PERSIAN ṢŪFĪ POETRY UP TO THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

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Medieval Persian mystical poetry is regarded by the peoples of the eastern Islamic world as containing the very highest expressions of their psychology and culture. The men who wrote it or in whose honour it was written are accorded the greatest possible veneration. This poetry is the richest source for the study of changes and tendencies in the human mind that underlie and accompany historical developments.

This article contains a new reading of the long didactic poems of ʿAṭṭār and Rūmī. These poems have clearly not been read with any understanding of their plan, development or structure. With regard to Persian Ṣūfī lyric poetry, it is not possible here to begin the task of a psychological analysis. All that will be attempted here is a sketch of the broadest outlines of historical development, indicating various extremely unstructured elements.[1]

With regard to the rise of Persian Ṣūfī poetry, it is necessary to bear in mind the existence of libertine tendencies, represented notably by the figure of the *qalandar*, the wandering antinomian dervish. It is no accident that this poetry should have first flourished mainly in the north-east of Iran, the homeland of Abū Yazīd of Basṭām (d. 874?), the leading figure of the "drunken" school of Ṣūfism, and the region of central Asian tribal influences, to be found notably in the practice of the contemplation of human beauty.

When embarking upon the study of the early Ṣūfī poetry in the form of the popular quatrain (*rubāʿī* or *du-baitī*), it is absolutely essential to concentrate upon the examples preserved in early manuscripts of twelfth-century prose works[2] or of the poems of Sanāʾī, who wrote in the first third of the twelfth century, instead of relying upon the collections made by modern writers from extremely late manuscripts. It must be remembered that Ṣūfīs use profane poetry as well as poetry of clearly mystical content. Let us look, first of all, at the quatrains said to have been recited in the lifetime of Abū Saʿīd ibn Abī ʾl-Khair of Maihana (967-1049) in north-east Iran, according to thirteenth-century manuscripts of the biographies composed in the twelfth century.

We find here poems of love and devotion, and quatrains evoking libertine and antinomian tendencies. The tone is bold and vigorous, that of a proud group standing intransigent against the world. The love inherent in Man's

[1] Biographical and bibliographical information about the various authors will be found elsewhere in the present volume.

[2] These works are described in the article "Medieval Ṣūfī Literature in Persian Prose" in the present volume.

primordial reply to God of "Yes" (*Qur'ān* VII 172) brings dervishes to sacrifice their lives; the world and its money are not for true men.[3]

> Besides this world we have another world
> Besides hell and heaven we have another place
> Tavern-haunting and love are our stock-in-trade
> *Qur'ān*-reciting and asceticism are another world[4]

The worship of beauty goes together with the rejection of prescribed religious worship:

> Since I saw your face O candle of Ṭirāz
> No work I do no fast I keep no prayer
> When I'm with you my profanity is all prayer
> When I'm without you all my prayer is profane[5]

Let us turn now to earlier twelfth-century sources. In the commentary on the *Qur'ān* written by Maibudī, the pupil of the conservative Anṣārī, we naturally find a different content:

> Besides this tongue we have another tongue
> Besides hell and heaven we have another place
> The man of free lineage is alive with another soul
> And that pure jewel of theirs is from another mine[6]

Love and devotion predominate even more, but here the accent is usually on submission rather than boldness. Elements such as wine occur in a specifically sacred context:

> With love our steed set off from non-existence
> Our night is bright from the wine of perpetual union
> Of that wine which in our school is not forbidden
> Till non-existence returns you won't find our lips dry[7]

This last poem, and one which mentions the black light that appears to the mystic near the end of his path,[8] also occur in the *Sawāniḥ al-ʿUshshāq* of Aḥmad Ghazālī (d. 1126).[9] Here we find the themes of union and separation,

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[3] Muḥammad ibn al-Munavvar, *Asrār al-Tauḥīd fī Maqāmāt al-Shaikh Abī Saʿīd*, ed. by V. Zhukovsky, Petrograd 1899, p. 13.
[4] Ibid., p. 428.
[5] Ibid., p. 431.
[6] Maibudī, *Kashf al-Asrār*, ed. by ʿAlī Aṣghar Ḥikmat, vol. 1, Tehran 1952, p. 331.
[7] Ibid., p. 508.
[8] Ibid., p. 324.
[9] Ed. by Hellmut Ritter, Leipzig 1942, pp. 4 and 37.

beauty and the vision of the Beloved. The following quatrain anticipates later exaltation of Man to the degree of being needed by God:

Love from non-existence for my sake came into existence
I was and was love's object in the world
I shall not leave you till scent leaves aloes-wood
Year month day night in spite of the envious[10]

Allusion is made to the practice, characteristic of libertine and antinomian dervishes, of exposing oneself to blame (*malāmat*):

This is the street of *malāmat* the battlefield of destruction
And this the path of gamblers that lose their all
A *qalandarī* man is needed with torn skirt
To pass over like an *ᶜayyār*[11] and without fear[12]

In the letters of Aḥmad Ghazālī's martyred pupil ᶜAin al-Quẓāt Hamadānī (d. 1131) we find an extremely complicated context. Here many of the quatrains are concerned with the beloved's tresses, generally the clearest of Ṣūfī symbols for the phenomenal world:

His hair I pull and purposely let go back again
That it may jump and go towards Orion back again
There's nothing wrong in its going homewards back again
Because parts go towards the whole back again[13]

There is boldness again in the use of the concept of unbelief (*kufr, kāfirī*):

Without eyes on the path of *qalandarī* one cannot go
Stealthily to the street of adversity one cannot go
Unbelief in itself is the foundation of faith
Easily easily to unbelief one cannot go[14]

Turning to the quatrains found in early manuscripts of Sanāʾī's poems, we find that *qalandarī* themes, joined with calls for self-annihilation, are the most striking:

This horse of *qalandarī* is not to be ridden by everyone
This counter of nothingness is not to be played by everyone
A man is needed who throws his life outside
When life disappears he makes a life from love[15]

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[10] Ibid., p. 4.
[11] A member of one of the unruly urban bands of this period.
[12] Ibid., p. 15.
[13] *Nāmehā*, ed. by ᶜAfīf ᶜUsairān and ᶜAlī Naqī Munzavī, vol. 1, Tehran 1969, p. 128.
[14] Ibid., p. 316.
[15] Sanāʾī, *Dīvān*, ed. by Mudarris Riżavī (2nd edition), Tehran [1976], p. 1132, No. 178.

