

## Cārullāh Efendi (d. 1151/1738) on Ibn al-‘Arabī (d. 638/1240): Correcting Misconception via Manuscript Notes

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Manuscript studies have recently gained momentum, as one frequently encounters many academic studies and events of different sizes, such as symposiums, workshops, edited books, and papers on this subject.<sup>1</sup> These academic activities have led to the production of more comprehensive projects and publications on manuscripts. Such manuscript research may range from the critical analysis of a single manuscript to the review of an entire collection. Examining annotations made in the margins of texts has recently emerged as a new method to unearth otherwise hidden knowledge “behind” the texts.<sup>2</sup> A new generation of scholars is employing manuscript notes to write the biographies of more obscure persons, to understand the process of building a library, to gain a deeper comprehension of the literature on certain issues, or as a documentary source.<sup>3</sup>

Manuscript notes offer biographical, bibliographical, annotative, and glossarial information to researchers as well as providing critical information – that is, performing criticism in the margins. Of these, I focus here on critical annotations that can also be considered marginal commentary because they represent a kind of “marginal criticism”. To illustrate the critical attitude of marginal commentaries, I utilise the handwritten notes set down by Cārullāh Efendi (b. 1070/1659–1660, d. 1151/1738) in the margins of works investigating Ibn al-‘Arabī to demonstrate that the former considered that the latter should be reconsidered, and further asserted that Ottoman scholars either misunderstood or held certain biases against him. Thus, marginal commentaries show their potential to display intellectual debates.

1 For general reviews on book culture and manuscript studies, see Açıl: “Kitap Kültürü Çalışmalarının Genel Seyri”, pp. 1–15; Hirschler: *Medieval Syrian Book Culture*, pp. 5–17.

2 For a few examples, see Açıl (ed.): *Osmanlı Kitap Kültürü*; Açıl: “Edebiyatın İlmi veya İlmin Edebiyatı”, pp. 61–91; Arslan: “Eserden Müessire Seyr u Sefer”, pp. 67–83.

3 See, for example, Liebrecht: “Library of Aḥmad al-Rabbāt”, pp. 17–59; Görke and Hirschler (eds.): *Manuscript Notes*.

Cārullāh Efendi wrote notes related to Ibn al-‘Arabī in the margins or on the front pages of manuscripts he read. These notes constitute a defence of Ibn al-‘Arabī and his doctrine against the accusations and criticism levelled at him by other scholars, and I will demonstrate how, in these marginal notes, Cārullāh Efendi simultaneously defends Ibn al-‘Arabī and criticises esteemed scholars who had denigrated him.

Although Ibn al-‘Arabī was condemned as a *kāfir* (unbeliever) by certain Ottoman scholars and intellectuals, other circles in Ottoman society held him to be the greatest shaykh (*al-shaykh al-akbar*), and this sharp dichotomy persists even today in modern Islamic discourses. Historically, however, the seventeenth century constituted a period when most views portrayed him in a negative light, as exemplified by the work *The Balance of Truth* (*Mizān al-ḥaqq fī ikhtiyār al-aḥaqq*), most likely written in 1656 by Kātib Çelebi, also known as Hājji Khalīfa (d. 1067/1657). This work, in which Kātib Çelebi discusses twenty-one controversial issues prevalent in his time, reflects the general atmosphere of the century.

Kātib Çelebi was among the most influential figures of the seventeenth century as a result of his writings and his network of contemporaries. Serhat Küçük has reviewed the most well-known assessments of Kātib Çelebi to reveal how he has been perceived throughout history in his “Kātip Çelebi Algısı Üzerine Düşünceler” (Reflections on the Perception of Kātib Çelebi).<sup>4</sup> According to Küçük, he tended to employ universal truths for local objectives instead of presenting universal messages for humanity through local issues.<sup>5</sup> Thus, he was a man of his times of transformation and inter- and intra-communal intellectual exchange,<sup>6</sup> who uses both Eastern and Western knowledge and science.<sup>7</sup> As G.L. Lewis puts it, his fame largely rests on his *Kashf al-zunūn*, which is still a research tool of Orientalists, and his *Jihānnumā* is a landmark in Ottoman scholarship since Western sources were essential for the completion of the work.<sup>8</sup>

Kātib Çelebi was one of the students of Qāḍizāde Mehmed Efendi (d. 1045/1635), who epitomised one of the two sides present in the political and religious movements of the seventeenth century and who was criticised as having “no

4 The assessment of Kātib Çelebi has been a controversial one, including both praise and disparagement, and Serhat Küçük tries to reflect both sides. See Küçük: “Kātip Çelebi Algısı Üzerine Düşünceler”, pp. 45–59.

5 Küçük: “Kātip Çelebi Algısı Üzerine Düşünceler”, p. 55.

6 See Çalışır: “*Virtuous*” *Grand Vizier*, pp. 133–146.

7 Fazhoğlu: “Gelecek Geçmişi, Şimdi Kılma Bilinci”, pp. 65–71.

8 Lewis: “Introduction”, pp. 11–12.

acquaintance with rational sciences”<sup>9</sup> in *The Balance of Truth*. Kātib Çelebi was also an essential scholar in the life of Cārullāh Efendi, as he was the teacher (*hocā*) of Cārullāh Efendi’s teacher ‘Abd al-Wahhāb Efendi (d. 1100/1689), better known by the name ‘Arab-zādah. This established a direct link between Cārullāh Efendi and Kātib Çelebi. Cārullāh Efendi reflects this in one of the marginal notes he wrote in a manuscript containing the work *al-Mulakkhkhaṣ* that Kātib Çelebi himself had copied.<sup>10</sup> Kātib Çelebi most likely taught ‘Abd al-Wahhāb Efendi the mathematical sciences that were subsequently taught to Cārullāh Efendi. Consequently, Cārullāh Efendi can be considered a link in the chain running back to Qāḏizāde. This being the case, Kātib Çelebi makes the perfect starting point for us to comprehend both the seventeenth century in general and Ottoman scholars’ view of Ibn al-‘Arabī in particular, since *The Balance of Truth* gained public approval and confirmation even in his own lifetime, for example, from the shaykh al-Islam of the era, ‘Abd al-Raḥīm Efendi.<sup>11</sup>

According to Kātib Çelebi, Qāḏizāde, like Birgili Mehmed Efendi (d. 981/1573), had initially desired to become a Sufi. However, upon realising that the “Sufi path did not suit his temperament, he adopted the way of the rational sciences (*‘aqliyyāt*)”.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, ‘Abdūlmecid Siwāsī (d. 1049/1639) represents the opposite of Qāḏizāde, namely *taṣawwuf* (spirituality/Sufism). Çelebi argues:

These two sheikhs were diametrically opposed to one another; because of their differing temperaments, warfare arose between them. In most of the controversies I have mentioned in this book, Qāḏizāde took one side and Siwāsī took the other, both going to extremes.<sup>13</sup>

The issues that Çelebi portrays in *The Balance of Truth* are the main fault line that divided Ottoman society into two distinct segments. What is of interest to me is that Kātib Çelebi posited himself as an arbitrator between them, just as the name of his book implies: *The Balance of Truth*. He proposed himself as a balance to select “the truest truth among truths”, though he was neither a genuine madrasa teacher nor the best scholar of his time; indeed, he would be

9 Katib Chelebi: *The Balance of Truth*, p. 136.

10 MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Carullah Efendi, 1489/1, fol. 1r; *Sharḥ al-Mulakkhkhaṣ fī al-hay’ah* by Qāḏizāde al-Rūmī. Here, Cārullāh Efendi states that the copier of the book (Kātib Çelebi) is the master of his master (‘Abd al-Wahhāb Efendi), who is the author of *Asāmī al-kutub* and other books.

