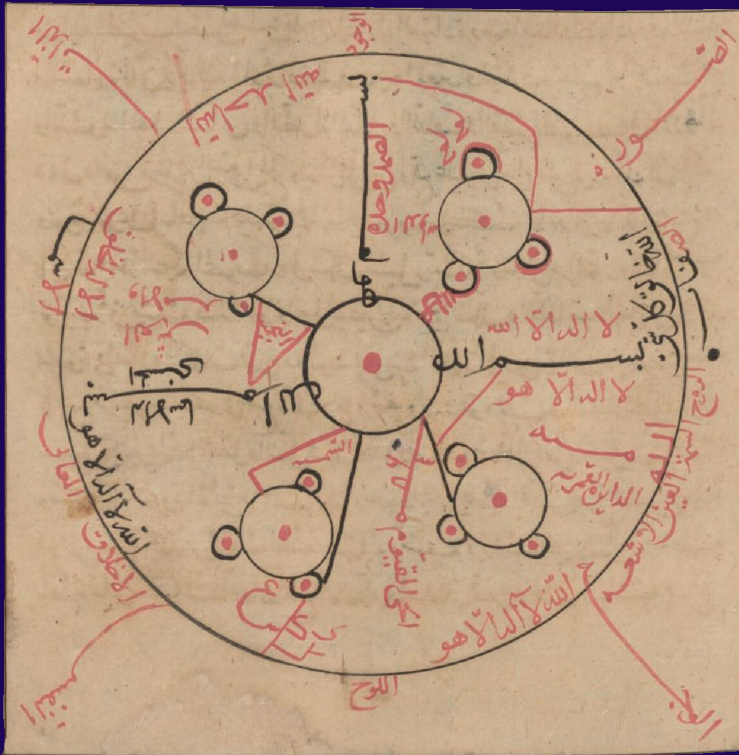




Lost in a Sea of Letters

Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya and
the Plurality of Sufi Knowledge

Cyril V. Uy II



Lost in a Sea of Letters

Islamicate Intellectual History

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*Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya
and the Plurality of Sufi Knowledge*

By

Cyril V. Uy II



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Cyril Villarosa Uy II
Harrisonburg, VA
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Note on Transliteration and Usage

For names and terms written in Arabic and Persian, I follow the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* system, but transliterate Persian as if it were Arabic (th for ṣ, dh for z, and ḍ for ḏ). I render the *tā' marbūṭa* in Persian as *-a* or *-at*, and transcribe the final *hā'* in participles, relative pronouns, and prepositions as *-a* or *-i* as appropriate (e.g., *gashta, ki, ba*). The Persian *iḏāfa* is indicated as *-i* (*-yi* for words ending in vowels), but omitted in personal names (e.g., 'Azīz Nasafī, not 'Azīz-i Nasafī). The Arabic definite article is omitted from the proper names of individuals from Persian-speaking regions after their first occurrence (e.g., Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, Qūnawī). Conventional English spellings are used for countries and major cities, while regions, provincial localities, and lesser-known cities are given with full diacritics. The full titles of Arabic and Persian texts and subsections are transliterated in full the first time they are mentioned in the body text of the book.

All dates are given according to the Gregorian calendar to facilitate interdisciplinary discussions with nonspecialists. In an attempt to reduce clutter, these dates are not written side-by-side with their Hijrī-Qamarī counterparts unless directly relevant (e.g., in direct quotations and detailed analyses of timelines and/or manuscripts). Death dates for individuals (apart from Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya) are listed after the first occurrence of their full names in the body text of each chapter.

Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Arabic, Persian, French, and German are my own. Quotations from the Qur'ān are taken from the translation by M.A.S. Abdel Haleem, with occasional modifications for context and consistency.

Introduction

Countless beings who inferred differently from the way in which we do now perished; and yet they may have come nearer to the truth!¹

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, *The Joyous Science*

•••

Do you see me through the whiteness of your blackness, through the blackness of your whiteness, through their sum, or through what exceeds both of them?²

SA'D AL-DĪN ḤAMŪYA, *The Book of the Beloved*

••
•

The insights at the core of this book came to me through jazz. Soon after the advent of the pandemic, I moved into a one-bedroom apartment in Providence, RI. My partner was in Rome on a fellowship, so I passed the time with Ḥamūya. I translated his manuscripts, redrew his diagrams, mapped his metaphysics, and tracked his letrist correspondences as they reverberated across the cosmos. After months of diligent work, I was making headway into his world.

But Ḥamūya made for a frustrating interlocutor. His chains of letters deconstructed themselves. His metaphysical schemes fell apart before I could finish charting them. No matter how many times I copied them out, his diagrams remained impenetrable. In Gadamer's words, I was pulled up short. I grasped the details of what Ḥamūya wrote, but had no idea what he was saying. And yet there was something seductive about his writing. Ḥamūya always seemed one substitution away from the perfect cadence that would tie up all those loose ends, resolving a multiplicity of phrases and changes into a single transcendent tonic. The keys to the unseen always dangled—chimed, jingled—just out of reach.

I spent my evenings with the jazz greats of the 1950s and '60s. As the sun set, I would sink into my IKEA PELLO, slip on a pair of headphones, and spin (or

1 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Joyous Science*, trans. R. Kevin Hill (London: Penguin Classics, 2018), 125.

2 Sa'd al-Din Ḥamūya, *Kitāb al-Maḥbūb*, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (SBB), MS Or. fol. 4084, fol. 75^a.

stream) records like *Bird and Diz* (1952), *For Musicians Only* (1958), *Sonny Side Up* (1959), and *Giant Steps* (1960). Bird, Dizzy, both Sonnys, and Trane—even Getz on the 1958 release—ripped through tunes at breakneck speed, jostling one another to conjure the stickiest earworms and densest harmonic worlds. I listened rapt. After exhausting each record, I kept digging. How much more could they do? How much *further* could they go?

Then came *Meditations* (1966). Setting his sheets of sound ablaze, the new Trane was a revelation. I felt jazz itself rattle as it coughed up the dregs of melody, harmony, and meter. What *was* this—*mā la-hā*? Aghast and agog, I couldn't tear myself free. Now under the spell of both Ḥamūya and Coltrane, my nights and days began to fold up into one another. I spent weeks, maybe months, swept up in these currents; waves of letters and tones swelling up and crashing down over me. The harder I fought, the further I was dragged out and pulled up short.

As Ḥamūya and Coltrane reverberated in an unbearable din, each amplified the dissonance of the other. Then, at first faintly and only for a brief moment, I could hear something. Free jazz and lettrism began to play in counterpoint. Each melody was sharpened by the harmony that emerged between them. More than that, I could finally grasp what had pulled me in. Ḥamūya and Coltrane pursued meaning with resonant approaches. Meaning—the meaning that *mattered* to them—was not bound to a dispassionate cataloguing of marks on paper. What they were after was something transformative. Those marks (and the sounds that accompanied them) needed to resonate with human bodies. They needed to change how those bodies related to themselves and the worlds around them—how those bodies related to the act and experience of relation itself.

To pursue this meaning, Ḥamūya and Coltrane sought strategies that could excite and enthrall. They drew from their extensive training in powerful contemporary traditions—13th-century Sufism for Ḥamūya, 20th-century jazz for Coltrane—and, with a radical refiguring of forms, they warped their work into something *unheimlich*. Their uncanny performances goaded readers and listeners into making meaning for themselves. They forced them to reconsider old habits, forge unforeseen connections, and improvise with new modes of thinking, feeling, and being. In cutting contests, their techniques were equal parts exhilarating and disturbing. Their precise effects, of course, depended on the receptivity and preparation of their interlocutors. For the uninitiated, free jazz—both lettrist and musical—was just noise.