The attack on Man's self-identity goes together with a glorification of his inner potential:

> Wash your hands of self as you are your own world
> Do not speak of stars as you are your own heaven
> The obvious is for others You are your own secret
> Rejoice for in short you are your own[16]

The popular character of the quatrain continues in the dialect quatrains attributed to Bābā Ṭāhir of Hamadān (fl. 1055?). In those found in a fifteenth-century manuscript a nomadic *qalandarī* standpoint is explicitly enunciated.[17] The spontaneity of the quatrain is most apparent in those of Auḥad ad-Dīn Kirmānī (d. 1238), who is represented by his thirteenth-century biographer as saying that he would find his quatrains on a green tablet seen in ecstasy during the Ṣūfī practice of listening to music (*samāʿ*).[18] In one of his quatrains Auḥad ad-Dīn says that he is called an antinomian (*ibāḥatī*).[19]

Let us now leave the quatrain and turn to the history of Ṣūfī poetry in other forms, beginning with Sanāʾī, with whom we encounter extremely difficult problems. The historian is unlikely to be satisfied by a picture which presents Sanāʾī as standing alone as the founder of Persian Ṣūfī poetry in the forms of the long didactic poem and the shorter and the extended ode. Yet this is the picture which the evidence still presents, and his achievement is certainly an enormous one.

A fact to be borne in mind is that a very great number of Sanāʾī's poems, including some with Ṣūfī content, are panegyrics addressed to Sulṭān Bahrāmshāh (c. 1117-1157) or other dignitaries. One of the greatest difficulties is that of most Ṣūfī poetry: the mixture of the sacred and the profane. We find poems enjoining piety and devotion, often in violent harangues, and praising God and the Prophet; we also find what are classed in some old manuscripts as *qalandarīyāt*, poems enjoining wine-drinking, gambling, profane love and the rejection of religion. Hellmut Ritter[20] has observed that those in the latter category, compared to those composed later in the twelfth century by ʿAṭṭār (d. 1221), approach the frivolous. They can, however, have a clearly serious character, as in the case of a personal vision of an "elder (*pīr*, old man,

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[16] Ibid., p. 1170, No. 477.

[17] Cf. Mujtabā Mīnuvī, *Az Khazāʾin-i Turkīyeh*, in *Majalle-yi Dānishkade-yi Adabīyāt*, vol. 4, No. 2, Tehran 1957, p. 57.

[18] *Manāqib-i Auḥad ad-Dīn Ḥāmid ibn Abī ʾl-Fakhr Kirmānī*, ed. by Badīʿ az-Zamān Furūzānfar, Tehran 1968, pp. 102-3.

[19] Ibid., Introduction, p. 39.

[20] *Philologica XV: Farīduddīn ʿAṭṭār. III. 7. Der Dīwān*, in *Oriens* 12 (1959), p. 21.

spiritual director) of light'', who shows the poet wine-drinkers who utter apparent blasphemies,[21] or in the case of a dialogue between the poet and a *qalandarī* ''elder''.[22] In the following poem we find the Ṣūfī technical terms *maqām* (station), *manzil* (stage) and *ḥāl* (state):

He who has not brightness in his heart
Does not have familiarity in the tavern

In no way indeed in the tavern
Is there a place for people of hypocrisy

Boy rise and bring a cup of wine
For I have not the means for piety

I'll buy a draught of wine with heart and soul
No-one will accept the currency of wine like this

Drunkenness and unconsciousness how fine you are
No kingship is better than these two

Drink wine and speak not of science of verbiage
Curse you this subject is not words for the assembly

How much will you say how much and how and why?
Have you no escape from these ideas?

In the *maqām* of existence and the *manzil* of revelation
There is no howness howmuchness or whyness

You are one come up round the heart and see
In your heart there is no grief for twoness

How will you arrive from yourself to God
Since you are not separated from self?

When you arrive at a place where you become other than you
After that the *ḥāl* is not other than Godly

Do not call me negligent Sanāʾī
For these words are not self-asserting[23]

Sanāʾī's *Sair al-ʿIbād* (''The Journey of the Faithful''), a short work in the *maṣnavī* (rhyming couplet) form, again shows an ''elder of light'' as the narrator's guide. There is a definite plan: they journey through the elements of

[21] Sanāʾī, op. cit., pp. 666-8.
[22] Ibid., pp. 89-90.
[23] Ibid., pp. 98-9.

this world, with these elements' corresponding vices and dangers coming from the heavenly spheres, before passing through these spheres. In the first sphere they encounter a number of beautiful youths (this is not without importance with regard to the study of Ṣūfī love-poetry), but in the rest they find various classes of bad people, with corresponding perversions of eyesight and objects of adoration. Eventually they reach Universal Soul, but not Universal Reason; the latter is hidden by veils, which cover different classes of dervishes. After years of individual effort the narrator finds a superior class of these, and in it a dominating light, the *qāżī* (judge) of the town of Sarakhs, to whom a very long panegyric is then devoted.

We see here two features to be found later in ʿAṭṭār and Rūmī: the existence of a plan and the stress on the importance of a master. But these should not obscure richer aspects, such as the profusion of the detail and the savagery of the satire.