11 Birinci: “Katip Çelebi’nin Mizanü’l-Hakk’ı Yasaklanmış Mıydı?”, p. 17.

12 Katib Chelebi: *The Balance of Truth*, p. 132.

13 Katib Chelebi: *The Balance of Truth*, p. 133.

classified as an encyclopedist<sup>14</sup> rather than a madrasa teacher because he was not educated in a madrasa.

In all, twenty-one controversial issues dominant during the seventeenth century were treated in *The Balance of Truth*. These are: “The Life of the Prophet Khidr”, “Singing”, “Dancing and Whirling”, “The Invoking of Blessings on Prophets and Companions [*taşliyya* and *tardıyya*]”, “Tobacco”, “Coffee”, “Laudanum, Opium and Other Drugs”, “The Parents of the Prophet”, “The Faith of Pharaoh”, “The Controversy concerning Shaykh Muhyi al-Din Ibn al-‘Arabī”, “The Cursing of Yazid”, “The Innovation [*bid‘a*]”, “Pilgrimages to Tombs”, “The Supererogatory Prayers [Nights of *Raghā’ib*, *Barā’at* and *Qadr*]”, “Shaking Hands”, “Bowling [*inḥinā*]”, “Enjoining right and Forbidding Wrong”, “The Religion of Abraham”, “Bribery”, “The Controversy between Abū al-Su‘ūd Efendi and Birgili Mehmed Efendi”, and “The Controversy between Siwāsī and Qāḍizāde”.<sup>15</sup>

A look at the subjects addressed in this book reveals that a myriad of controversial issues had emerged by the seventeenth century, demonstrating that this was an intellectually chaotic and contentious century. The most critical of these controversies for this chapter is the one about Ibn al-‘Arabī and his famous doctrine of the unity of being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*). Although Ibn al-‘Arabī and his theory influenced Ottoman thought throughout its entire history, intellectuals continue to struggle with this topic. Therefore, I will focus on this specific problem, investigating how the two opposing sides assessed Ibn al-‘Arabī and his doctrine of the unity of being in the seventeenth century.

The so-called Qāḍizādelis and Siwāsīs constituted the two polar camps when it came to Ibn al-‘Arabī and the unity of being, and I believe this reflects the understanding and attitudes of the larger seventeenth-century Ottoman intellectual community. In fact, in his chapter titled “The Controversy concerning Shaykh Muhyi al-Din Ibn al-‘Arabī”, Kātib Çelebi discusses the arguments made for and against him by the Siwāsīs and Qāḍizādelis, respectively. Since Qāḍizāde Mehmed Efendi was the teacher of Kātib Çelebi, it can be easily argued that he was a first-hand witness to this debate.

Although Ibn al-‘Arabī wrote many influential books (six hundred according to Kātib Çelebi), Kātib Çelebi mentions only four of his more famous works in *The Balance of Truth* (*Fuṣūṣ*, *Futūḥāt*, *Jafr kabīr*, and *Miftāḥ al-jafr*) and opines that these made him unmatched among his contemporaries.<sup>16</sup> Though it is not

14 For the life of Kātib Çelebi and a general assessment of his works, see Katib Chelebi: *The Balance of Truth*, pp. 7–20.

15 Katib Chelebi: *The Balance of Truth*, p. v.

16 Katib Chelebi: *The Balance of Truth*, p. 80.

stated directly, it does seem that Kātib Çelebi adopted an attitude towards Ibn al-‘Arabī that was more similar to the Siwāsīs than the Qāḏizādelis.<sup>17</sup>

Kātib Çelebi asserts that there were three distinct ways of viewing Ibn al-‘Arabī and the unity of being during seventeenth-century Ottoman society: (1) utter disapproval and disavowal toward him and his doctrine, (2) acceptance and affirmation of him and his doctrine, and (3) suspense of judgement about him. Whereas Kātib Çelebi himself was a proponent of the third view, which he considered to be the moderate view, he describes the first group as follows:

Some of the partisans of purification and most of the partisans of speculation examined with the eye of speculation the books he had written regarding the doctrine of purification and on the basis of the principle of the unity of existence and rejected them [...]. Some confined themselves to a refusal to accept them, without positively refuting them. Others carried their non-acceptance to the extreme of writing refutations and lampoons, branding the Shaykh as an infidel. Some fanatics of this sort went so far as to distort his appellation of “Greatest Shaykh” [*şeyhü’l-ekber*] into “Most Infidel Shaykh” [*şeyhü’l-ekfer*].<sup>18</sup>

This first group seems to be the supporters of Qāḏizāde Mehmed Efendi, as they accuse Ibn al-‘Arabī of engaging in speculation in the above quotation. This condemnation of Ibn al-‘Arabī as an infidel (*kāfir*) based on his use of speculation and disavowal of his doctrine of the unity of being is characteristic of a mentality that would eschew all forms of *taşavvuf*.

The second group, those who accepts Ibn al-‘Arabī and his doctrine, would be characterised as supporters of Siwāsī and other mystics. According to Kātib Çelebi:

Most of the exponents of purification, and several exponents of speculation, who understood the origin and principle of the Shaykh’s doctrine, or who looked at his outward state and judged correctly, never rejected him but accepted all his words. Some even said, “He is the seal of the Saints and heir of the caliphate of Muhammad.”<sup>19</sup>

17 For a legal discourse on Ibn al-‘Arabī, see Zildžić: *Friend and Foe*, pp. 119–161.

18 Katib Chelebi: *The Balance of Truth*, p. 81.

19 Katib Chelebi: *The Balance of Truth*, p. 82.

Therefore, the point that separated the first and second groups was their respective elevation of rationalism and mysticism, *‘aqliyyāt* and *taṣawwuf*.

The third way of approaching Ibn al-‘Arabī and the unity of being is to suspend judgement: “They have committed themselves neither to rejection nor to acceptance, saying that it is best not to come to the abyss of the altercation, but to stand on the sideline of neutrality, where safety lies.”<sup>20</sup> Kātib Çelebi attempts to remain on this safe side and hence recommends laypeople (specifically Ottomans in the seventeenth century) to “think well of the Shaykh; if one does not do so, one should not think badly of him. This is the attitude proper to the generality of believers. May God Almighty aid them to think well.”<sup>21</sup>

The relevant and the most crucial questions dealt with throughout the remainder of this chapter are: How did Cārullāh Efendi approach Ibn al-‘Arabī and the unity of being? Did he emulate Qāḍizāde Mehmed Efendi and reject Ibn al-‘Arabī and his doctrine, or did he accept them like ‘Abdūlmecīd Siwāsī? The last possibility is that Cārullāh Efendi opted to remain neutral, as the master of his master, Kātib Çelebi, had proposed.

Before portraying how he treated Ibn al-‘Arabī and his doctrine, however, it is important to present some of the biographical knowledge we have on Cārullāh Efendi. Although he was one of the most influential judges (sg. *qādī*, pl. *quḍāt*) among seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Ottoman scholars, he remained relatively obscure to modern scholarship until only very recently, when a comprehensive biography of him was written.