Listening to Coltrane's *Meditations* made me realize that I had not understood Ḥamūya because *I was not actually listening to him*. My drive to make Ḥamūya speak was both monologic and analytically inadequate. I struggled

to situate him in his 13th-century world(s), yet would not risk my own in response to his provocations. To make sense of him, I needed to do both; to recognize the two as one and the same. This book endeavors to understand Ḥamūya by *playing along* with him. I listen to the interplay of his band, feel his pulse, and imagine the reactions of his audience(s) as I try to catch a few of his lines. My playing inevitably colors him with its own inflections. There are articulations I can't hear, grooves I can't feel, sounds I simply can't make. Some phrases slip in by virtue of my own training and muscle memory. Listeners may even struggle to distinguish between us at times. If I hear him correctly, though, this is one of Ḥamūya's most profound epistemological points: *I couldn't play it any other way*. Now—with these notes fresh in our ears, let's leave jazz behind and modulate to another key, at least for the time being.

This book theorizes 13th-century Sufi knowledge not as a body of facts, but as an embodied sensibility. The study focuses on the life and work of Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya (d. 1252), a Mongol-era Sufi whose arcane treatises both inspired and bewildered future generations of occultists, mystics, and messiahs. Hailing from a prominent family in northeastern Iran, Ḥamūya traveled extensively, cultivating relationships with elites across the Iranian Plateau, Central Asia, and the Eastern Mediterranean. Along with shahs, khans, and *ṣāḥib-dīwāns*, his journeys brought him into the orbit of Sufi shaykhs whom later theorists and hagiographers would name the greatest saints of their generation. These Sufis traveled far and wide in their pursuit of knowledge and power, forging loose networks of masters and disciples that bound together nearly all strata of the medieval Islamic world.

Through close readings of theoretical treatises, training manuals, teaching certificates, and personal correspondences written in Arabic and Persian, I excavate an epistemological terrain in which abstract speculation, embodied experience, and social performance were fundamentally intertwined. For Ḥamūya and his colleagues, the broader matrix of Sufi thought and practice was the only universal framework supple enough to subsume all possible modes of knowing and being. Sufi training coupled regimented programs of social discipline and ritual practice with dynamic theoretical frameworks to produce subjects that lived the world as webs of diverse ontological possibilities. Sufi writers in turn sought to refine how readers navigated these possibilities through textual strategies keyed to the practical and phenomenological dimensions of their training.³ The lettrist operations, ritual cues, genealogical

3 I use “phenomenology” and related terms to foreground medieval Sufis' careful attention to

claims, and dizzying formal structures of medieval Sufi texts thus reflect an episteme in which even the most abstract theory could not be divorced from material and social concerns.⁴ For these Sufis, perfect knowledge was a fluid and all-encompassing sensibility that could negotiate—and improvise with—diverse ideas, identities, and practices across a plurality of contexts.

In Ḥamūya's writing, these embodied sensibilities became manifest as boundless play: an undamnable emanation of letters and words that generated infinite possibilities of meaning. Even among his contemporaries, the shaykh's work stood out for its deconstructive ethos and radical openness to interpretation.⁵ His avant-garde treatises destabilized the genre conventions of his colleagues and forced readers to interrogate the underlying mechanisms of medieval Sufi knowledge itself. His deconstructive approach turned Sufi strategies in on themselves, parochializing the work of rivals who would limit the Real to their own particular perspectives. While other Sufis laid claim to perfect knowledge through demonstrations of their *own* totalizing sensibilities, Ḥamūya wrote Reality by opening up his words to the creative imagination of his readers.⁶

The book puts the work of Ḥamūya and his colleagues into conversation with an increasingly self-reflexive and interdisciplinary attention to knowledge within the academy. By identifying the performative strategies through which these Sufis communicated their abstract-experiential knowledge in text,

the nuances of first-person experience. In this sense, I intend a broader orientation or attitude, not a strictly Husserlian or Heideggerian method of investigation.

- 4 I use “episteme” in a general Foucauldian sense to mark the implicit rules, relationships, and sensibilities that underpin the conditions for truth and legitimate knowledge within a given socio-historical context. See, for example, Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), xxii.
- 5 I use “deconstruction” and “deconstructive” to mark Ḥamūya's penchant for destabilizing ostensibly coherent systems, exploiting irreconcilable contradictions, and relishing in the ebullient productivity of language. As Derrida suggests, the “de-” in deconstruction is not about demolishing, but opening up what might be thought beyond such binaries as creation and destruction. See Jacques Derrida, “Afterword: Toward an Ethic of Discussion,” in *Limited Inc*, trans. Samuel Weber (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 147. For a concise overview of the term's usage in contemporary academic work, see David J. Gunkel, *Deconstruction* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2021).
- 6 By “creative imagination,” I mean the capacity to generate new meanings, interpretations, connections, associations, valences, implications, and so on and so forth. I do not intend the technical usage of *khayāl* found in Sufi theoretical texts—i.e., a mode of perception bound to an intermediary realm between spiritual and corporeal worlds. See Henry Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn Arabi*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969); and William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 14–16.

I expand the epistemological sensitivity of intellectual-historical methodologies and intervene against post-Enlightenment assumptions that confine knowledge to a realm of ethereal ideas and logical propositions.⁷ The distinctive features of Ḥamūya's epistemology likewise invite us to reimagine the legacy of medieval Sufi knowledge. My analysis of the shaykh's work reveals a creative and self-conscious engagement with plurality that blossomed amidst the embodied sensibilities of 13th-century Sufis. Sa'd al-Dīn's deconstructive methods and the radical openness of his thought underscore how a nuanced negotiation (or even active promotion) of difference could thrive as a robust approach to social and intellectual competition. The strategies and stakes that his work illuminates thus offer us a means of exploring the global efflorescence of medieval and early-modern Sufism as a function of its rich internal diversity, relational potential, and endlessly contested possibilities.

1 *Ecce homo*

Contrary to standard practice, I have relegated a full narrative of Ḥamūya's life to a biographical essay at the end of the book.⁸ This choice stems from the nature of my source material and my own theoretical commitments. As we will see in Chapter 4, the shaykh takes a characteristically playful approach to his *curriculum vitae*, refashioning key details in dialogue with diverse audiences and conventions. Though later historians, hagiographers, and theorists would wrangle this disparate data into streamlined accounts, the contents and contours of their anecdotes typically reveal more about their own epistemologies than that of Ḥamūya.⁹ The conceit of this project is that a nuanced analysis of Ḥamūya's knowledge demands that we resist stabilizing narratives; that we concern ourselves instead with how the shaykh continually (re-)constructs the constellation of relationships that make up his world. In short, the demands of conventional biography run counter to this ethos, ossifying the dynamic motifs

7 With respect to texts (and images), I use the term performative to mark strategies that directly engage readers in the process of meaning making. I adapt the concept from Bissera Pentcheva's work on medieval Byzantine icons. See eadem, *The Sensual Icon: Space, Ritual, and the Senses in Byzantium* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010) and my discussion on pp. 15 ff. below. When referring to living human bodies, I use the terms performative and social performance in reference to acts that construct or maintain a sense of self or social identity. See, for example, Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 173.

8 See Appendix 1: Biographical Essay (p. 231).

9 See, for example, Coda, pp. 224 ff.

that would allow us to most clearly grasp Ḥamūya's life and work. What I am after is improvisation and performance itself, not a chart or score. (Readers who prefer to bolster their ear training with sight reading are welcome, of course, to follow along with my transcription of the shaykh's life in the Biographical Essay.)

I rehearse only a few bare facts here to underscore Ḥamūya's importance to his own milieu and the generations that followed. Sa'd al-Dīn hailed from a family of powerful Sufis who claimed seats of institutional authority across Egypt and Greater Syria. He completed his early training at prestigious institutions in Nishāpūr and Khwārazm, then set off in search of Sufi wisdom. As he traversed the medieval Islamic world, Ḥamūya forged intimate bonds with the most renowned Sufi masters of his time: Najm al-Dīn Kubrā (d. 1221) and his *khalīfas* in Khwārazm, Shihāb al-Dīn 'Umar al-Suhrawardī (d. 1234) in Baghdad, Ibn 'Arabī (d. 1240) and Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī (d. 1274) in Damascus, and 'Azīz Nasafī (d. after 1300), whom he trained upon his return to Khurāsān.