Sanāʾī's massive *Ḥadīqat al-Ḥaqīqa* ("The Enclosed Garden of Reality") also has a plan, if a loose one. It is perhaps going too far to see the first chapters, which praise God, the *Qurʾān,* the Prophet and the outstanding figures of early Islam, as being in a symmetrical relationship with the final ones, in which the poet eulogizes the Sulṭān and those around him, gives advice and satirizes various classes of people, and finally speaks of himself. But in the intervening chapters we see a symmetry between on the one hand the discussion of Reason, followed by sections on knowledge and love, and on the other the ensuing dialogue with Universal Soul, and the attacks on lust, the world and the animal soul, followed by sections on pride and other vices of the carnal soul. Thus the work is divided into two parts, the first on a higher, the second on a lower level.

The *Ḥadīqat,* so far as the study of the ideas and practice of Ṣūfism is concerned, is restrained in comparison with the evocations of ecstasy and annihilation to be found in later *maṡnavī* works. What is perhaps most striking is the indebtedness to the philosophers—a phenomenon often observed in Ṣūfism when writers are closely under the shadow of a king—shown in the emphasis on the importance of Reason and the accompanying details. This naturally poses a problem with regard to the violent hostility existing between Ṣūfīs and philosophers, and this problem continues to present itself in later Ṣūfī literature, in which authors owe much to those whom they subject to vicious attacks. It must not be thought, however, that Sanāʾī's Ṣūfism is systematic: he is more concerned with giving advice, indicating pitfalls and calling for effort than with any considerations of theoretical elaboration. The first long chapter of the *Ḥadīqat* is nevertheless of the greatest importance as a statement of belief in God's Unity and the various aspects of the Ṣūfī

path—submission, love, reliance on God, etc.—that gives us a general idea of much of what was considered suitable for popular consumption, while not reflecting the high level of speculation and intrepidity shown at the same time by ᶜAin al-Quẓāt Hamadānī. We may also note, later in the *Ḥadīqat,* the presence of misogyny and scurrility.

The Ṣūfī element in Khāqānī (d. 1199) is far less than in Sanāʾī. He does however lay particular emphasis, much of his work being devoted to the Kaᶜba, on the vision of the "Kaᶜba of the spirit."[24] We may note here the homology in Ṣūfī poetry between the Kaᶜba and the heart (*dil*). The following poem, in which reference is made to the primordial "trust" (*amānat*) accepted by Man (*Qurʾān* XXXIII 72), is typical not of Khāqānī's *Dīvān*, but of a certain style of Ṣūfī poetry, that of the manifesto:

We are companions of the court of love
We are dwellers in the street of *qalandarī*

We are both lords of the winehouse
And companions of the worshipper of the dregs

Striving not for the sake of heaven
Boiling not because of the flames of hell

We are slaves of the will of the friend
And are free from the paradise of delights

If the world is created in time let it be so
We nonetheless are lovers from past eternity

All the year round without the trouble of a shirt[25]
We smell the scent of our Joseph

For that fire from which love arose
Now we are Abraham now Moses

We have the caliph[26] as the source of our lineage
We are of noble birth even though we are orphans

So it is that for the sake of one command
We are where the two roads of hope and fear cross

In the tavern like Khāqānī
We are pledged to the great *amānat*[27]

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[24] *Dīvān,* ed. by Żiyāʾ ad-Dīn Sajjādī, Tehran 1959, pp. 88-9.
[25] Cf. *Qurʾān* XII 93-4.
[26] The *khalīfeh*, the vicegerent of God, i.e. Adam (cf. *Qurʾān* II 30).
[27] Khāqānī, op. cit., p. 629.

With Niẓāmī (d. 1209?), the master of the romantic epic, we encounter a poet extremely hard to understand, owing to his literary virtuosity and the profusion of his imagery. His didactic poem *Makhzan al-Asrār* ("The Treasury of Secrets"), composed in 1176, contains, after a section on the importance of the heart, a very rich description of his personal visionary experience, involving a beloved in human form, the description of nature, and profane beauty and pleasures. Here too we find a link with lyric love-poetry. The rest of the work, in comparison, seems rather disappointing, so far as content is concerned, however rash it must be to pass a premature judgment on a poet whose style may hide the greatest psychological profundity. Niẓāmī seems unduly occupied with writing for a king and giving him advice, although he repeatedly speaks out against tyranny. His position is a conservative one, opposed to wine and begging.[28] He proudly declares:

Through me poetry's base became the cell of devotion
The poet's craft became free from the tavern[29]

He glorifies what he presents as his own practice: *zuhd* (ascetic devotion, often mocked in Ṣūfī lyric poetry) under the patronage of a king (often attacked in Ṣūfī literature).[30]

With ʿAṭṭār we find a far purer spirit. He violently rejects the composition of poetry for a patron.[31] His lyrics, which often resemble those of Sanāʾī and Khāqānī mentioned and quoted above, are usually far more mystical, though he also sings of young male beauty. The extended ode quoted below, in which ʿAṭṭār—as, contrary to what is often believed, is normal in Ṣūfism—rejects the heretical concepts of *ḥulūl* (God's indwelling or incarnation in Man) and *ittiḥād* (unitive fusion with God), anticipates the popularisation in Persian poetry of the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd* ("unity of existence") formulated by Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1240):

O you who have come your face covered into the bazaar
A whole crowd captured by this talisman

Whatever is other than you is mirage and appearance
For there neither a little nor a lot has come

Here *ḥulūl* is unbelief and *ittiḥād* as well
For this is a unity but come in repetition...

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[28] *Makhzan al-Asrār*, ed. by Vaḥīd Dastgirdī, Tehran 1955, pp. 144 and 96-7.
[29] Ibid., p. 44.
[30] Ibid., p. 161.
[31] *Manṭiq al-Ṭair*, ed. by Ṣādiq Gauharīn, Tehran 1969, p. 253.