Cārullāh Efendi held several titles, including that of scholar (*‘ālim*), judge, bibliophile, and founder of a madrasa and library. He was born in the vicinity of Yenişehir, known in Greek as Larissa, in 1070/1659–1660. He completed his primary education in his home village at the age of fifteen, whereupon he travelled to the centre of Larissa, where he stayed for the next fifteen years until 1682 before moving to Istanbul to further his education. He subsequently remained in Istanbul for seven years, then set about his scholarly journey (*riḥla*). After leaving Istanbul, he migrated to Mecca and Medina for about seven years between 1688 and 1695. His stay in Mecca resulted in his taking on the title “Cārullāh”, which means “the neighbour of Allah”. He then moved to Jerusalem and Damascus, from where he departed to Baghdad in 1699. After spending two years in Baghdad, he lived six months in Harir, one month in Diyarbakir, and two months in Aleppo before going to Edirne in 1703 and finally back to Istanbul in 1704.<sup>22</sup>

20 Katib Çelebi: *The Balance of Truth*, p. 82.

21 Katib Çelebi: *The Balance of Truth*, p. 83.

22 For the details of his biography, see Onuṣ: “Bir Osmanlı Âlimi”, pp. 7–38.

Cārullāh Efendi was a *mudarris* (teacher at a madrasa) at the Feyzullāh Efendi Madrasa until 1727 and then at Büyük Ayasofya (Hagia Sofia) between 1727 and 1729. This latter position seems to have made him well known in Ottoman intellectual circles. He was appointed as judge of Aleppo between 1730 and 1733, though the details of this posting are still unknown to us. He returned to Istanbul in 1735 and became the judge of Edirne in 1737 for two years. He took up the judgeship of Galata before he was appointed to Edirne in 1737, keeping in mind that he returned to Istanbul from Aleppo in 1733, the time of Galata judgeship might be between a time between 1733 and 1737. All these assignments are very prestigious and highlight the depth of his knowledge in the religious sciences. In 1738 he was exiled to Komotini (Gümülcine) for reasons that are still unknown. Cārullāh Efendi died in 1738 in Istanbul at the age of 81, most probably after returning from Edirne.

In addition to the professional positions he held and the personal characteristics ascribed to him, what truly makes Cārullāh Efendi an essential figure in manuscript studies is his library, which was built in 1734;<sup>23</sup> the contents continue to be preserved under the name of the Cārullāh Efendi Collection within the Süleymaniye Library, in Istanbul. The collection contains 2193 manuscripts, 1600 of which contain a wide variety of manuscript notes, including reading notes (*muṭāla‘a*), ownership statements (*tamlīk/tamalluk*), endowment attestations (*waqfīyya/taḥbīs*), and corrections.<sup>24</sup> Cārullāh Efendi was a keen critic of his age and of previous scholars, and this feature of his permeates into his manuscript notes.<sup>25</sup> In this chapter, I will analyse several marginal criticisms from his extant notes written in works on Ibn al-‘Arabī and the unity of being. These will show that Cārullāh Efendi defends the doctrine of the unity of being and Ibn al-‘Arabī against the accusations levelled against him by other esteemed scholars.

Cārullāh Efendi’s approach to Ibn al-‘Arabī reflects both his exhaustive knowledge of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and his inclination towards mysticism (*taṣawwuf*). As he was the student of a student of Kātib Çelebi, it could be hypothesised that Cārullāh Efendi’s notes might bear in them the *taṣawwuf* of the Siwāsīs and the speculation of the Qāḏizādelis, since Kātib Çelebi himself

23 Erünsal: *Kütüphanecilikle İlgili Osmanlıca Metinler*, p. 447; Erünsal: *Türkiye Kütüphaneleri Tarihi*, p. 84; Erünsal: *Osmanlı Vakıf Kütüphaneleri*, p. 207; Özcan: “Veliyyüddin Cārullah”, p. 38.

24 For an analysis of the notes Cārullāh Efendi wrote on the manuscripts preserved in the Carullah Efendi Collection, see Açıll (ed.): *Osmanlı Kitap Kültürü*.

25 Sami Arslan, in his article on the *taṣawwuf* section of the Carullah Efendi Collection, argues that Cārullāh Efendi was behaving like a critic when he criticised al-Ghazālī, al-‘Irāqī, and al-Fanārī. See Arslan: “Derkenar’ın Gölgesinde”, pp. 307–309.

was taught by adherents of both views at different times. Most importantly, Cārullāh Efendi did not reject Ibn al-‘Arabī, which makes him similar to Kātib Çelebi. To use an analogy here, I argue that Cārullāh Efendi’s marginal notes could be considered as a *balance*, treating Ibn al-‘Arabī and his doctrine just like Kātib Çelebi did in his book. However, Cārullāh Efendi went one step further and defended Ibn al-‘Arabī against condemnation, going so far as to support Ibn al-‘Arabī’s doctrine of the unity of being. Cārullāh Efendi, in many manuscript notes, labelled Ibn al-‘Arabī as the shaykh or the great shaykh.<sup>26</sup>

Before going any further, it is crucial to look at the relationship between Cārullāh Efendi and Ibn al-‘Arabī as reflected in the Cārullah Efendi Collection preserved in the Süleymaniye Library, and more specifically in manuscripts about Ibn al-‘Arabī, to prove that Cārullāh Efendi was a loyal follower of Ibn al-‘Arabī. The collection contains 2193 manuscripts, so it is a rich collection of works. After restricting the criteria to include only those works written by Ibn al-‘Arabī, eighteen titles in twenty-three different manuscripts emerge; these are shown in Table 9.1.

A quick look at the table reveals that Cārullāh Efendi has a particular interest in Ibn al-‘Arabī; he acquired not only his most well-known works, namely *The Meccan Illuminations* (*al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*) and *The Bezels of Wisdom* (*Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*), but also several other pieces that were not so common among the Ottoman intellectual milieu. He meticulously read these works, as they include extensive notes by him in their margins. Another piece of evidence demonstrating Cārullāh Efendi’s interest in Ibn al-‘Arabī is that he also obtained and studied commentaries on his works in order to delve more deeply into *taṣawwuf*.<sup>27</sup> Although Cārullāh Efendi did not obtain all the commentaries written on Ibn al-‘Arabī, he was in possession of several. Most of these commentaries owned by Cārullāh Efendi were on *The Bezels of Wisdom*: altogether, there are eleven commentaries contained in thirteen manuscripts.

Cārullāh Efendi itemised all commentaries on Ibn al-‘Arabī’s works, and indicated those items which he had in his collection by marking them with a red dot. In a note on the *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, he clearly stated: “I marked those

26 See, for example, MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Carullah Efendi, 77, fol. 267v, and MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Carullah Efendi, 1051, fol. 67r.

27 Cārullāh Efendi makes forty-three references to Ibn al-‘Arabī and his works while referring ninety-two times to other authors and works related to *taṣawwuf*, most of which are commentaries on Ibn al-‘Arabī’s works or pieces related to the unity of being. See Arslan: “Derkenar’ın Gölgesinde”, pp. 323–325. The Carullah Efendi Collection has 133 manuscripts related to *taṣawwuf*, of which twenty-nine are works of Ibn al-‘Arabī or commentaries on them.