After his death in 1252, Ḥamūya's legacy remained a potent source of authority among Mongol elites and their administrators. His son Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm (d. 1322), for example, married the daughter of the famed Īlkhānid historian and official 'Aṭā-Malik Juwaynī (d. 1283) in 1272/1273, then went on to play a central role in the Īlkhān Maḥmūd Ghāzān's (d. 1304) conversion to Islam in 1295. During the conversion ceremony, Ṣadr al-Dīn presented Ghāzān with a talisman and a robe originally owned by his father, effectively linking the Īlkhān's conversion to the spiritual authority of Sa'd al-Dīn.¹⁰

The most enduring dimensions of Ḥamūya's legacy, however, were his prodigious intellectual output and the endless possibilities of his letrist methods. Texts like *The Book of the Beloved* (*Kitāb al-Maḥbūb*) and *The Mirror of Spirits and Signs on Tablets* (*Ṣajanjal al-arwāḥ wa-nuqūsh al-alwāḥ*)—perhaps his most recognized works in the medieval and early modern periods—manipulated the visual, sonic, and phenomenal qualities of the Arabic alphabet to explore the hidden recesses of Reality.¹¹ Alongside numerous other

10 See Charles Melville, "Pādshāh-i Islām: The Conversion of Sultan Maḥmūd Ghāzān Khān," in *Pembroke Papers, Vol. 1: Persian and Islamic Studies in Honour of P.W. Avery*, ed. Charles Melville (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Center of Middle Eastern Studies, 1990), 16; and Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh al-Hamadānī (d. 1318), *Kitāb Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghāzānī: dāstān-i Ghāzān Khān*, ed. Karl Jahn (London: Luzac, 1940), 76 ff. For his marriage to 'Aṭā-Malik Juwaynī's daughter, see Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 1449), *al-Durar al-kāmina*, 4 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Jayl, 1993), 1.67.

11 These two texts are cited together by name in 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 1492), *Nafahāt al-uns min ḥaḍarāt al-quds*, ed. Maḥmūd 'Ābidī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Iṭṭilā'āt, 1996), 431; Nūr

treatises and a formidable collection of poetry, these esoteric tomes served as generative points of inspiration for a wide range of thinkers in Ḥamūya's wake.¹²

ʿAzīz Nasafī framed himself as an unparalleled exegete of his master's thought, boasting of his ability distill the arcane secrets scattered across Ḥamūya's over four hundred treatises into just ten chapters of simple Persian prose.¹³ Although the Kubrāwī systematizer ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla al-Simnānī (d. 1336) rejected Saʿd al-Dīn's theories of prophecy and sainthood, he had no choice but to engage with the shaykh's letterist methods in order to refute him.¹⁴ During the Tīmūrid period, the occult theorist Ṣāʾin al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī (d. 1432) held up Ḥamūya's *Book of the Beloved* as a master key to universal knowledge, while the apocalyptic revolutionary Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh (d. 1464) marshaled the text as evidence for his own messianic claims.¹⁵ Around a cen-

Allāh Shūshtarī (d. 1610), *Majālis al-muʾminīn*, 2 vols. (Tehran: Kitābfurūshī-yi Islamiyya, 1986), II.76 (though he miswrites the *Sajanal* as *Sajil al-arwāh*); and Amin Aḥmad Rāzī (17th c.), *Tadhkira-yi Haft Iqlīm*, ed. Sayyid Muḥammad Riḍā Tāhirī (Tehran: Soroush Press, 1999), II.837. For other references to *The Book of the Beloved*, see, for example, Ṣāʾin al-Dīn ʿAlī Iṣfahānī Turka, "Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam," in *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, by Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī, ed. Muḥsin Bīdārfar, 2 vols. (Qom: Intishārāt-i Bīdār, 2000), 1,385 ff. and Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh, "The *Risālat al-Hudā* of Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh (d. 869/1464): Critical Edition with Introduction," ed. Shahzad Bashir, *Rivista Degli Studi Orientali* 75, no. 1/4 (2001), 107–108. For a Safavid-era commentary on *The Mirror of Spirits*, see Maḥmūd Dihdār Ṣirāzī (fl. 1576), *Ḥall al-rumūz fī sirr al-kunūz*, Ankara, Milli Kütüphanesi, Milli MS 2706f-1.

- 12 For an annotated list of Ḥamūya's writings, see Appendix 3: List of Ḥamūya's Works (p. 249).
- 13 See Nasafī (d. after 1300), *Kashf al-ḥaqāʾiq*, ed. A. Dāmghānī (Tehran: Bungāh-i Tarjuma wa Nashr-i Kitāb, 1965), 7—Nasafī recounts a dream in which he is visited by the Prophet Muḥammad, Saʿd al-Dīn, and Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Khafif (d. 982), 7; and Lloyd V.J. Ridgeon, *ʿAzīz Nasafī* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1998), II. For the most recent work on Nasafī, see Mohammad Amin Mansouri, "ʿAzīz-i Nasafī (fl. 7th/13th c.), Hierarchies, and Islamic Cosmopolitanism" (PhD dissertation, Toronto, University of Toronto, 2022); and idem, "Sufism vs. Monism in ʿAzīz-i Nasafī's Works," *Iranian Studies*, 2024, 1–17.
- 14 See ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla Simnānī (d. 1336), *Chihil majlis-i Shaykh ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla Simnānī*, ed. Najīb Māyil Hirawī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Adīb, 1987), 172–176; Marijan Molé, "Les Kubrawīya entre Sunnisme et Shiisme aux huitième et neuvième siècles de l'Hégire," *REI* 29, no. 1 (1961), 100–102; Jamal J. Elias, *The Throne Carrier of God: The Life and Thought of ʿAlāʾ ad-Dawla as-Simnānī* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 43–44; and Giovanni Maria Martini, *ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla al-Simnānī between Spiritual Authority and Political Power: A Persian Lord and Intellectual in the Heart of the Ilkhanate*, Islamicate Intellectual History 4 (Leiden: Brill, 2018), xvi–xix.
- 15 Matthew S. Melvin-Koushki, "The Quest for a Universal Science: The Occult Philosophy of Ṣāʾin al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī (1369–1432) and Intellectual Millenarianism in Early Timurid Iran" (PhD dissertation, Yale University, 2012), 200 ff.; Shahzad Bashir, *Messianic Hopes*

tury later, Maḥmūd Dihdār Shīrāzī (fl. 1576)—the Safavid occultist and teacher of Shaykh Bahā'ī (d. 1621)—cited Ḥamūya as one of the foremost masters of the science of letters and penned his *Decoding Symbols in the Treasures' Secret* (*Ḥall al-rumūz fī sirr al-kunūz*) as a commentary on *The Mirror of Spirits*.¹⁶ Each of these figures and others besides them drew upon the authority of Sa'd al-Dīn's spiritual and intellectual legacy, appropriating, challenging, and transforming his work to suit their own ideological and material goals.

2 Theory and Method (or, How to Read Ḥamūya)

Modern scholars, by contrast, have been content to ignore Ḥamūya. He has yet to receive a monographic study, the majority of his texts languish in manuscript collections, and surveys of medieval Sufism and intellectual history frame him as a marginal figure at best. Even with promising new work on the horizon, contemporary scholarship on his life and work pales in comparison with his medieval and early modern renown. (I direct interested readers to Appendix 2: Literature Review for a sketch of the field in its current state.) If we cannot make sense of Sa'd al-Dīn, then I argue it is because we fail to grasp something fundamental about his world. As we have seen above, Ḥamūya linked masters of jurisprudence, ascetic discipline, visionary experience, divine love, advanced metaphysics, and institutionalized piety across the Islamic world. His legacy echoed throughout the centuries as a source of ideological authority for Mongol dynasts, Sufi hagiographers, messianic visionaries, and occult theorists alike. The lack of contemporary scholarly interest is not Ḥamūya's problem but ours—a shortcoming rooted in our own epistemological inhibitions. In short, the problem is that we think we know what knowledge is. Or, to put it another way, we are convinced we know what *real* knowledge is *not*.