One undivided essence (*ʿain*) besides which there was not an atom
When it became external all these others came...

O you whose exterior is the lover and whose interior is the beloved
Who ever saw the object of the search become the searcher?...

If both worlds throw up a hundred thousand waves
All is one but come a hundred times...[32]

More than half of ʿAṭṭār's most famous work, *Manṭiq al-Ṭair* ("The Language of the Birds") is taken up with the speeches made by a number of birds about a projected journey in search of a king. Eleven named birds speak; afterwards come two more series of eleven speeches (excuses and questions), given by unidentified speakers. It has escaped attention that these two series represent the original series of eleven birds, twice repeated. This is slightly obscured by the fact that the first bird, the hoopoe, which takes the rôle of leader and replies to what every bird says, is given, at the beginning of both of the two last series, an extra, unnamed interlocutor who has no personality, but whose function is to establish, through asking questions, the hoopoe's personal motif, that of obedience. This "blank" also serves the structural function of linking the series together, and strengthening the dominant position of the hoopoe. With this in mind we can now see, for the first time, the subtle play of continuities and developments through the three series, shown in the table (see p. 122).

The nightingale of course represents the passionate lover; the duck clearly represents the pious ascetic, obsessed with his *nafs*; the sparrow is Jacob, blinded with grief. Eleven birds, ten plus one: when the thirty birds (*sī murgh*) who survive the journey come for the great confrontation with their king, the bird called the *Sīmurgh*, from whom they are then unable to distinguish themselves, they are compared to Joseph's ten guilty brothers. The book's epilogue is dominated by a story about a king who condemns his boy-friend to death: the ten slaves charged with his execution are persuaded to spare him, but tell the king that he is dead. Eventually the king and the boy are re-united.

ʿAṭṭār's *Muṣībat-nāmeh* ("Book of Affliction") is heavily structured. A pilgrim, who personifies Thought, asks forty entities (angels, parts of the universe, prophets, organs of the soul) for their assistance, and, confused by their replies, returns to his spiritual director (*pīr*), who explains the spiritual realities which each of them represents. What has escaped attention is that the pilgrim, running away from the *pīr's* direction, presumptuously starts at the

[32] *Dīvān*, ed. by Taqī Tafaẓẓulī, Tehran 1967, pp. 817-820.

Bird	First series	Second series	Third series
Hoopoe	Speech } Appears as instructor Reply }	Asked why it is leader Obedience is extremely important	Asked what happens if it is obeyed Obedience is good
Nightingale	Speech Loves rose Reply Do not love transient form	Is weak Die! Love gives force	Asks about *pākbāzī*[a] Abandon everything
Parrot	Speech Wants Water of Life Reply Abandon life for the Friend	Is full of sin Ask for God's kindness	Has not shown much obedience, asks about *himmat* (courage, aspiration) This is very important
Peacock	Speech Wants heaven Reply That is the house of the *nafs* (carnal soul)	Is inconsistent, sometimes pious, sometimes profligate That is normal: you nourish the *nafs*	Asks about justice and fidelity at the end of the journey They too are very important
Duck	Speech Is obsessed with water and devotions Reply That is for the dirty	Cannot control its *nafs* The *nafs* is a dog	Will boldness be all right there? If one is worthy
Partṛidge	Speech Loves jewels Reply Colours and stones are worthless	Cannot escape from the Devil You have the *nafs* with you	Boasts of its love Do not boast of love
Humāy[b]	Speech Is obsessed with its glory as king-maker Reply You are proud	Love of gold and the world have made me full of pretensions Abandon form and everything	Has obtained perfection, cannot abandon its treasure While you are proud all is worthless
Falcon	Speech Likes the hand of the king Reply This world's kings are no good	My heart is happy in this palace This world does not suit you	How may I become happy of heart? Happiness of heart is through Him
Heron	Speech Loves the sea Reply It is unsettled, and itself desires the friend	Cannot abandon its beloved Form is not beautiful; love the Unseen	For what shall I ask Him? Himself, as better than all the world
Owl	Speech Loves treasures in ruins Reply Reject the love of gold	Is afraid of death, without provisions Death must come	What merchandise or gift is to be taken there? The burning of the soul
Sparrow	Speech Searches for its Joseph Reply Start on the path	My life has passed in grief All passes away	Our eyes are black; how far? (The description of the journey follows)

[a] "Playing clean", gambling away all one has—an important term of Ṣūfī lyric poetry, often used with reference to lovers.
[b] A mythical bird.

very top of the scale, beginning with Gabriel, who represents the Spirit (*rūḥ*), and that from the point of view of external appearance the first twenty entities are arranged in descending, and the last twenty in ascending sequences, the fortieth term being none other than the Spirit. It is then explained that the earlier entities are attributes of the Spirit (arranged in a different structure), it itself being derived from the Light of Muḥammad. Thus the pilgrim has been obliged to descend before ascending to the point of departure. Again we have series (entities, attributes) linked by an element that dominates the whole.

The arrangement of ʿAṭṭār's *Mukhtār-nāmeh*, his own selection of his quatrains, is also symmetrical. The first twenty-one chapters are clearly religious; then come eight in which the poet proceeds through despondency to hope; then come twenty-one which might appear on the surface to be profane. Six chapters on God's Unity and the ways in which it is realised are followed by six on the Spirit, how its secret is unspeakable and how people are unworthy, six on the stages of the Ṣūfī path and six on death and sadness; then two chapters on despair and hope and two on the helplessness of the lover flank six chapters on the beloved in general and six that describe him in detail; then six chapters are devoted to *qalandarī*, the rose, dawn, the moth and the candle (a subject used to express the doctrine of annihilation).