TABLE 9.1 Works by Ibn al-‘Arabī in the Carullah Efendi Collection in the Süleymaniye Library

	Name of work	Catalogue number
1	<i>al-Mukhtaṣar min al-Futūḥāt</i>	CEF 275.05
2	<i>al-Isrā’ ilā al-maḥall al-asrā</i>	CEF 983
3	<i>Inshā’ al-dawā’ir</i>	CEF 985.01
4	<i>Ḥaqā’iq al-asmā’ al-ḥusnā</i>	CEF 1001
5	<i>Sirr al-qadar</i>	CEF 1017M
6	<i>Kitāb al-Shawāhid</i>	CEF 1034.02
7	<i>‘Uqlat al-mustawfiz</i>	CEF 1034.08
8	<i>‘Anqā’ mughrib fī ma’rifat khatm al-awliyā’ wa-shams al-maghrib</i>	CEF 1062
9	<i>al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya</i>	CEF 1064, 1065, 1066, 1067
10	<i>Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam</i>	CEF 1070
11	<i>Risālat al-taṣawwuf</i>	CEF 1080.03
12	<i>Kitāb al-Azal</i>	CEF 1080.04
13	<i>Kitāb al-Bā’</i>	CEF 1080.06
14	<i>Kitāb al-Mabādī’ wa-l-ghāyah</i>	CEF 1091
15	<i>Uṣūl al-Fuṣūṣ</i>	CEF 1530
16	<i>Shaqq al-jayb fī ‘ilm al-ghayb</i>	CEF 1544
17	<i>Mawāqī’ al-nujūm wa-maṭālī’ ahillat al-asrār wa-l-‘ulūm</i>	CEF 1563, 1564, 1565
18	<i>Muḥāḍarāt al-abrār wa-musāmarāt al-aḥyār</i>	CEF 1738

*Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* that I have in my collection with a red dot<sup>28</sup> (Fig. 9.1). It seems that he uses this practice only for the works of Ibn al-‘Arabī and associated commentaries.

Table 9.2 lists the commentaries on Ibn al-‘Arabī that are maintained and preserved in the Cārullāh Efendi Collection. In sum, Cārullāh Efendi collected thirty-five manuscripts directly related to Ibn al-‘Arabī, be they his own works or commentaries on them. This is sufficient evidence for a substantial interest in *taṣawwuf*, Ibn al-‘Arabī, and the doctrine of the unity of being. As stated earlier, I aim to demonstrate how, in his marginal notes, Cārullāh Efendi defended Ibn al-‘Arabī and his doctrine against accusations and criticisms, criticising

28 Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

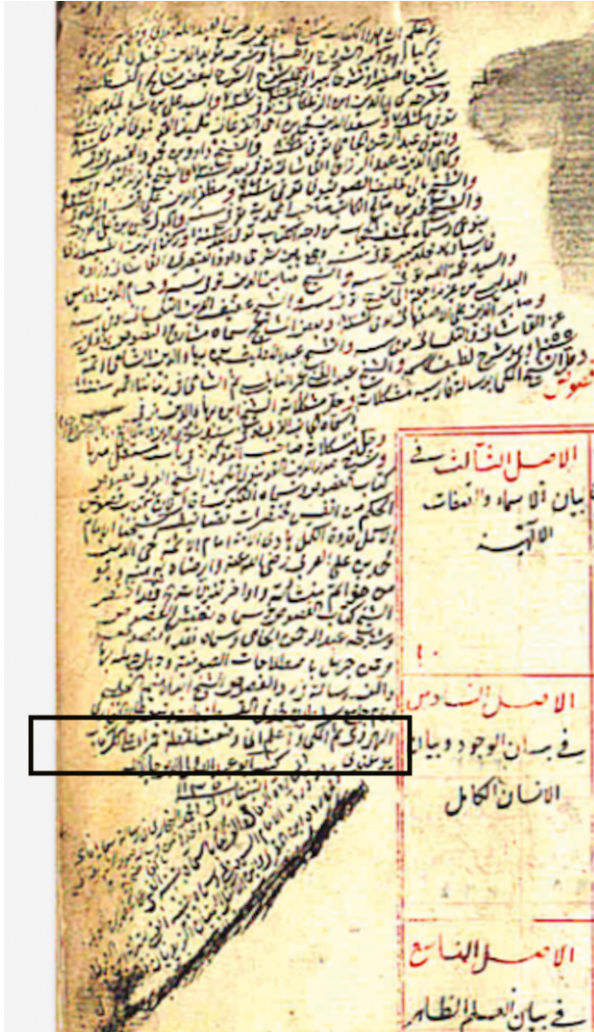


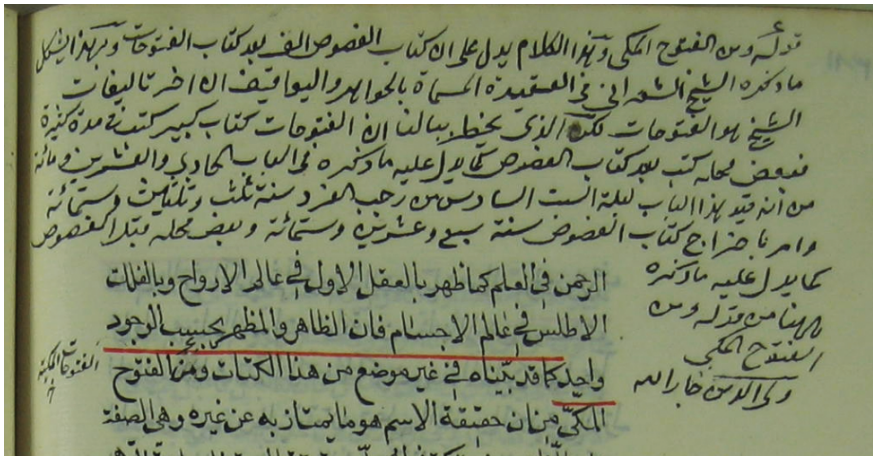
FIGURE 9.1 MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Carullah Efendi, 1032, fol. 1r; al-Busnawī: *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*

prominent Ottoman scholars while defending Ibn al-‘Arabī and the unity of being.

Some of the marginal notes demonstrate Cārullāh Efendi’s knowledge of the biography of Ibn al-‘Arabī and his works. It was still a controversial topic precisely when and thus in which order *The Bezels of Wisdom* and *The Meccan Illuminations*, two of Ibn al-‘Arabī most prominent works, were composed. In one of his notes, Cārullāh Efendi endeavoured to alleviate confusion about this, focusing in particular on the sequence in which these two works were

TABLE 9.2 Commentaries on Ibn al-‘Arabī’s work in the Carullah Efendi Collection of the Süleymaniye Library

Commentator	Name of work	Catalogue number
‘Abd Allāh al-Busnawī (d. 1054/1644)	<i>Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam</i>	CEF 1032
Ibn al-Zamlaqānī al-Dimashqī (d. 727/1327)	<i>Naṣṣ al-nuṣūṣ fī sharḥ al-Fuṣūṣ</i>	CEF 1033
Rukn al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 769/1367)	<i>Nuṣūṣ al-ḥuṣūṣ fī sharḥ al-Fuṣūṣ</i>	CEF 1035
Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī (d. 751/1350)	<i>Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam</i>	CEF 1036, 1037
‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 898/1492)	<i>Sharḥ al-Fuṣūṣ</i>	CEF 1040
‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī	<i>Naqd al-nuṣūṣ fī sharḥ al-Naqsh al-Fuṣūṣ</i>	CEF 1056 (this commentary is also present in another copy, in CEF 1071.02)
Mu‘ayyid al-Dīn al-Jandī (d. 691/1292[?])	<i>Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam</i>	CEF 1043
Qāsim bin Ebī al-Fazl al-Sa‘dī (d. 1052/1785)	<i>Sharḥ ‘Anqā’ al-mughrib lī-Ibn ‘Arabī</i>	CEF 1049, 1049M
Bālī Efendi, al-Sofyawī (d. 960/1553)	<i>Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ fī al-ḥikam</i>	CEF 1068

