beyond the bi-polar strife of good and evil. For such a person the moods of contraction and expansion are non-existent.

Annihilation and Abiding (Fana‘ i wa Ba‘ti).—According to Subhawardi, what most mystics describe as the state of annihilation (fana‘) is in reality not fana‘ but something else. According to some, fana‘ is the annihilation of all attachment, absence of all urges towards satisfaction of worldly desires, etc. This state, according to Subhawardi, is what is implied in repentance of a true type (fana‘-i-alam-nah): ‘To some fana‘ is the annihilation of evil attributes and baqti‘, the abiding of good attributes. This, again, according to Subhawardi, is not true fana‘ and baqti‘ but the result of moral transformation and purification (fakhr-kh求kus). There are many phases of fana‘, but the state of absolute fana‘ is one where the being of God is so overpowering and overwhelming that the consciousness of the finite self is totally obliterated. He quotes with approval the following event as a true representation of the state of annihilation (fana‘).

A person greeted ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar while he was engaged in circumspection (fana‘-i) of the Ka‘bah to which he made no response. Later on he heard that the man had complained to someone at the absence of his response. At this ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar replied that in that state he was in communion with God and, therefore, did not have any consciousness of himself, not to speak of others.

There are two kinds of fana‘. The first is the apparent annihilation (fana‘-al-gha‘ib). Here the mystic receives illumination through divine action with the result that freedom of action and choice disappears from him. He sees all actions, his as well as those of others, emanating directly from God. At the stage of the real annihilation (fana‘-al-bid‘i‘), the mystic receives illumination from God’s attributes and His essence (khaylit) with the result that he is overwhelmed by the divine amr so much so that he becomes totally immune from evil promptings of all kinds.

Some people in the state of annihilation lose all consciousness but, according to Subhawardi, it is not an essential phase of this state.

In the state of abiding (baqti‘), the mystic is restored the power of action which had been annihilated previously. God allows him full freedom to act as he likes and as the situation demands. In this state he is conscious of the obligations both to the world and to God and none of these becomes a hindrance to the other. His duty to the world does not make him oblivious of his duty
to God, nor does his communion with God deprive him from turning his attention to the worldly matters.

The apparent annihilation (fanā' al-zāhir) is for those who are at the station of heart and are busy with emotional states, while the real annihilation (fanā' al-bātīn) is for those who have passed beyond that station and attained union with God and who are what he calls bi-Allah (with God). 47

Union and Separation (Jam' wa Tafriqah).—According to Junaid, nearness to God in ecstasy (waqīj) is union while the sense of selfhood (bā'wiriyah) and absence from God (ghubāb), i.e., awareness of self, is separation (tafrīqah). Suhrwardi accepts this position and says that the state where the mystic feels himself united with God (taffid al-tāfīd) is denoted by union (jam'), while ordinary and normal state of consciousness, where the mystic feels the separate individuality of his own self as well as of other things, is called separation (tafrīqah). He adds that both these states are complementary; if we ignore union, we are landed in negation of the divine attributes (ta'ālā) and if we ignore separation, it leads to herey (tāhād) and denial of God (zandqah).

Union is annihilation in God (fanā' bi-Allah), whereas separation (tafrīqah) is relationship of an obedient servant to God (‘ubdīyyah). Union is the result of man's possession of a soul, while separation is due to his possession of a body, and as long as the combination of the soul and the body persists, these two states must equally be emphasized in the life of the mystic.

There is another state which is called by mystics the union of the union (jam' al-jam'). When a mystic looks towards God's action, he is in the state of separation; when he looks towards God's attributes, he is in the state of union; and when he looks towards God's essence, he is in the state of union of the union. 48

Process of Self-Purification.—The ideal life, according to Suhrwardi, is the life of a perfect man who, in spite of the highest spiritual attainments, is yet conscious of his subservience to the Law of Shari'ah. But this stage of purification cannot be attained without a long process of self-mortification which demands self-examination, introversion, contemplation, patience, submission to God's will, and an attitude of complete detachment. The spark of life that is kindled within the heart of the mystic has a charm of its own, but it cannot be kept burning unless it is fed constantly on the oil that flows from continuous efforts towards asceticism. He receives wayward glimpses of the Infinite Beauty and is charmed, but they prove fleeting; he wants this experience to be broadened in extensity and deepened in intensity; he wants this experience to be stabilized and enriched—hence the necessity of the whole process of self-purification. The result is second birth out of the womb of spirit into the kingdom of the re-awakened spirit.

Suhrwardi gives the details of this process of gradual enlightenment. There

47 'Avdūrīf al-Muṣṭafī, Chap. 61, pp. 632–53.

are four preliminary stages: Faith, repentance (taubah), continence, constancy in unblemished virtuous actions. These four must be supplemented by four other things which are essentials of asceticism, viz., minimum conversation, minimum food, minimum stay-at-home, and minimum contact with people.