ʿAṭṭār's *Ilāhī-nāmeh* ("The Book of the Divine") has been completely misunderstood. Orientalists have merely repeated the description given by Ritter[33] to the effect that it represents conversations betweeen a "king" and his six sons, whom he urges to look for higher and spiritual goals instead of the gifts for which they ask him.

In reality what happens in the book is on a far higher level. ʿAṭṭār himself gives the key to the book in the introduction, in his invocation of the Spirit, which is addressed as the caliph, the vicegerent or deputy (*khalīfeh*) of God. The Spirit has six sons, the *nafs* (carnal soul), the Devil, the intellect, knowledge, poverty, which "wants non-existences (*maʿdūmāt*)", and *tauḥīd*, the assertion or realisation of God's Unity, which wants one Essence (*ẕāt*).[34]

Proceeding to the body of the work, we find first of all that the teacher is clearly designated not as a "king", as the orientalists have asserted, but as a caliph.[35] This is of paramount importance for the understanding of the whole work. It must be recalled that this is the period of the revival of the power of the caliphate under Nāṣir (1180-1225), and his admission of the princes of the Islamic world into the *futuwwa*, an organization characterized by initiatory

[33] Cf. Hellmut Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele*, Leiden 1955, p. 5.
[34] ʿAṭṭār, *Ilāhī-nāmeh*, ed. by Hellmut Ritter, Leipzig 1940, pp. 28-9.
[35] Ibid., p. 30.

rituals. ᶜAṭṭār is writing after the breakdown of the Seljūq empire in Iran, in a period which saw antagonism between Nāṣir, who used leading Ṣūfīs for diplomatic purposes, and Muḥammad Khwārizmshāh (1200-20), who is represented as hostile to Ṣūfīs. In the *Ilāhī-nāmeh* he glorifies Sulṭān Maḥmūd of Ghazna (999-1030), the loyal supporter of the caliphate.

The book can be seen as being divided into three parts, corresponding respectively to the *nafs*, the intellect and the heart, which is transformed into the Spirit or higher soul. These three divisions correspond to the Plotinian triad of Universal Soul, Universal Reason and the One. Thus the work proceeds through an upward development.

In the first part, the first son asks for the daughter of the king of the fairies. The caliph tells him a story in which a beautiful fairy is shown to be the *nafs*,[36] which must be rendered quiescent. This theme is linked here with that of the Devil's becoming a Muslim (i.e. "submitting"), which is the point of the dialogue with the second son, who asks for the gift of magic. Magic is the work of the Devil, but if the devil within one "submits" it becomes lawful. Thus the first part of the book is bound together by the common process of transformation of the two forces which can work evil, the *nafs* and the devil within one (which are seen in Ṣūfism—and notably in Rūmī—as working together, and indeed as being identical), and by their complementarity.

The second part of the book is bound together in a different way: the third and fourth sons ask for the cup in which one can see the whole world and for the Water of Life. One is the intellect, the other knowledge. Here we have not transformation, but simple equivalence, and the relation of subject to object.

The third part is far more complicated, since here the relation between the two halves is that of the dialectic in which Man negates his own existence in order to affirm God's Unity. The fifth son asks for the ring of Solomon, for sovereignty, but the essence of sovereignty is contentment, and the essence of contentment is poverty. This poverty, however, is also metaphysical, since Ṣūfism (and notably ᶜAṭṭār in *Manṭiq al-Ṭair*)[37] links it with annihilation (*fanā*): Man must realise that he is poor through lacking existence in comparison with God. So ᶜAṭṭār speaks here of non-existence,[38] in a prelude to the work's climax. The sixth son asks for the gift of alchemy; but the caliph says that what is important is the spiritual alchemy which transforms body into heart and heart into Spirit. This is effected by the Light of God, into which the Spirit is absorbed.[39] Here the accent is on the disappearance of duality,

[36] Ibid., p. 76.
[37] pp. 219ff.
[38] *Ilāhī-nāmeh*, p. 294.
[39] Ibid., p. 326.

brought about by annihilation and absorption into God. We see here the practical realisation of God's Unity, the sixth of the elements mentioned in the Introduction.

The structure of the *Ilāhī-nāmeh* must not, however, blind us to the wealth of unstructured elements which it contains: the contemplation of human beauty, the description of profane love, the practice of magic, the glorification of insanity and the depiction of madmen as mouthpieces for Ṣūfī wisdom, and much more.

What is most surprising is that it has not been seen that the *Maṣnavī* ("Rhymed Couplets") of Jalāl ad-Dīn Rūmī (d. 1273), venerated as the "Persian *Qurʾān*", the greatest monument of Ṣūfī didactic poetry, happens to have a plan, a plan extremely similar to the structure of the *Ilāhī-nāmeh.* If one examines the six Books into which the *Maṣnavī* is divided, it is difficult to see how it could have been said that "each Book forms an artistic whole",[40] when the Third Book ends with an injunction to read the remainder of one story in the Fourth.

The reading of the *Maṣnavī* is made greatly easier if one concentrates upon the explanations usually given by Rūmī himself of the meaning of the various stories in it. In the first story of the First Book, however, where a complete explanation is not given, we have no difficulty in recognising the *nafs* in the person of the handmaiden. In the story of the second Jewish king the text speaks of the idol of the *nafs* (I 771 ff.), and in the story of the Lion and the Beasts we are told that the *nafs* is the inward lion (I 1374 ff.). The principal message of the First Book is that one must die from self (cf. I 3000 ff.). At the end of the story of the vision of Zaid it is declared that the body must be delivered from the *nafs* (I 3702), and ʿAlī speaks of the arousal of his *nafs* at the end of the Book (I 3976).