FIGURE 9.2 MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Carullah Efendi, 1037, fol. 381v; al-Qayṣarī: *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*

written. He selected the phrase “from *al-Futūḥ al-Makkī*”<sup>29</sup> in the main text of *The Bezels of Wisdom*, marked the line above this with red ink (see Fig. 9.2), and engaged in a detailed discussion on the dates and processes of production of these two important works, writing:

Upon his words “and from *al-Futūḥ al-makkī*”: This expression shows that *al-Fuṣūṣ* was written after *al-Futūḥāt*. This produces a problem regarding what Shaykh al-Sha‘rānī claimed in his work on creed (*al-‘aqīda*) entitled *al-Jawāhir wa-l-yawāqīt*, that the last book written by the shaykh was *al-Futūḥāt*. But what comes to our mind [as a solution is the following]: The *Futūḥāt* is a sizeable book which was written over a long period, and some parts of it were written after the *Fuṣūṣ* (...). Veliyyuddīn Cārullāh.<sup>30</sup>

Al-Sha‘rānī (d. 973/1565), cited by Cārullāh Efendi, was an esteemed mystic and scholar of Ibn al-‘Arabī.<sup>31</sup> His main achievement was an attempt to legitimise Ibn al-‘Arabī’s doctrine and reconcile it with Sunni theology. Although al-Sha‘rānī argued that *The Bezels of Wisdom* was written before *The Meccan Illuminations*, Cārullāh Efendi identified an overt contradiction between Ibn al-‘Arabī’s testament and al-Sha‘rānī’s view on the dates of composition regarding Ibn al-‘Arabī’s works. Nevertheless, it appears that he did not want to reject al-Sha‘rānī’s argument directly. So he examined the writing process of *The Meccan Illuminations* and discovered that Ibn al-‘Arabī had finished one of the chapters of *The Meccan Illuminations* in 633/1236. In contrast, *The Bezels of Wisdom* was completed in 627/1229–1230. This renders it possible for *The Meccan Illuminations* to be referred to in *The Bezels of Wisdom* while still upholding al-Sha‘rānī’s stance that the former work was also Ibn al-‘Arabī’s last.

Another note on one of the hadiths of the prophet Muḥammad illustrates Cārullāh Efendi’s knowledge of and critical mind vis-à-vis the religious sciences (Fig. 9.3). Critiquing the hadith’s chain of authorities, Cārullāh Efendi strove diligently to evaluate this isnad (*isnād*; chain of transmission). In cases such as this, when he could not authenticate a particular hadith, Cārullāh Efendi interpreted its chain of authorities to make its application understandable in specific contexts. In this example, Ibn al-‘Arabī discussed a well-known, albeit disputable, hadith that reads علماء امتي كانباء بني اسرائيل (the scholars of

29 This was the title of the work as written in the manuscript. Cārullāh Efendi later offered a marginal correction to *al-Futūḥāt al-makkīyya*.

30 MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Carullah Efendi, 1037, fol. 381v.

31 For al-Sha‘rānī’s biography, see Winter: *Society and Religion in Early Ottoman Egypt*, pp. 38–87.

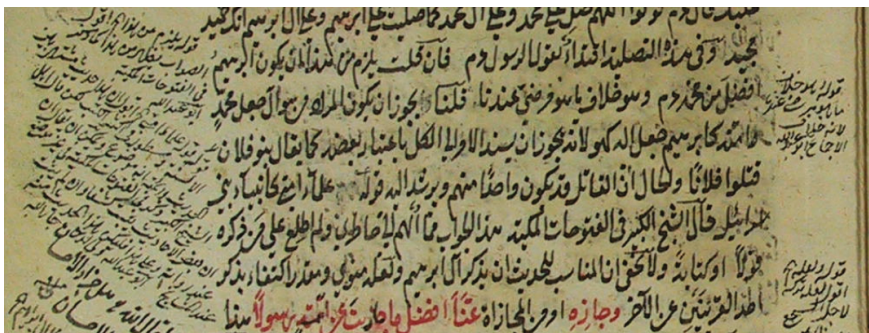


FIGURE 9.3 MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Carullah Efendi, 1050, fol. 4r; al-Iznikī: *Sharḥ Mafātiḥ al-ghayb*

my *umma* (community) are similar to the prophets of the people of Israel). Cārullāh Efendi attempted to legitimise Ibn al-‘Arabī’s use of this hadith, which has often been classified as *mawḍū‘* (forged). As a high-ranking scholar in the Ottoman system who studied hadith, Cārullāh Efendi might be expected to be very critical of using a *mawḍū‘* hadith and thus question the reliability of the *isnād*, and this is exactly what he did in his note:

Upon his words and the phrase “the scholars of my community ...”, I say: This is a hadith that has been famous among people and written in many books. However, hadith scholars have stated that it is a forgery (*mawḍū‘*). Then, it is possible to say that the Great Shaykh (*al-shaykh al-kabīr*) has argued in another passage of *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya* that some hadiths were authenticated by *kashf* (mystical unveiling) even though they were not authenticated by its transmitters (*‘inda riwāya*). Therefore, scholars should treat this hadith from this point of view. Abū ‘Abdallāh Veliyyuddīn Cārullāh.<sup>32</sup>

Usually, a teacher (*mudarris*) like Cārullāh should not use *mawḍū‘* hadith as an argument and should rebuke authors who do use one. However, Cārullāh Efendi made an exception in the case of Ibn al-‘Arabī after scrutinising his other passages and discovering his argument for *kashf*. This is a manifest effort by Cārullāh Efendi to legitimise Ibn al-‘Arabī even when he cited a controversial source. In conclusion, this example demonstrates Cārullāh Efendi’s inclination towards Ibn al-‘Arabī.

32 MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Carullah Efendi, 1050, fol. 4r.

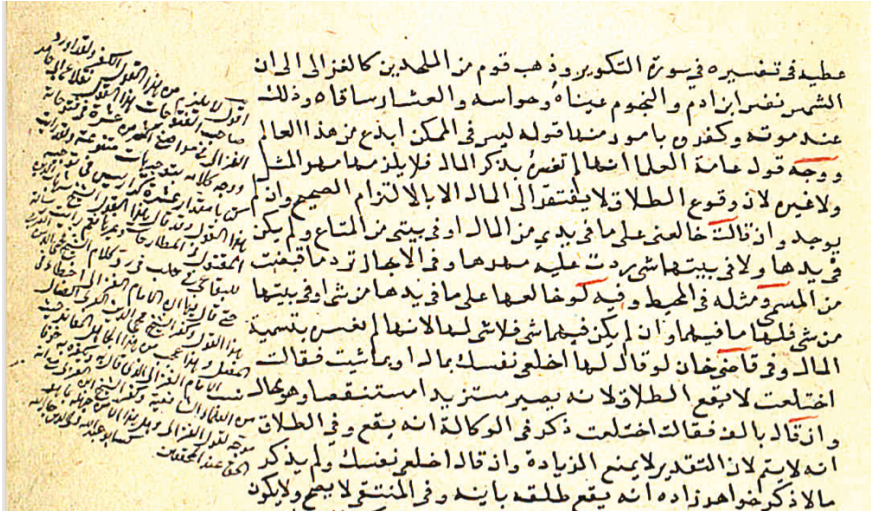


FIGURE 9.4 MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Carullah Efendi, 792, fol. 382r; al-Sarūjī: *al-Ghāya fī sharh al-hidāya*