The rationalist frameworks that dominate intellectual history implicitly limit knowledge to logical systems that organize facts about the world. Such approaches mine theoretical texts for propositions about the nature of real-

and Mystical Visions: The Nūrbakhshīya Between Medieval and Modern Islam (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 79–80; and Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh, “*Risālat al-Hudā*,” 107–108. Incidentally, Ḥamūya's text is the only work besides the Qur'ān that Nūrbakhsh mentions by name.

16 See Matthew Melvin-Koushki, “MAḤMŪD DEHDĀR ŠIRĀZĪ” in *Elr*; and Dihdār Shīrāzī, *Ḥall al-rumūz*.

ity, assembling these claims into stable metaphysical systems whose parts are then tracked through time or stuck to specific problems for comparative analysis. In Islamic intellectual history and its adjacent fields, these biases have led scholars to analyze Sufism as a disembodied phenomenon, privileging theoretical treatises devoted to a systematic elaboration of abstract concepts. Through a careful attention to ontology, metaphysics, and psychology, such approaches have produced important studies of key Sufi thinkers, illuminating the incredible depth and complexity of their intellectual worlds.¹⁷ Despite their textured accounts of Sufi theory, however, these studies typically direct their gaze away from the material plane and thus neglect fundamental dimensions of medieval Sufism. Intellectual histories likewise skew towards Perennialist sensibilities when faced with phenomenological arguments or logical contradictions. In so doing, they tend to accept claims regarding ineffable or supra-rational experience at face value, withholding phenomenological data from critical analysis and obscuring the historically contingent strategies through which Sufis mapped their worlds.¹⁸

After extensive research on Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, the late Swiss Islamicist (and my *Urwurgrößdottorvater*) Fritz Meier called for a turn towards cultural history:

A movement like Sufism, aspiring to a life of dedication and involving itself in social work on a broad front, should not necessarily be judged by the literature it produces. Precisely because its pretensions lay in other areas, a large part of its “true” history escapes us.¹⁹

17 See, for example, Gerhard Böwering, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam: The Qur’ānic Hermeneutics of the Ṣūfī Sahl at-Tustarī (d. 283/896)* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980); Toshihiko Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); William C. Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-Arabī’s Cosmology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998); idem, *The Sufi Path*; Michel Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints: Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn ‘Arabī*, trans. Liadain Sherrard (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1993); Michael A. Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsaying* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994); and Elias, *Throne Carrier*.

18 For the problematic dimensions of Perennialist approaches to the study of Sufism, see Gregory A. Lipton, *Rethinking Ibn ‘Arabi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

19 Fritz Meier, “The Mystic Path,” in *The World of Islam: Faith, People, and Culture*, ed. Bernard Lewis (New York: Knopf in association with American Heritage Publishing Company, 1976), 127. For Meier’s text edition and monographic study of Kubrā’s *Effusions of Beauty and Revelations of Majesty*, see Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, *Die Fawā’ih al-ġamal wa-fawātih al-ġalāl des Naġm ad-Dīn al-Kubrā: eine Darstellung mystischer Erfahrungen im Islam aus der Zeit um 1200 n. Chr. (M)*, ed. Fritz Meier (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1957).

Within the last two decades or so, scholars in the field have taken up Meier's challenge, framing Sufis as social actors inextricable from the material and discursive constraints of their immediate contexts. Such interventions have spawned creative approaches to texts and material evidence typically ignored by intellectual history, mining miniatures, endowment deeds, teaching certificates, pedagogical guides, and hagiographies for insights into the rich social worlds of the medieval Sufis.²⁰ This body of work inverts the intellectual-historical paradigm, glossing over the technical intricacies of abstract theory to explore questions of social imagination and lived reality. Nevertheless, while their social-constructivist approaches to phenomenological questions illuminate important historical dimensions of Sufi subjectivities, these studies tend to bracket the specific metaphysical claims through which Sufi theorists articulated their own experiences.²¹

This brief sketch, of course, represents a general heuristic. It is not the case that intellectual-historical studies resolutely ignore socio-historical con-

20 See, for example, Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Middle Period 1200–1550* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006); Erik Ohlander, *Sufism in an Age of Transition: 'Umar al-Suhrawardī and the Rise of the Islamic Mystical Brotherhoods* (Leiden: Brill, 2008); Shahzad Bashir, *Sufi Bodies: Religion and Society in Medieval Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011) and idem, "Naqshband's Lives: Sufi Hagiography between Manuscripts and Genre," in *Sufism in Central Asia: New Perspectives on Sufi Traditions. 15th–21st Centuries*, ed. Devin A. DeWeese and Jo-Ann Gross (Boston: Brill, 2018), 75–97; Nathan Hofer, *The Popularisation of Sufism in Ayyubid and Mamluk Egypt, 1173–1325* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015); and Alexandre Papas, ed., *Sufi Institutions* (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

21 Here and throughout, I use "subjectivity" to mark how a subject relates to itself as such. Sufi subjectivities, then, are the ways in which Sufis relate to themselves *as Sufis*. Following Foucault, I understand subjectivity not as an *a priori*, but rather as a *relation* that comes into being through an existing set of norms and practices. On moral subjectivation, i.e., the production of a moral subjectivity, Foucault writes, "... A history of the way in which individuals are urged to constitute themselves as subjects of moral conduct would be concerned with models proposed for setting up and developing relationships with the self, for self-reflection, self-knowledge, self-examination, for decipherment of the self by oneself, for the transformations that one seeks to accomplish oneself as object." Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure: Volume 2 of The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley, History of Sexuality (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 29. For more on subjectivity, subjectivation, the subject, and the self, see Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," *Critical Inquiry* 8, no. 4 (1982): 777–795; idem, "What Is Critique?" And "The Culture of the Self," ed. Henri-Paul Fruchaud, Daniele Lorenzini, and Arnold I. Davidson, trans. Clare O'Farrell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2024), 83–94; and Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 27–29.

text while cultural studies neglect abstract Sufi thought completely. Even when pursuing a more holistic approach, however, contemporary scholarship tends to relegate material and metaphysical concerns to separate spheres of analysis. For intellectual-historical projects, discussions pertaining to socio-political context or the exigencies of embodied practice typically function as a means of contextualizing analyses that are more focused on abstract thought. Cultural histories likewise marshal technical minutiae from theoretical texts only to set the stage for sustained engagements with the social imaginaries of medieval Sufi actors.

When confronted with Ḥamūya's oeuvre, each of these approaches runs up against a serious analytical impasse. The shaykh articulates complex theoretical accounts of reality, yet subordinates rational objectivity to subjective experience. His ontological vision is not one of discrete parts and stable structures, but rather of dynamic forces whose qualities and boundaries are endlessly reconfigured. For Ḥamūya, theoretical texts are not repositories for information about the world; they are tools that provoke new ways of thinking, feeling, and being in it. His treatises thus produce knowledge through a dialogical interplay between text and audience, transforming the minds and bodies of his readers into laboratories within which the meaning of his words can become manifest as boundless experiential possibilities. It is not the flat surface of the page, the shaykh suggests, but rather living, breathing, and speaking bodies that can encompass and reflect the inexhaustible potential of Reality. Disciplined by the ascetic rigors and social bonds of Sufi practice, these bodies were firmly rooted in material conditions and historical time. It is precisely through its arcane complexity, therefore, that Ḥamūya's knowledge is bound up with world in which it circulated.