The Second Book continues on the level of the *nafs*, which is represented as an ass (II 729 and 1850 ff.) and violently attacked (II 2134 ff., 2445 and 2602-3), but here, as in the dialogue with the second son in the *Ilāhī-nāmeh*, the Devil is brought in. The spell of the Devil goes into men's hearts (II 317). We are given a long story about the Devil and Muʿāwiya (II 2604-2792). The Ṣūfī Shaikh is above the Devil's power (II 3409). The principal theme of the Second Book is that of deception and evil (cf. II 491 ff. and 3004-5). Later on Rūmī explains that the *nafs* and the Devil are really one (III 3197).

The themes of the Third and Fourth Books, which are joined together by their common content (as well, as has been noted, by one story, and also by

[40] *The Mathnawí of Jalálu'ddín Rúmí,* edited...with critical notes, translation and commentary by Reynold A. Nicholson, London 1925-40, vol. 6, pp. xii-xiii.

the story of Moses), are those of Reason, the intellect and knowledge. This is anticipated in the introduction to the Third Book. It would be tedious to enumerate the passages and stories in these two books which concern these themes. Here the Angel replaces the Devil (III 3193 ff.).

The Fifth and Sixth Books, like the dialogues with the fifth and sixth sons in the *Ilāhī-nāmeh*, are bound together by the dialectic of the negation of Man's existence and the consequent affirmation of the existence of God. They are also bound together by the story of Sulṭān Maḥmūd and his favourite Ayaz, which gives expression to the doctrine of *fanā* (annihilation—cf. V 4146 and 4205). We are now, as in the last dialogues of the *Ilāhī-nāmeh,* on the level of the heart, the Spirit and Light—the last two being major themes of these two books, and themselves closely linked (cf. V 288 ff. and VI 4580 ff.). Here, however, the rôle of the Spirit as God's deputy is replaced to some extent by the theme of the Ṣūfī Shaikh, whose importance as a guide is emphasized, and by Rūmī's intimate friend Ḥusām ad-Dīn, to whom the *Maṣnavī* is dedicated and whose inspiration runs through it. Rūmī, writing after the destruction of the caliphate by the Mongols in 1258, addresses Ḥusām ad-Dīn as God's deputy (caliph, *khalīfeh*) in the present age (V 41). We see here a remarkable illustration of the great change in eastern Islam effectuated during this period: the spectacular rise in importance of the Ṣūfī Shaikh.

In the Sixth Book Rūmī stresses the need to make the transition from negation to affirmation (VI 640 ff.). An existence is concealed in non-existence (VI 3578). The incomplete conclusion of the work is obviously deliberate. We are given a long story about three princes, without being told in detail about what happens to the third prince, and a short story about three sons, without being told about ʻhe third son. The third term in each series is meant to represent the highest deg ee of the quality of laziness, praised as the occupation of the mystics, who let God work for them (VI 4886-7), while the last lines clearly refer to the special relationship between Rūmī and Ḥusām ad-Dīn as the source of the inspiration of the *Maṣnavī.*

It would be wrong, however, to lay stress upon the plan of the *Maṣnavī*. It is unlikely that here, or in the case of ʿAṭṭār, attempts at structural analyses would add anything once the obvious has been pointed out. As for the fact that the plan of the *Maṣnavī* has been so long ignored, this is understandable once one appreciates the essentially fragmentary character of Persian poetry, the use to which it is put as a series of starting-points for the Ṣūfī's spiritual experience, the preoccupation of Ṣūfīs with technical terms, and the prevalence, since the time of Rūmī, of the doctrine of Ibn ʿArabī, which necessarily obscures, in the rigidity of its system, the developments to be found in previous literature. The power of the *Maṣnavī* lies not in its develop-

ment but in the way in which Rūmī is constantly breaking away from it, as well as from the individual stories and arguments. It is in these breaks or lines of flight that we see the lyricism which, constantly straining away from the poem's didacticism, gives it its tension.

This lyricism, in Rūmī's *Dīvān*, reaches heights unequalled in the rest of Persian poetry, from which it stands apart in the peculiarity of its style, the wealth of its evocations of personal experience, and its domination by the figure of Shams-i Tabrīz, Rūmī's guide and mystical beloved. Here the fragmentation of the short ode receives a powerful acceleration, as the poet breaks the line up into smaller units with internal rhymes and rapid transitions from the objects which he rejects or with which he identifies himself—showing the nomadic character of Persian poetry:

I saw a tree and a fire A cry came My beloved
That fire is calling me Perhaps I am Moses son of ʿImrān?

I went into the wilderness in affliction and tasted manna and quails
For forty years I have been wandering round this desert like Moses

Do not ask about ship or sea Come and look at these wonders
For how many years I have been sailing a ship on this dry land

Come soul You are Moses and this mould your staff
When you pick me up I become a staff when you throw me down I am a serpent

You are Jesus and I your bird You made a bird of clay
As soon as you breathe into me I am flying into the zenith

I am the pillar of that mosque against which the Prophet leant
When he leans against another I am moaning in the pain of separation

Lord of lords formless maker of forms
What form are you drawing on me? You know I do not

Now I am a stone now iron For a time I am entirely fire
Now I am a balance without stone Now I am both stone and balance

For a time I graze here For a time they graze on me
Now I am wolf now I am sheep now indeed I am the figure of the shepherd

The material came as a token How should a token remain for ever?
Neither this remains nor that remains Let him that is mine know I am that[41]

[41] Rūmī, *Kullīyāt-i Shams*, ed. by Badīʿ uz-Zamān Furūzānfar, vol. 3, Tehran 1959, p. 192. Cf. *Qurʾān* XX and V 110.

It is not possible to analyse here the variety of themes in Rūmī's enormous *Dīvān*, which in any case cuts itself off from the line of historical development, except in its glorification of the Sufi master. By making the name of Shams-i Tabrīz the *takhalluṣ*, the proper name which comes as a focus of intensities at the end of a poem, Rūmī expressed a cardinal feature (extremely marked from this time onwards) of Ṣūfī practice, which now dominates the "drunken" school of Ṣūfism—characterized by the mystics' dance of which he often speaks—, namely, the submission to the Shaikh which normally concludes and resettles the free divagations of the spirit, although in his case it appears as accentuating them.