The most prevalent and scathing condemnation levelled against Ibn al-ʿArabī throughout Islamic history has been that of *kufṛ* (unbelief). Cārullāh Efendi, however, defended him against this accusation in a marginal note. This marginal note also reflects one of the extreme approaches to Ibn al-ʿArabī and his unity of being in the Ottoman Empire referred to at the beginning of this chapter. Both in the Ottoman literature and among Ottoman scholars, there were those who believed in a sharp distinction between *taṣawwuf* and *aqliyyāt* as exemplified by the debate between the Qāḍizādelis and the Siwāsīs. As noted above, Kātib Çelebi argued in *The Balance of Truth* that some laypeople and scholars, those he talked about as belonging to the first group in his categorisation, branded Ibn al-ʿArabī a *kāfir* because of his doctrine of the unity of being. The sentence in question that Ibn al-ʿArabī used is *ليس في الممكن ابدع من هذا العالم*, which means that among all possible worlds, there is no better world than this existing one. In MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Cārullah Efendi, 792 (illustrated in Fig. 9.4), Ibn al-ʿArabī was admonished for using this sentence. Cārullāh Efendi, however, comes to his defence in the marginal note by showing the first usage of the phrase:

I say that this sentence does not necessitate unbelief (*al-kufṛ*), as the author of the *Futūḥāt* used it more than ten times in his *Futūḥāt*, quoting from Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī. This sentence has many interpretations.

I saw a book of ten quires on the interpretation of that word. Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn al-Maqtūl, too, used this expression in his *al-Muṭāraḥāt* and other works. I even saw in Aleppo a treatise by al-Biqā‘ī refuting Shaykh Muḥyī al-Dīn al-‘Arabī’s work in which [the author] still said that Imam al-Ghazālī made a mistake in saying this and accused Shaykh Ibn al-‘Arabī of unbelief (*kaffara*) as the deviant and the one who led others astray. This is a strange statement made by this ignorant and stubborn man, for he attributes that sentence to al-Ghazālī as the one who said it and labelled him an unbeliever out of fear of Shafī‘i scholars. So, he accused Shaykh Ibn al-‘Arabī of unbelief, although he [i.e., Ibn al-‘Arabī] is interpreting the sentence of al-Ghazālī. And what is this, if not his ignorance of what is the truth in the eyes of verifying scholars (*al-muḥaqqiqīn*)? Written by Abū ‘Abdallāh Veliyyuddīn Cārullāh.<sup>33</sup>

The sentence itself is, as Cārullāh Efendi indicated in his note, an old one that was first used by al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), one of the most proficient scholars of his age and who remains to this day a pillar of Sunni Islam;<sup>34</sup> and as pointed out, the sentence was also used by many esteemed scholars after al-Ghazālī. What Cārullāh Efendi has correctly done in the note is to research the origin of the sentence, allowing him to discover that its original author was al-Ghazālī, not Ibn al-‘Arabī. Since, according to him, the earlier source of the phrase is al-Ghazālī, the author should rebuke him instead of Ibn al-‘Arabī; however, the author could not brand al-Ghazālī a *kāfir* because, as the note clarifies, Shafī‘i scholars were too powerful to allow such an accusation to be levelled during that time. Instead, assumed Cārullāh Efendi, the author denounced Ibn al-‘Arabī because he is an easier target as compared to al-Ghazālī. The note also indicates a disagreement between two prominent schools of law (sg. *madhhab*, pl. *madhāhib*) of Islam, namely the Hanafis and the Shafī‘is. In a manner, Cārullāh Efendi, himself a Hanafi, indirectly criticised Shafī‘i scholars and their dominance.

Another dimension that the note reveals is the theological significance of this in the history of Muslim thought. The note is at the heart of the discussion, pivoting on the doctrine of *aṣṣaḥ* (optimum), according to which God could not create a better universe than the existing one. The theory argued that the existing universe is the best of all possible universes that God could have created. This argument divided Muslim scholars into two groups: on the

33 MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Carullah Efendi, 792, fol. 382r.

34 For the biography of al-Ghazālī, see Watt: *Muslim Intellectual*.



FIGURE 9.5 MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Carullah Efendi, 1350M, fol. 85r; Şadr al-Sharī‘a: *Ta‘dīl al-‘ulūm*

one hand, most of the Mu‘tazilite scholars, who asserted that God had no other choice but to create this perfect universe, and the Ahl al-Sunna scholars, who rejected this doctrine, claiming that it would injure the notion of godhood by making God obligated to do something. For Ahl al-Sunna scholars, God created out of His mercy or favour and could, therefore, have created another world in another way if He saw fit.<sup>35</sup>

Another indirect defence of the unity of being and Ibn al-‘Arabī by Cārullāh Efendi is in the marginal note illustrated in Fig. 9.5. In it, Cārullāh Efendi advocated for Ibn al-Arabī and his doctrine against the accusations of Şadr al-Sharī‘a (d. 747/1346). In his work *Ta‘dīl al-‘ulūm*, Şadr al-Sharī‘a claimed that some extremely ignorant Sufi (*juhāl al-mutaṣawwifa*) and deviant quasi-philosophers (*ḍullāl al-mutaḥsifa*) have taken the unity of being as their doctrine (*madhhab*), and he mentioned that he had written a treatise refuting it.<sup>36</sup> Since accusing proponents of the unity of being extremely ignorant mystics and deviant philosophers was tantamount to dismissing many

35 See İlhan: “Aslah”, p. 495.

36 MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Carullah Efendi, 1350M, fol. 85r.

influential and renowned scholars throughout the history of Islam, Cārullāh Efendi’s response to Şadr al-Sharī’a in his marginal note is in the same tone:

On the phrase of “an extremely ignorant mystics took, etc.,” I say: The ignorance refers to the son of his aunt’s sister [i.e., himself]! For the Proof of Islam (*ḥujjat al-Islām*), Imam al-Ghazālī, advocated the absolute being (*al-wujūd al-muṭlaq*). Likewise, so did Shaykh Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-‘Arabī in various writings of his, and specifically in his *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*; and also his student Şadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī in his writings, and specifically in his *Miftāḥ* and *Nuṣūṣ*; and also his students like Shaykh al-Farghānī in his *Sharḥ al-ta’iyya* and Shaykh al-Jandī in his *Sharḥ al-Fuṣūṣ*; and also Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-‘Irāqī in his *Lama’āt*; and other verifying scholars as well. Even the verifying scholar al-Quṭb al-Rāzī agrees with this opinion in *al-Muḥākamāt*. The treatises written on the issue are countless, such as the treatise by Sayyid al-Muḥaqqiqīn, the treatise by Bahā’ al-Dīn, the treatise by the author of *al-Mafāḥiṣ*, and others. However, I did not look into the treatise of the author of *al-Ta’dīl* [i.e., Şadr al-Sharī’a] so that I could really do it justice. Abū ‘Abdallāh Veliyyuddīn Cārullāh.<sup>37</sup>

Cārullāh Efendi is indeed brave in this note in accusing such an influential figure as Şadr al-Sharī’a of being ignorant. It is also of importance that Cārullāh Efendi employed a sarcastic style in referring to Şadr al-Sharī’a as the son of his aunt’s sister.