A critical engagement with Ḥamūya's thought thus demands that we reimagine the historical possibilities of knowledge production. Recent scholarship in the histories of science and knowledge deconstruct post-Enlightenment mythologies, theorizing knowledge as a contingent human phenomenon whose qualities are inextricable from the contexts in which it is produced and engaged.²² Rooting knowledge in the social and material realities of historical

22 See, for example, Peter Burke, *What Is the History of Knowledge?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016); Lorraine Daston, "The History of Science and the History of Knowledge," *KNOW: A Journal on the Formation of Knowledge* 1, no. 1 (March 1, 2017): 131–154; Marwa Elshakry, *Reading Darwin in Arabic, 1860–1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013); Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Peter Harrison, *The Territories of Science and Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015); David Larsson Heidenblad and Johan

actors, these studies highlight embodied practices as significant articulations of epistemology. Such an approach to knowledge counters the seductive draw of Platonic ideals, encouraging us to pull even the loftiest metaphysics out of the world of Forms and into the realm of fleshy bodies.

Following James Secord, I analyze the production of knowledge as a fundamentally communicative act. Secord advocates a “foundational shift” in the way that we understand knowledge, urging us to think “always about every text, image, action, and object as the trace of an act of communication, with receivers, producers, and modes of conventions of transmission.”²³ Rather than direct representations of static systems imprinted wholesale from the mind of an author onto the page, Secord characterizes texts as narratives indexed to particular concerns and conventions of communication.²⁴ As a single text circulates through multiple audiences, its meaning changes according to new concerns, conventions, and interpretations. Inseparable from the local settings in which it is produced and read, a text’s meaning emerges from the negotiation of power among multiple communities of actors and thus is *inherently* heterogeneous.²⁵ Secord’s formulation of knowledge production as a form of communication thus allows thick technical analyses to be situated within broader contexts without reproducing essentialist or diffusionist models. At the same time, his framework centers the relationships of power at stake in any form of communication between agents.²⁶

As communities and individuals produce, consume, and perform knowledge through discursive and embodied practices, they contest not only the meaning of texts and ideas, but also their sense of self and the nature of their relationships with others. The boundaries and qualities that differentiate historical identities are neither stable nor independent, but rather come into

Östling, eds., *Circulation of Knowledge: Explorations in the History of Knowledge* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2018); Helge Jordheim and David Gary Shaw, “Opening Doors: A Turn to Knowledge,” *History and Theory* 59, no. 4 (2020): 3–18; Projit Bihari Mukharji, *Doctoring Traditions: Ayurveda, Small Technologies, and Braided Sciences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016); Kapil Raj, *Relocating Modern Science: Circulation and the Construction of Knowledge in South Asia and Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, *Toward a History of Epistemic Things: Synthesizing Proteins in the Test Tube* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997); James A. Secord, *Victorian Sensation: The Extraordinary Publication, Reception, and Secret Authorship of Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); and idem, “Knowledge in Transit,” *Isis* 95, no. 4 (2004): 654–672.

23 Secord, “Knowledge,” 661.

24 Secord, *Victorian Sensation*, 667–670.

25 Secord, *Victorian Sensation*, 518.

26 Secord, “Knowledge,” 667–670.

being as actors deploy shared objects, strategies, and discourses to position themselves vis-à-vis their interlocutors.²⁷ Understood as historical phenomena, therefore, even seemingly intractable divisions—religious, confessional, intellectual, political—become dynamic and contingent, shifting according to the specificities of time, place, and the goals of particular actors.²⁸ In negotiating the messy realities of their social worlds, individuals constantly adapt and refashion their relationships with others, articulating a plurality of complex and often conflicting identities through the discourses and materials available to them.²⁹

Bringing these insights together, I frame the production of abstract theory and social identity as a single process through which individuals map their worlds and negotiate relationships of power. As actors fashion themselves and their realities, they do so not only through logically coherent facts or objective propositional statements, but also according to implicit claims vis-à-vis *how* legitimate truth is to be defined, organized, absorbed, and articulated, as well as *who* holds the authority to produce it. While propositional statements offer rhetorical points of congruence and convergence, focusing exclusively on these aspects of knowledge production obscures both the shared substrates underlying diverse traditions and the multifaceted identities that actors communicate to the networks of interlocutors with whom they interact.

This book reads Ḥamūya against his contemporaries to identify a set of contextually specific stakes, the networks of individuals invested in them, and the textual forms, social values, and embodied practices through which these actors attempted to define and contest them. The specificity of the shaykh's strategies comes into view through an analysis of how he engages with this

27 See, for example, Nancy Khalek, *Damascus after the Muslim Conquest: Text and Image in Early Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbāsid Society (2nd–4th/8th–10th Centuries)* (New York: Routledge, 1998); and Judith Weisenfeld, *New World A-Coming: Black Religion and Racial Identity during the Great Migration* (New York: New York University Press, 2016).

28 See, for example, Finbarr B. Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); and Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

29 See, for example, Antony Eastmond, *Tamta's World: The Life and Encounters of a Medieval Noblewoman from the Middle East to Mongolia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); and Lara Deeb, *An Enchanted Modern: Gender and Public Piety in Shī'ī Lebanon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

competitive field—i.e., how he continually deconstructs and recontextualizes its rules to set himself above his rivals.³⁰ As we will see, Ḥamūya's work makes meaning by twisting, warping, and exaggerating Sufi conventions to the point that they are almost unrecognizable. Nevertheless, like Dadaists, French post-structuralists, and free jazz pioneers, it is precisely *through* these ubiquitous forms—from *within* this shared field of play—that the shaykh's strategies produce their most compelling effects.

Adapting a bricolage of interdisciplinary methods, I explore the practical and phenomenological dimensions of medieval Sufi texts, demonstrating how Ḥamūya and his colleagues keyed techniques of reading and writing to specific epistemological ideals, social relationships, and regimens of bodily training. Recent scholarship on encyclopedism offers tools with which to illuminate the formal and structural dimensions of Sufi writing.³¹ For scholars working on encyclopedias, theoretical and methodological difficulties arise from the formulaic and compilatory nature of their sources. Encyclopedic texts appear opaque to intellectual historians because the information they transmit often seems mundane, derivative, and utterly unremarkable. Through attention to the organizational frameworks, paratextual technologies, and material qualities of written or printed documents, however, recent scholarship illuminates how such features can themselves reflect contextually specific claims about knowledge, power, and identity.

In Ḥamūya's case, the problem of the encyclopedia is inverted. Rather than ostensibly formulaic or derivative, the idiosyncrasies of the shaykh's style subvert modern sensibilities regarding theoretical coherence or continuity. As is the case with encyclopedias, however, an attention to how Sa'd al-Dīn struc-

30 My analysis of Ḥamūya's deconstructive tendencies runs parallel to Ian Almond's approach in *Sufism and Deconstruction*. See idem, *Sufism and Deconstruction: A Comparative Study of Derrida and Ibn 'Arabi*, (New York: Routledge, 2004). While Almond explores the analytical purchase of reading Ibn 'Arabi and Derrida in dialogue across time, I am more interested in illuminating the stakes (and possibilities) of Ḥamūya's strategies in their immediate 13th-century context. As we will see in Chapter 1 (esp. pp. 66 ff.), for example, Sa'd al-Dīn leverages shared epistemological commitments and the radical openness of his own lettrist approach to challenge Ibn 'Arabi, essentially critiquing him for *not being deconstructive enough*.

31 See, for example, Elias Muhanna, *The World in a Book: Al-Nuwayrī and the Islamic Encyclopedic Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017); Mary Franklin-Brown, *Reading the World: Encyclopedic Writing in the Scholastic Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); Ann Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); and Jason König and Tim Whitmarsh, "Ordering Knowledge," in *Ordering Knowledge in the Roman Empire*, ed. Jason König and Tim Whitmarsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 3–42.

tures his work reveals modes of communication whose primary epistemological thrust lies beyond the straightforward propositional statements they produce. *The Book of the Beloved*, for example, uses organizational techniques to subvert audience expectations and defer meaning indefinitely. His strategies work in tandem with medieval theories of Qur'anic inimitability, which rooted the miracle of revealed language in its ability to withhold, layer, or nuance multiple levels of meaning through grammatical and structural forms.³² By appropriating and expanding these forms, the shaykh not only performs a vision of infinite epistemological and ontological possibilities in text; he implicitly equates *The Book of the Beloved* with the Qur'ān to assert himself as a saintly fount of divine revelation.