Repentance (taubah) over past shortcomings and determination to avoid them in future are effective only when a person keeps a constant check over his thoughts and actions and is fully awake to all situations. 49 But to maintain this psychological state of repentance there are certain essential requirements. The first is self-examination (muḥāsābah) and the other is introversion or meditation (muraqqabah). A person asked Wāsi, "Which is the best virtuous action?" He said, "Outwardly self-examination and inwardly meditation; both are perfected by each other and help to maintain the attitude of repentance in the mystic which leads to concentration on and communion with God (trībāh).

The other thing that is essential for a mystic is patience (ṣabr) without which it is not possible for him to continue his life. This moral quality enables him to endure the vicissitudes of life. It is far more easy for an individual to show his mettle in adversity than in prosperity and hence the mystics have emphasized the importance of patience in a state of affliction which is regarded superior to patience shown in a state of want. The next state is that of rīḍah which is in a way the fruit of conversion (taubah) where the mystic enters the sphere of fear and hope. He feels shocked at the tendency of the soul and, being morally at a higher stage of development, he fears succumbing to these temptations. This feeling of fear, therefore, serves to keep him aware and make him watchful of any fall towards the satisfaction of his base self. He is repentant and feels hopeful of ultimate victory over these evil forces. Thus, the life of the mystic moves between these two poles of fear and hope and gradually attains the stage of what Suhrwardi calls continence (zahid), which in a way sums up all that he has achieved so far. The stage of continence, in other words, is the stage where the fruits of conversion (taubah) with its constituents of self-examination and meditation, patience and voluntary submission to God, piety, hope, and fear, all converge and make the mystic into a perfect ascetic who lives, moves, and has his being in complete communion with God and in total reliance (tausukh) upon Him. This second stage of continence is distinct from poverty (fāqr). A fāqr is one who is forced by circumstances to lead a life of poverty, while the continent person (zahid), on the other hand, adopts this life of detachment of his own free-will even when the state of affluence is open to him.

The third stage is that of stability in morally virtuous actions. According to Suhrwardi, a zahid who does not follow the Law of the Shari'ah is liable to be led astray. It is only through constancy in action for God ('aml li-Allah),

49 He calls them scolding of one's self (safr), warning (tisīb), and awakening (bidārī).
remembrance (dhikr), recitation from the Qur'an, prayers, and meditation (mar'ah al-dhikr) that a mystic can hope to attain his objective which is 'abd-al-'aziz, perfect obedience to God. Suhaylib 'Abd Allah Tukari said about this stage: "When a man after passing through repentance, continence, and constancy in virtuous deeds reaches the stage of slavehood, he becomes totally passive towards the divine will and of his own free-will decides no longer to exercise his freedom of choice and action. Then he is granted full power of activity and freedom of action because he has identified himself with the will of God. His self-destruction is equivalent to God's determination; the liability of his falling a prey to evil temptations and ignorance are totally obliterated."

According to Suhrawardi, the stage of giving up freedom of choice and action is the stage of annihilation, but the second stage where the mystic freely acts, because his will follows the will of God, is the state of allying in God. It is the shedding of the mortal self for the eternal, material for the spiritual, human for the divine. The mystic at this stage is the perfect servant.98

98 'Aandari al-Ma'sir, Chap. 59, pp. 585-600.

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Chapter XIX
SHIHAB AL-DIN SUHRAWARDI MAQTUL

The intellectual life of Islam and that of Christianity—the two sister civilisations—in the Middle Ages can be compared with each other to a large extent through the role that Aristotelian philosophy played in them. Peripatetic science and philosophy entered the Western world through translations from the Arabic in the seventeenth century and eventually became dominant to such an extent as to replace the Augustinian and Platonic wisdom of the earlier period only to be overthrown itself by the humanistic rationalism of the Renaissance. In Islam the attack of Sufis and theologians upon the rationalistic aspect of Aristotelian philosophy weakened its hold at the very time when that philosophy was gaining strength in the Christian West and was replaced in the Muslim world by two elements, the doctrinal Sufism of Muhayri

1 The Arabic word shihaba is neither philosophy as currently understood in modern European language, i.e., one form or another of rationalism, nor theology. It is, properly speaking, theosophy as understood in its original Gnostic sense and not in any way connected with the pseudo-spiritualistic movements of the century. It is also unjustified to compare it to the Latin root aepse, like the Arabic word shihaba by which this wisdom is known, means taste. Moreover, it can be designated as speculative wisdom because specula means mirror and this wisdom seems to make man's soul a mirror in which divine knowledge is reflected.

2 Shahib al-Din Suhrawardi is often called al-Maqtul, meaning he who was killed, since he was put to death for certain indirect formulations. We, however, refer to him as Shahib al-Islahi by which name he is universally known among his disciples.


372

373

al-Din Ibn Arabi and the Ithnasan al-Islahi or illuminative wisdom of Shahib al-Islahi Shahib al-Din Yahya Ibn Bahadd ibn Amrut Suhrawardi, both of which aimed at an effective realization of the "truth" and replaced the rationalism of Peripatetic philosophy by intellectual intuition (shihaba).