Other historical authorities, too, were the subject of Cārullāh Efendi’s marginal criticism. Among them is Abū Ḥayyān (d. 745/1344), who rebuked Ibn al-‘Arabī in his Qur’an commentary *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ* based on phrases that the latter had not actually written or intended. Cārullāh Efendi, in turn, accused Abū Ḥayyān of ignorance in one of his notes defending Ibn al-‘Arabī (Fig. 9.6). With reference to the comment of Abū Ḥayyān, Cārullāh Efendi sought to exonerate Ibn al-‘Arabī of the slander and condemnation levelled against him:

Upon his words *wa-innahu kāna yaz’umu*, etc., I say this: What he has cited from Shaykh Ibn al-‘Arabī is slander and an enormous accusation (*iftirā ‘alayhi wa buhtānun ‘aẓīmun*). We seek refuge in Allah from ignorant calumniators. In his *Futūḥāt al-makkiyya* and other works, Shaykh Ibn al-‘Arabī mentioned that the rank of sainthood (*wilāya*) manifested in the prophet is superior to the rank of prophethood (*nubūwa*) in the

37 MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Carullah Efendi, 1350M, fol. 85r.

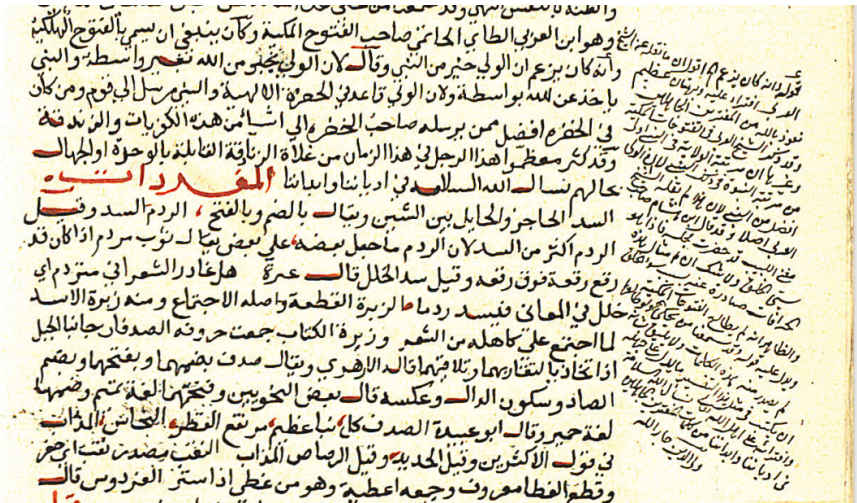


FIGURE 9.6 MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Carullah Efendi, 77, fol. 267v; Abū Ḥayyān: *al-Bahr al-muḥīṭ*

same prophet. Because, in fact, Shaykh Ibn al-‘Arabī did not say that sentence: a saint (*walī*) would be more excellent than a prophet (*nabī*). In fact, Shaykh Ibn al-‘Arabī did not say that. Ibn Hishām, the author of *Mughnī al-labīb*, has said [about Abū Ḥayyān]: “I attended a session of his, and there he was a bad character.” Undoubtedly, such fables (*al-khurāfāt*) derive from him because of his bad character. Moreover, it is obvious that he never examined (*yuṭālī‘u*) *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, for which his words are proof: “We heard someone say, etc.” Had he read it, he would not have used those words. And he does not deserve to write in such a commentary that points to his ignorance and his slander of men of Allah (*ahl Allāh*). [...] Veliyyuddīn Cārullāh.<sup>38</sup>

The first issue that Cārullāh Efendi discussed in this note is the accusation that Ibn al-‘Arabī considered saints to be superior to prophets, which is indeed a strange notion in terms of Islamic faith. In this note, Cārullāh Efendi asserted that this is indeed not the case. He first presented the correct sentence and interpreted it. Then, he rebuked Abū Ḥayyān for inaccurately citing the sentence in a manner that would mislead his readers. According to Cārullāh Efendi, this sentence does not compare sainthood with prophethood; instead,

38 MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Carullah Efendi, 77, fol. 267v.

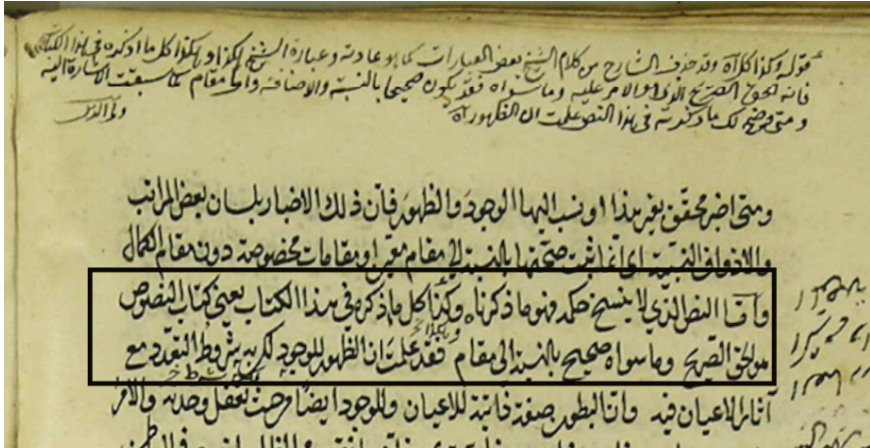


FIGURE 9.7 MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Carullah Efendi, 1051, fol. 55v; Mollā Fanārī: *Sharḥ Miftāḥ al-ghayb*

it compares sainthood manifested in a prophet with prophethood manifested in the same prophet. Contextually, prophethood is treated as superior to sainthood. After first clarifying the sentence, Cārullāh Efendi examined the scholar who argued that Ibn al-‘Arabī used this sentence, concluding that Abū Ḥayyān was not an adequately meticulous or well-tempered scholar and cannot, therefore, be trusted in his accusations. Consequently, Cārullāh Efendi saved Ibn al-‘Arabī from condemnation in a single small marginal note.

The last three marginal notes that I would like to discuss are criticisms of Mollā Fanārī (d. 834/1431), a prominent and esteemed scholar in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>39</sup> In the note in Fig. 9.7, Cārullāh Efendi accused Mollā Fanārī of misleading his readers regarding Ibn al-‘Arabī. The manuscript in which this note is found is a commentary written by Mollā Fanārī on al-Qūnawī’s *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*. The most exciting part of Cārullāh Efendi’s note is that he accused al-Fanārī of setting Ibn al-‘Arabī up to be misunderstood. Cārullāh Efendi criticised and accused al-Fanārī in this way because he omitted parts of certain statements of Ibn al-‘Arabī, which in turn causes them to be misunderstood. In the Ottoman world, I believe this is especially important, because al-Fanārī was one of the most esteemed scholars and renowned pillars of Ottoman thought, making it very hard to oppose him in a scholarly context. We can consider such an attitude as a sign of Cārullāh Efendi’s excessive self-assurance. The note reads as follows:

39 Though he was the first shaykh al-Islam of the Ottoman Empire, he did not reject the unity of being. See Aşkar: *Molla Fenârî*, pp. 155–175.