For a textured approach to the experiential dimensions of medieval Sufi reading and writing, I benefit from the work of phenomenologically minded scholars in the history of philosophy, religious studies, and art history.³³ Focusing on the performative dimensions of texts and images, this body of scholarship centers strategies of knowledge production premised upon engagement and direct experience rather than detached observation. Rather than bracketing subjective phenomena as beyond the realm of critical analysis, these studies develop methodologies to historicize the means through which texts and images target the body, emotions, and intellect to shape subjective experience. Attending to the phenomenological dimensions of Sufi theoretical treatises, for example, we are able to discern how Ḥamūya manipulates Arabic and Persian letters to provoke embodied experiences of dynamic cosmic processes. Likewise, when directed towards Sufi handbooks, a focus on experiential concerns illuminates how Sa'd al-Dīn's colleagues used prayers—and their attendant bodily practices—to generate specific emotional states. By tracing how Ḥamūya recontextualizes liturgical language and practice within his advanced

32 See Lara Harb, *Arabic Poetics: Aesthetic Experience in Classical Arabic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 203–251.

33 For studies in history of philosophy, see, for example, Sara Rappe, *Reading Neoplatonism: Non-Discursive Thinking in the Texts of Plotinus, Proclus, and Damascius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); and Peter T. Struck, *Birth of the Symbol: Ancient Readers at the Limits of Their Texts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004). For religious studies, see for example, Sells, *Mystical Languages*; Joshua Levi Ian Gentzke, "Imaginal Renaissance: Desire, Corporeality, and Rebirth in the Work of Jacob Böhme" (PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 2016); and Jessica Barr, *Intimate Reading: Textual Encounters in Medieval Women's Visions and Vitae* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2020). For art history, see for example, Pentcheva, *Sensual*; and Jeffrey F. Hamburger, *Diagramming Devotion: Berthold of Nuremberg's Transformation of Hrabanus Maurus's Poems in Praise of the Cross* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020).

theoretical texts, we are able to analyze in turn how he manipulates these shared conventions to explore the affective possibilities of abstract knowledge.

It is exceedingly difficult to present Ḥamūya's performative writing in a mode amenable to the analytical conventions of contemporary scholarship. In many cases, his techniques of destabilizing or recontextualizing interpretive possibilities operate through recursive expositions, abrupt shifts in context, and deferrals of meaning that unfold across dozens of folia. Succinct summaries of these textual forms erase the nuances through which they produce meaning, while detailed descriptions of their qualities alternate between tedious and vexing. In the chapters that follow, therefore, I offer extensive quotations from Sa'd al-Dīn's work, both in their original languages and in translation. These examples serve to orient readers, offering specific frames of reference within which to analyze and explore the shaykh's performances. As Ḥamūya's writing produces meaning through a self-conscious engagement with the subtleties of language and form, a study of his work without such quotations would be tantamount to an art history without the images.

I couple my focus on experience and practice with an attention to the material circumstances in which medieval Sufis lived and wrote. As recent work in the history of knowledge has shown, political, economic, and institutional alignments can shape both abstract theories of human behavior and the most fundamental rules of knowledge production.³⁴ Ḥamūya and his colleagues were not only Sufis; they also boasted a wide range of legal and theological affinities, geographic affiliations, and genealogical allegiances. They inhabited myriad social and professional positions, acting as jurists, warriors, theologians, courtiers, traditionalists, landed nobles, ritual specialists, occult scientists, and so on and so forth. Although contemporary narratives tend to distance mystics from worldly authority, the figures at the center of this study were cultural elites who maintained close ties with political regimes: Kubrā with the court in Khwārazm, Suhrawardī with the 'Abbāsids, Ibn 'Arabī with the Saljūqs and Ayyūbids, and Ḥamūya and Bākharzī with the Mongols in Iran (the Īlkhāns) and Central Asia (the Golden Horde), respectively.³⁵ As Ḥamūya and his interlocutors contested the boundaries of their knowledge among themselves and

34 See, for example, Paul Erickson, Judy L. Klein, Lorraine Daston, Rebecca Lemov, Thomas Sturm, and Michael D. Gordin, *How Reason Almost Lost Its Mind: The Strange Career of Cold War Rationality* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2013).

35 See Hamid Algar, "KOBRAWIYAI. THE EPONYM" in *Elr*; idem, "KOBRAWIYAI. THE ORDER," in *Elr*; Ohlander, *Sufism*, 16–27, 89–112; Claude Addas, *Quest for the Red Sulphur: The Life of Ibn 'Arabī*, trans. Peter Kingsley (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1993), 218–244; Jamal J. Elias, "The Sufi Lords of Bahrabad: Sa'd al-Din and Sadr al-Din Hamuwayi," *Iranian Studies* 27, no. 1/4 (1994), 74–75; and Mohammad Javad Shams, "Bākharzī, Abū al-Ma'ālī Sayf al-Dīn," trans. Matthew S. Melvin-Koushki in *Encyclopaedia Islamica*.

with their critics, they did not disregard other dimensions of their identities, but rather negotiated what it meant to be a Sufi *through* these diverse commitments.

In assembling this theoretical scaffolding, my goal is to illuminate dimensions of medieval Sufi knowledge production typically obscured by modern epistemological biases. I use contemporary frameworks as a set of tools: lenses through which to identify and analyze the elements that made medieval Sufi systems viable (or even *potent*) constellations of knowing and being. In so doing, I recognize that nuanced approaches to the heterogeneous possibilities of knowledge and the dialogical relationship between epistemology and identity are not the sole purview of modern scholarship. For Ḥamūya and his colleagues, real knowledge transformed the minds, bodies, and souls of its knowers, catalyzing new ways of being in the world. The question of knowledge was not one of dispassionate abstraction; it was an urgent moral and ethical concern. To achieve perfect knowledge was to perform perfect actions, adapting oneself to the demands of each and every moment with perfect fluency. As was the case with the micro- and macrocosms, medieval Sufis recognized the mesocosm of the social world as a dynamic play of forces navigable only by endlessly reassessing and representing oneself amidst a plurality of subjective possibilities. It was precisely this sensibility—adaptable across all realms of knowing and being—that constituted the apex (and purportedly exclusive property) of the Sufi path.

Medieval Sufis likewise embraced the multivalent possibilities of knowledge in text. As we will see, Ḥamūya's work in particular reflects a sophisticated approach to epistemology that was rooted in relational difference, a multiplicity of meaning, and dynamic play. He recognized the dialogic interplay between subjectivity and meaning, developing creative methods to exploit the endless interpretive potential that different readers could bring to a single text. Through a range of performative strategies, he manipulated specific experiential dimensions of reading, forcing his audiences into an active process of meaning making. As diverse readers mapped his language to the physical, emotional, and intellectual dimensions of their own dynamic subjective states, they expanded the meanings of his words indefinitely. Ironically, Sa'd al-Dīn asserted his claims to authoritative knowledge by loosening the reigns of authorial intent and cultivating a plurality of interpretive possibilities.

Despite their universalizing ideals, Ḥamūya and his ilk were not *laissez-faire* relativists unmoored from the shore of critical acumen.³⁶ The knowledge they

36 I use the term “universalizing” to mark the projection of one's own position as qualita-

produced was not universally accessible; nor did they intend it to be. While Ḥamūya may have opened his words to the creative imagination of his audience, his writing nevertheless belies an attempt to rebuff readers whose subjectivities had not been disciplined by advanced Sufi training. The very same strategies that opened up endless possibilities for an elite corps of readers thus rendered his texts utterly illegible to the uninitiated. This is not to say that non-Sufis could not read his words, but rather that these individuals were barred from the social bonds, embodied experiences, and epistemological practices that would mark them as knowing beings. A boundless interpretive sensibility may have been an epistemological and ethical ideal, but the question of *which* bodies could best perform this potential was always up for debate.