The glorification of the Ṣūfī Shaikh, which runs through the narrative poetry devoted by Rūmī's son Sulṭān Valad (d. 1312) to his predecessors, is the most pronounced common feature of the poetry produced in India at this time by Fakhr ad-Dīn ᶜIrāqī (d. 1289) and Jamāl ad-Dīn Hānsavī (d. 1260-1). Otherwise, they are usually extremely dissimilar. Jamāl speaks as a preacher, calling for repentance and attacking lust and profane love. He rejoices when Ramażān brings the disappearance of wine and musical instruments. His pious exhortations to asceticism and poverty are in complete contrast to ᶜIrāqī's poetry, in which we find the themes of *qalandarī* and *naẓar ilā ʾl-murd,* the Ṣūfī practice of contemplating beardless boys as an aid to ecstasy and the vision of God's beauty:

In the beauty of the cheeks of the fair apparent all Him I saw
In the eyes of the pretty faces comely all Him I saw[42]

If we now leave India and the panegyrics addressed to Ṣūfī leaders which continue in the works of Amīr Khusrau (d. 1325) and Amīr Ḥasan Sijzī (d. 1336), we find, in the works of ᶜIrāqī's Anatolian period, the first appearance in Persian poetry of Ibn ᶜArabī's doctrine of the "unity of existence", which, Henry Corbin[43] has suggested, could be designated as "theomonism". This constitutes a revolution fraught with the most serious consequences for the subsequent history of Ṣūfī poetry. It comes in poems consisting of several stanzas with a refrain, speaking of the mystery of God's making Himself manifest in the world:

The sun of your cheek appeared
In a moment the world became manifest

It borrowed a look from your beauty
Saw the fairness of your face and fell in love

[42] ᶜIrāqī, *Kullīyāt*, ed. by Saᶜīd Nafīsī, Tehran 1956, p. 183.
[43] Introduction to Ḥaidar Āmulī, *Naṣṣ al-Nuṣūṣ*, ed. by Henry Corbin and Osman Yahia, vol. 1, Tehran 1976, p. 8.

It took as a loan some sugar from your lips
When it tasted that it began to speak

A drop of dew fell on the ground in the morning
It saw the face of the sun and was astonished

A little vapour left the sea for the air
When it joined together it became the sea again

His jealousy allowed no other in the world
Of necessity He became the identity (*ᶜain*) of all things

The relation of power and action to us
Was from that cause that He became us

We are His world-reflecting cup
For through us all that was appeared

Until now I did not realise
Today it has become clear to me

(Refrain)

That all is He all that is in certainty
Soul beloved heart-ravisher heart and religion[44]

The penetration of Ibn ᶜArabī's ideas continues in the *Gulshan-i Rāz* ("Rose-bed of Mystery") of Maḥmūd Shabistarī (d. 1320), who gives explicit expression to Ibn ᶜArabī's doctrine of the Perfect Man (*insān-i kāmil*), which grants the personality of the mystic immense power and significance. Shabistarī is a philosopher, not a poet: his explanations of various terms found in Ṣūfī lyric poetry, as having certain symbolic meanings, are obviously not to be given much authority (one has only to compare them with the explanations given in other glossaries from the same period onward to see how arbitrary such exercises are).

With regard to most of the Ṣūfī poetry produced at this time, it must be said that it seems to be extremely lacking in originality. The real advances are being made elsewhere, in the Arabic prose literature which develops Ibn ᶜArabī's ideas. Didactic works such as the *Kanz al-Rumūz* of Amīr Ḥusainī (d. 1318?) or the *Rauẓat al-Anwār* of Khwājū Kirmānī (d. 1352 or 1361) do not appear to add anything at all to our knowledge of Ṣūfī doctrine or psychology, whereas by contrast slightly earlier works, such as ᶜIrāqī's *ᶜUshshāq-nāmeh* and the anonymous *Kanz al-Asrār* and *Miftāḥ al-Futūḥ* attributed to ᶜAṭṭār, are of the

[44] ᶜIrāqī, op. cit., p. 75.

greatest value for the study of libertine tendencies, love-mysticism and Ṣūfī practice.

The works of Auḥadī (d. 1338), however, and notably his *Jām-i Jam,* are, like other fourteenth-century productions, of some historical value. One may note a certain dichotomy, normal and to be expected, between his didactic poetry and his lyrics: like other *maṣnavī* writers, he shows hostility to the *qalandars* in his didactic verse,[45] while in his *Dīvān* he goes beyond what could be dismissed as symbolic or ornamental in giving them a spirited defence:

> Look at their outward form from the viewpoint of inner meaning
> For such horsemen are the backbone of the army of inner meaning
>
> Do not look in error at their black sackcloth
> For in the midst of blackness their work is white...
>
> If in this land they are thrown out of the city
> To whichever land they go they are princes...[46]

The most remarkable poetry of this period, however, is to be found in three works attributed to ʿAṭṭār, and apparently composed by one author: the *Jauhar al-Ẕāt, Ushtur-nāmeh* and *Hailāj-nāmeh,* of which the first is found in a manuscript dated 1335. We find here a moderate pro-Shīʿite position, and a Persian that usually seems later than that of ʿAṭṭār; but one cannot for the moment exclude the possibility that some of this poetry might have been preserved in oral or written form from an earlier date. At present these works cannot be studied properly without further investigation of the earliest manuscripts. They give pride of place to Ḥallāj (d. 922), the great martyr of Ṣūfism, and to his notorious utterance "I am God (*Anā ʾl-Ḥaqq*)", which the reader is urged to repeat.[47] It would seem that they are not unconnected with ʿAṭṭār's declaration at the end of the *Ilāhī-nāmeh*[48] that there are further secrets which can be revealed only on the gallows. One can only regret that literary judgments on these poems, accusing them of weakness and tedious repetitions, should have for so long discouraged the study of the wildest and most "drunken" examples of Ṣūfī didactic poetry.