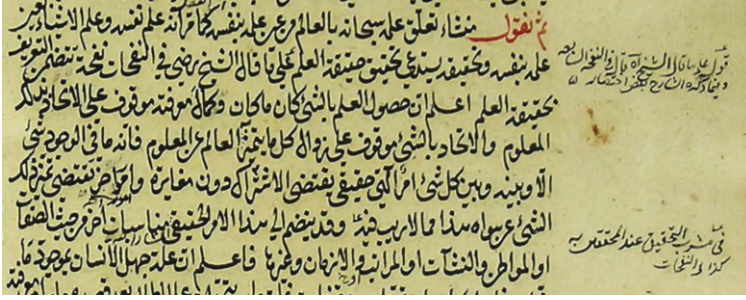


FIGURE 9.8 MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Carullah Efendi, 1051, fol. 63r;  
Mollâ Fanârî: *Sharḥ Miftāḥ al-ghayb*

Upon the phrase “and like this, all ...”: The commentator has omitted some words of the shaykh. As a matter of fact, this is a habit of his [al-Fanārî]. In fact, the words of the shaykh are as follows: [...].<sup>40</sup>

Al-Fanārî simply said that Ibn al-‘Arabî wrote something without providing the entire quotation. Obviously, Cārullāh Efendi quoted the complete statements of Ibn al-‘Arabî in the continuation of the same note mentioned above:

Whatever he [Ibn al-‘Arabî] has stated in this book is an evident truth and a real case. Other than that, it can be sound in relation and respect to a context, as pointed out previously. And whenever it has become clear to you that I have mentioned in this text, then you have known that the *zuhûr* ..., etc. Veliyyuddîn.<sup>41</sup>

Thus, Cārullāh Efendi established that omitting words was not a practice of Ibn al-‘Arabî, but on the contrary, a habit of al-Fanārî that creates ambiguity in the intended meaning of a text. If one were solely to read the commentary of al-Fanārî, the reader would not know what Ibn al-‘Arabî had written, due to al-Fanārî’s omissions.

In another note (Fig. 9.8), Cārullāh Efendi continued to accuse al-Fanārî of omitting some of Ibn ‘Arabî’s words: “Upon his word ‘according to what the shaykh said, etc.’: He [Ibn al-‘Arabî] said it in the seventh breath (*naḥḥa*),<sup>42</sup> and what the commentator has quoted here is somewhat of an abbreviated form.”<sup>43</sup>

40 MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Carullah Efendi, 1051, fol. 55v.

41 MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Carullah Efendi, 1051, fol. 55v.

42 This is how Ibn al-‘Arabî titled his chapters in this particular work.

43 MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Carullah Efendi, 1051, fol. 63r.

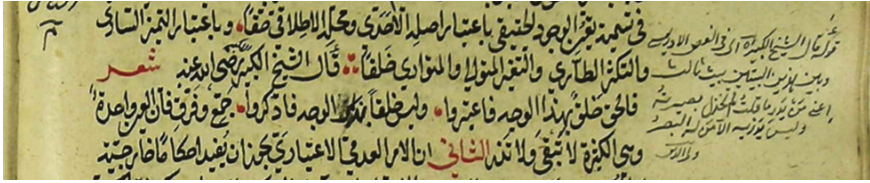


FIGURE 9.9 MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Carullah Efendi, 1051, fol. 67r; Mollā Fanārī: *Sharḥ Miftāḥ al-ghayb*

It is apparent here that Cārullāh Efendi had expected al-Fanārī to have quoted the entire sentence from the seventh chapter. However, as al-Fanārī did not quote the whole sentence, the intended meaning remained obscure to the commentary’s readers.

The final example of Cārullāh Efendi’s criticism of al-Fanārī is in a case where, after having compared al-Fanārī’s commentary on *The Bezels of Wisdom* with the original work, he realised that al-Fanārī had omitted a very important couplet without which an accurate meaning of the text cannot be reached. Cārullāh Efendi wrote the following (Fig. 9.9):

Upon the phrase “said the Great Shaykh ...”: This is in the chapter of the prophet Enoch, and there is another couplet between these two couplets:  
 “The foresight of the man who comprehends what I have said does not deceive him.

Only the man who has foresight can comprehend this.” Veliyuddīn.<sup>44</sup>

In this chapter on the prophet Enoch, al-Fanārī omitted one of the two couplets in Ibn al-‘Arabī’s original work. This couplet is crucial with regard to mystical knowledge. Remembering that Ibn al-‘Arabī used *kashf*, this omission alters the method he utilised to obtain true knowledge. Cārullāh Efendi implied that al-Fanārī omitted this couplet deliberately.

The seventeenth century was, according to Ottoman historiography, a period of decline,<sup>45</sup> change, crisis,<sup>46</sup> and transformation.<sup>47</sup> These approaches generally consider the military, administrative, cultural, intellectual, and scientific

44 MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Carullah Efendi, 1051, fol. 67r.

45 For an evaluation from a critic of so-called decline theory, see Kafadar: “The Question of Ottoman Decline”.

46 Faroqhi: “Crisis and Change”.

47 Tezcan: “The Second Empire”, pp. 563–568; Börekçi: *Factions and Favorites*, pp. 148–197; Açı: “The Poet ‘Azmizade Haleti”, pp. 428–432.

developments of the period. However, *The Balance of Truth*, composed by one of the most prominent intellectuals of the era, Kâtib Çelebi, portrays the main lines of cultural and intellectual division between rival groups. It is, therefore, only reasonable to scrutinise *The Balance of Truth* to obtain an explicit picture of the empire during the seventeenth century.

Kâtib Çelebi discussed twenty-one controversial issues in *The Balance of Truth*. According to him, two groups (i.e., the Qāḏizādelis and the Siwāsīs) dominated the intellectual landscape of the century and disagreed on these twenty-one issues. Ibn al-‘Arabī and his famous doctrine of the unity of being were among these divisive issues. As Kâtib Çelebi demonstrated in *The Balance of Truth*, however, there were three ways of approaching Ibn al-‘Arabī and this doctrine: rejection, acceptance, and suspension of judgement. Whereas Qāḏizādelis and Siwāsīs adopted, respectively, the first and second approaches, Kâtib Çelebi was in favour of the third approach, particularly on the issue of *kufṛ*.

Cārullāh Efendi was the student of one of the students of Kâtib Çelebi, which appears to be why, like Kâtib Çelebi, he adopted the third approach in his marginal criticism. Nevertheless, Cārullāh Efendi not only suspends judgement against Ibn al-‘Arabī but advocates for his doctrine. A truly erudite scholar, Cārullāh Efendi meticulously scrutinised the commentaries and manuscript notes related to Ibn al-‘Arabī as he believed that the distinguished Ottoman scholars judged him and his works unjustly. Cārullāh Efendi endeavoured to prove that Ibn al-‘Arabī was innocent of the accusations levelled against him.

Cārullāh Efendi wrote many notes throughout the manuscripts preserved in his collection. In those manuscript notes, one may recognise that Cārullāh Efendi acted as a critic; he undertook what we could call “marginal criticism”. In the notes, Cārullāh Efendi corrected the prevailing misunderstandings about Ibn al-‘Arabī and the doctrine of the unity of being while simultaneously absolving him of the accusations of *kufṛ* made against him. Presumably, he wished to upgrade the reputation of Ibn al-‘Arabī in the eyes of the potential readers of his marginal annotations, his students at the madrasa being among them. As a result, Ibn al-‘Arabī and the unity of being would be reassessed among the community of readers of the Ottoman manuscripts.

### Acknowledgements

I am indebted to Maşuk Yamaç and Sami Arslan for their invaluable help with this chapter.

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