If the theoretical and methodological considerations outlined above help to render Ḥamūya's work legible, then the reverse is true as well. The generative insights offered by medieval Sufis expand the epistemological range of contemporary academic approaches, opening avenues through which to explore our *own* ways of knowing. The maps may be different, but our contemporary forms of academic knowledge production belie their own dynamic constellations of the corporeal, social, affective, and intellectual.

To illustrate the point, I offer what I suspect will be familiar narrative. As new graduate students enter the academy, they undertake rigorous programs of embodied and socially embedded practices that reframe how they understand themselves and their worlds. Disciplinary boundaries determine the shape of these worlds, the entities that populate them, and the meaningful connections that can be drawn between their constituent parts. The physical layout of campuses and universities naturalize disciplinary boundaries in material space while funding bodies maintain epistemological (and social) hierarchies through investments, donations, and general economic support. Faculty regulate knowledge production in seminar discussions, written feedback, and individual meetings through a range of social, intellectual, and affective modes. Students' bodies are marked by long hours of reading and writing, shaping posture, motor capacity, sense perception, and comportment. Temperaments are transformed by critique, competition, and asceticism. In social settings, students are disciplined into a professional etiquette that regulates interactions with faculty, colleagues, and undergraduates. Institutional affiliations, profes-

tively distinct from, comprehensive of, and superior to all others. For an analysis of the universalizing tendencies in Ibn 'Arabī's work and contemporary scholarship on him, see Lipton, *Rethinking*. For a study of the fundamental tensions underlying universalizing discourses in the present, see also Wendy Brown, *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

sional relationships, and academic genealogies determine the reception vis-à-vis the academy and the public at large. (In the COVID era, the alienation and ennui of virtual university life only brought the importance of social and embodied practices into greater relief.)

At the end of the process, newly minted doctors organize and communicate their visions of the world through field-specific strategies whose myriad valences are legible only to individuals whose bodies are marked by the same rigorous training. To the uninitiated, a citation represents a neutral point of reference. To the discerning scholar, its form and content reflect disciplinary affiliations, research practices and capabilities, and even moral and social commitments. While academics may maintain diverse social identities, the work we produce for patronage (and, if they are lucky, prestige) remains bound to our abstract frameworks and arcane modes of expression.

Though exploring comparative questions is beyond the scope of this study, their overtones resonate across nearly all of its pages. What might marking and interrogating these dimensions of our epistemologies reveal about our own universalizing pretensions and the relationships of power they aim to fix? How might our basic practices of reading, writing, and even *feeling* authorize particular knowing subjects while erasing others? And finally, how might our epistemologies and identities be entangled with those from which we so desperately wish to tear ourselves free?

3 Progression of Themes (Lead Sheet)

I divide the book into five main chapters, each of which explores a theme central to the conversations of medieval Sufis: ontology, embodied practice, visual language, social bonds, and human perfection. Chapter 1, “Riffing on the Real: Letters and the Language of God,” reads Ḥamūya against his famous contemporary Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ‘Arabī, demonstrating how the two deploy an esoteric discourse known as the science of letters (*‘ilm al-ḥurūf*) to articulate what I call a relational approach to epistemology. For these two Sufis, entities *qua* entities have no essential qualities; they are knowable only through the shifting relationships in which they are embedded and the infinite points of view from which these relationships may be considered. By manipulating the Arabic alphabet’s phenomenal qualities across a range of disciplines and discursive registers, Ḥamūya and Ibn ‘Arabī develop ways of reading and writing that perform the infinite ontological-semantic potential of Reality within the minds and bodies of their readers. I explore how these performative strategies could reinforce social and intellectual boundaries by analyzing how these two Sufis

parochialize the rationalist worldviews of their Peripatetic contemporaries. Likewise, by teasing out the differences between Ḥamūya's and Ibn 'Arabī's lettrist methods, I reveal how the former could leverage the radical openness of his own approach to critique the universalizing claims of his fellow Sufis.

Chapter 2, "Sufi Free Jazz: Prayer, Deconstruction, and Boundless Play," reads Ḥamūya's abstract theoretical texts in conversation with Sufi litanies and training manuals. For medieval Sufis, the human body was the ultimate point of intersection for all levels of Reality. Their manuals brought together bodily instructions, imaginative exercises, and dynamic theoretical frameworks, teaching readers to navigate fluently across abstract and experiential realms. By deconstructing the conventions of these texts, Ḥamūya exploits their performative mechanisms to generate new interpretive possibilities. In the fifth appendix to *The Levels of Joy in the Fountains of Power* (*Kitāb Marātib al-qurra fī 'uyūn al-qudra*), the shaykh uses techniques of structure and allusion to place his text in conversation with Sufi training manuals. While conventional manuals carefully map embodied sensations to metaphysical principles, Ḥamūya's text warps the body to the point of utter abstraction and forces readers to continually reconfigure intellectual, corporeal, and affective possibilities. *The Book of the Beloved* excises Sufi prayers from litanies and recontextualizes them amidst a flurry of recursive analyses, lettrist operations, arcane diagrams, and ecstatic poetry. In litanies and prayer books, supplications function as transformative practices that engage the bodies and minds of supplicants to discipline specific spiritual and emotional states. By suffusing *The Book of the Beloved* with the language of Sufi prayer, the shaykh opens up the meaning of his words to the dynamic subjectivities of his readers. Read together, the textual strategies that Ḥamūya deploys in *The Levels of Joy* and *The Book of the Beloved* generate endless interpretive potential while simultaneously rooting access to his work in an advanced familiarity with the specialized literature and ritual practices of medieval Sufism.

Chapter 3, "Calculating Infinity: Diagram and/as Devotion," delves deeper into Sufi devotional texts through an analysis of Ḥamūya's *Mirror of Spirits and Signs on Tablets*. The *Mirror* may seem like a straightforward collection of prayers, but a closer look reveals a tangle of talismanic diagrams, strange symbols, and occult operations whose function and meaning are never explicitly revealed. Reading the *Mirror* against medieval litanies, cosmological diagrams, and Qur'anic theurgy, I demonstrate how Ḥamūya amplifies the transformative potential of Sufi prayer through a creative appropriation of visual forms. Stripped of the conventions that typically ground their meaning, the nebulous resonances of the *Mirror's* images buzz with an aesthetic-affective efficacy that simultaneously demands and disrupts interpretation. Rather than static

representations of Reality, the shaykh's diagrams function as potent spiritual technologies through which advanced operators could build new interfaces across the Qur'ān, the Real, and their own subjectivities.³⁷

Chapter 4, "Genealogies of Knowledge: Shaykhs, Sufis, and Spiritual Inheritance," illuminates the social dimensions of Ḥamūya's knowledge. While other chapters analyze how the shaykh's performative writing generates endless interpretive possibilities for his readers, this chapter illuminates how he manipulates shared conventions to open up diverse social possibilities for himself. The first part of the chapter reads the shaykh's *Lamp of Sufism* against the work of his master Najm al-Dīn Kubrā and his close friend Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, exploring how all three root authoritative knowledge in the interpersonal bonds of master-disciple relationships. Despite his repeated emphasis on the importance of Sufi masters, however, Sa'd al-Dīn's own shaykhs are noticeably absent from his work. In their place, we find appeals to the legacy of his great-great-grandfather, the renowned Sufi Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya Juwaynī (d. 1136). Reading his treatises and personal correspondences in the broader context of Sufi training, trans-regional scholarly networks, and the ideological underpinnings of the Ayyūbid and Mongol dynasties, I demonstrate how the strategies through which Ḥamūya frames himself as an authoritative producer of knowledge negotiate the differing expectations of his diverse audiences and the many privileges afforded to him as the scion of a powerful and well-connected family. In this case, material conditions work in tandem with epistemological sensibilities to produce a "deconstructive" politics that playfully manipulates the very genealogical conventions through which elite power was constructed.