With regard to the poetry of Ḥāfiẓ (d. 1389 or 1390), and the views expressed about the extent of its Ṣūfī content, it may be observed that in the Ṣūfī poets whom Ḥāfiẓ imitates there is already, as we have seen, a long tradition

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[45] Auḥadī, *Jām-i Jam,* ed. by Vaḥīd Dastgirdī, Tehran 1928, p. 140.

[46] Id., *Dīvān,* ed. by Ḥamīd Saʿādat, Tehran 1961, p. 86.

[47] Cf. Louis Massignon, *La Passion de Husayn Ibn Mansûr Hallâj,* 2nd edition, Paris 1975, vol. 2, pp. 380-406.

[48] p. 365.

of the mixture of the sacred and the profane; that the symbolic interpretation of the language of lyric poetry was already current in his day; that his short odes often incorporate the praise of patrons along with Ṣūfī elements; that he appears to have been an *Uwaisī*, a mystic who obtains his inspiration directly, without the intermediary of a Ṣūfī master; and that his *Dīvān* seems to contain a distinct trace of the influence of the philosopher Yaḥyā Suhravardī (d. 1191), the founder of the *ishrāqī* school.[49] He stands apart from the main influences which from his day onward overshadow Persian poetry: Shīᶜism and the school of Ibn ᶜArabī.

The *Dīvān* of Maghribī (d. 1406-7) is entirely devoted to the popularisation of Ibn ᶜArabī's system. In this respect he appears to be merely an unoriginal imitator of ᶜIrāqī. In the *Dīvān* of Qāsim-i Anvār (d. 1433-4), which contains a very clear exposition of Ibn ᶜArabī's ideas in a very monistic outlook, but also shows a concern with the resulting dilemmas, Edward G. Browne[50] found a trace of the teachings of the subversive Ḥurūfī sect, the literature of which unfortunately lies outside the scope of this survey. It is to be noted that Qāsim-i Anvār, like ᶜAṭṭār before him, rejects *ittiḥād,* the identification of the mystic with God in unitive fusion, as being incompatible with the position of the *muwaḥḥid,* the assertor or realiser of God's Unity:

> I am not You nor are You I Whatever is You are entirely and that's enough
> For the inclination of the spirit of the *muwaḥḥid* is not to *ittiḥād*[51]

If we turn to the poet Dāᶜī (d. 1466), a pupil of the severe Shāh Niᶜmatullāh (d. 1431), the founder of the orthodox Niᶜmatullāhī Order, we encounter a certain conservatism. His *ᶜIshq-nāmeh* ("Book of Love") contains stories about examples of profane love as an initiation to the love of God, but shows violent hostility to the *qalandars*, in contrast to whom the power of the Ṣūfī Shaikh is extolled.[52] A similar conservatism is to be found in Jāmī (d. 1492), who writes as a member of the stern Naqshbandī Order and advocates its practice of the silent *ẕikr* (repetition of a formula).[53] In his *Silsilat al-Ẕahab* we find, as in his prose work, his preoccupation with the classification of the admirers of human and divine beauty,[54] while his *Salāmān o Absāl* shows that he, like other Ṣūfī writers of the period, is attracted to philosophy and the

[49] Ḥāfiẓ, *Dīvān*, ed. by Muḥammad Qazvīnī and Qāsim Ghanī, Tehran n.d., pp. 96-7.
[50] *A Literary History of Persia,* vol. 3, reprinted Cambridge 1956, pp. 478-9.
[51] *Kullīyāt*, ed. by Saᶜīd Nafīsī, Tehran 1958, p. 126.
[52] *Kullīyāt*, ed. by Muḥammad Dabīrsiyāqī, vol. 1, Tehran 1960, pp. 281-4.
[53] *Haft Aurang*, ed. by Mudarris Gīlānī, Tehran 1958, pp. 18 ff.
[54] Ibid., pp. 204 ff.

patronage of kings. Unfortunately, Jāmī's slavish imitation of his predecessors prevents the reader from profiting from his immense knowledge of the history and theory of Ṣūfism. He remains the ultimate example of the erudite virtuosity of the fifteenth century.

It must not be thought, however, that this period is poor in developments. On the contrary, it is extremely exciting and tense, but what is happening is taking place in the field of Shīʿism and conflict with the established authorities. With regard to the relations between Ṣūfism and Shīʿism, one may note the use made by Ḥusain Khwārizmī (d. 1436-7) of the name Ḥusain, as being that of Ḥallāj, the martyr of Ṣūfism, and that of the martyred Third Imām of the Shīʿites, and the fact that he himself died a martyr.

In the *Maẓhar al-ʿAjāʾib* and *Lisān al-Ghaib,* works found in late fifteenth-century manuscripts and attributed to ʿAṭṭār, we find the savage and terroristic outpourings of a violently Shīʿite author. It has been said, and not without good cause, that these works have no literary value; but their use of extended anaphora certainly gives them considerable forcefulness as collections of harangues. In them we find that the privileged position given in the poetry discussed earlier in this article to the Spirit and the Ṣūfī Shaikh has been taken over by ʿAlī, the First Imām of the Shīʿites, allegiance to whom, it is incessantly repeated, is indispensable for the Ṣūfī. The reader may find these works trivial compared to those mentioned above, but the union of Ṣūfism and Shīʿism found in them makes them extremely important when one bears in mind that it is in Shīʿism that the population of Iran will from now onward find the most acute, tragic and intense expression of its mystical tendencies.

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