Chapter 5, "Real Talk: Language, Reality, and Human Perfection," pulls together threads from previous chapters to analyze how Ḥamūya articulates his own saintly authority in text. After sketching a general overview of the shaykh's approach to prophecy and sainthood, I explore the dialogic relationship between his theoretical claims and his textual performances. On the one hand, Ḥamūya's theoretical elaboration of sainthood reflects the idiosyncratic metaphysical structures I identify throughout the book. The shaykh sketches hierarchies of saints and prophets that are continually reconfigured, articulating a vision of human perfection rooted in an interplay of shifting qualities and relationships. On the other hand, his distinct modes of expression enact what he imagines perfect saints to do. As he explains in texts like *The Appear-*

37 For my use of "technology of the self," "spiritual technology," and "devotional technology," see p. 103, n. 70.

ance of the Seal of the Saints (*Risāla fī zuhūr khātim al-awliyā'*) and *The Sea of Gratitude in the River of Disavowal* (*Baḥr al-shukr fī nahr al-nukr*), saints drive human beings to perfection through writing, their pens mirroring the swords of the prophets. Through close readings of a passage on the Seal of Saints from *The Book of the Beloved*, I frame incomprehensible expression itself as a performative writing strategy. By continually deferring meaning and subverting conceptual resolution, Ḥamūya engages readers in an active process of meaning making, projecting the experiential and epistemological possibilities of his words beyond the totalizing grasp of his own text. In so doing, he transforms readers' bodies into sites within which the totality of the divine self-disclosure may become manifest as dynamic and boundless play. Reading his strategies in conversation with medieval theories of Qur'ānic inimitability, I demonstrate how Ḥamūya manipulates contemporary assumptions about revealed language to assert himself as a bona fide saint.

In what follows, I offer an experiment in method—the first steps towards an approach that I hope will provoke its own generative possibilities in the study of knowledge.

Riffing on the Real: Letters and the Language of God

But nontotalization can also be determined in another way: no longer from the standpoint of a concept of finitude as relegation to the empirical, but from the standpoint of the concept of *play*.¹

JACQUES DERRIDA, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences"

•••

There are some set things that I know, some devices ... harmonic devices that I know that will take me out of the ordinary paths ... I play all of them, you know, trying to acclimate my ear.²

JOHN COLTRANE, interview with Karl-Erik Lindgren

••

For medieval exegetes and modern interpreters, Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya's investigations into the nature of being have been a fascinating and frustrating enigma. Writing in the late 15th century, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 1492) warns readers with the following remarks:

در علوم ظاهری و باطنی یگانه است ... در مصنّفات وی سخنان مرموز و کلمات
مشکل و ارقام و اشکال و دوایر که نظر عقل و فکر از کشف و حلّ آن عاجز است
بسیار است و همانا که تا دیده بصیرت به نور کشف منفتح نشود ادراک آن متعذر
است

1 Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 2001), 365.

2 John Coltrane, interview with Karl-Erik Lindgren, disc 1, track 4, on Miles Davis, *In Stockholm 1960*, Dragon DRCD 228, 1960.

He is unparalleled in exoteric and esoteric knowledge ... His works contain numerous allusive discourses, difficult words, and numbers, figures, and circles whose unveiling and solution lie beyond the gaze of intellect and thought. So long as one's vision is closed to the light of unveiling, they will be impossible to apprehend.³

As Jāmī relates, it is not necessarily *what* Ḥamūya says that resists easy interpretation, but *how* he says it. Plumbing the hidden recesses of being, Sa'd al-Dīn twists and turns through cunning wordplay, ostensibly incoherent digressions, recondite allusions, blatant inconsistencies, impenetrable diagrams, bizarre neologisms, and above all, a feverish obsession with the sound, form, and semantic potential of the Arabic alphabet. Nevertheless, despite these difficulties, Ḥamūya's works read like a profound code ready to be cracked. Behind obscure language and arcane images, readers can imagine the contours of an overarching system whose infinite interpretive reach encompasses nearly every ontological and epistemological possibility. Just one more word, one more reference, one more figure grasped and God's ultimate secrets will give themselves up freely.

I do not purport to unlock such secrets here. Instead, this chapter analyzes the techniques and strategies through which Ḥamūya explores being in order to illuminate the epistemological assumptions that underpin such esoteric modes of expression. To clarify the particularities of Sa'd al-Dīn's approach, I read his work in conversation with that of Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī (d. 1240), whose theoretical sophistication, provocative exegetical experiments, and virtuosic discursive flexibility have rendered him a focal point for the study of Sufism (both apologetic and polemical) since the 13th century. As noted in the Biographical Essay (Appendix 1), later hagiographers remember Ḥamūya as a close companion of Ibn 'Arabī's chief disciple Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 1274) and, if we are to believe his great-grandson Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ḥamūya (fl. 14th c.), a friend of al-Shaykh al-Akbar as well.⁴ Whether or not a face-to-face meeting ever took place, Sa'd al-Dīn penned at least one letter to Muḥyī al-Dīn, challenging the shaykh on specific points regarding the secrets of the letters and

3 'Abd al-Rahmān Jāmī, *Nafahāt al-uns min ḥaḍarāt al-quḍs*, ed. Maḥmūd 'Ābidī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Iṭṭilā'āt, 1996), 431. Here and in subsequent quotations from published Persian and Arabic editions, I have removed the commas, periods, colons, semicolons, and quotation marks that have been inserted by contemporary editors. I find that these insertions tend to limit the interpretive possibilities of texts while also making them more difficult to parse.

4 Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Murād al-murīdīn*, ed. S.A.A. Mīr-Bāqirī Fard and Z. Najafī (Tehran: Mu'assasat-i Muṭāla'āt-i Islāmī-yi Dānishgāh-i Tihirān – Dānishgāh-i Makḡil, 2011), 28 ff.

the nature of being.⁵ By the 14th and 15th centuries, many Sufis read the two thinkers' theoretical works together as twin approaches to hidden realities. The Timūrid letrist Şā'in al-Dīn Turka (d. 1432), for example, quotes lengthy sections from Ḥamūya's *Book of the Beloved* as a means of elucidating the subtle points of Ibn 'Arabī's *Bezels of Wisdom* (*Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*).⁶ Likewise, a cursory survey of the Sufi manuscripts in Istanbul's Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi reveals several 15th-century collections (*majāmi'*) in which the two Sufis' works are bound together; Şehit Ali Paşa MS 1342 even purports to include one of Ibn 'Arabī's epistles copied by none other than Ḥamūya himself.⁷

Reading Ḥamūya and Ibn 'Arabī against one another, a shared set of ontological and epistemological presumptions becomes discernible. As I argue below, the two Sufis articulate what I refer to as a relational epistemology, rooted in a dynamic and ever-renewed divine self-disclosure. Utterly unfathomable in Its Essence, the Real only becomes known through Its manifestation in created entities. As projections of the Real, however, these entities *qua* entities lack essential qualities of their own and cannot be known in and of themselves. Instead, they are differentiated through (a) their relationships with the Divine Essence, (b) their relationships with one another, and (c) the context according to which all of these relationships are understood. Because the Real continually manifests Itself in new ways, these webs of association and the vistas from which they may be considered are in constant flux. Grounded as they are in stable premises and logical sequence, rational methodologies (at least according to our two Sufis) are woefully ill-equipped to capture fundamental realities.

To communicate knowledge about the nature of being, Ḥamūya and Ibn 'Arabī develop performative strategies that seek to shape readers' experiences of self and cosmos. Rather than mapping a static world, these techniques cul-

5 Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, "Makātīb-i Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥammū'i," in *Jashn-Nāma-yi Ustād Sayyid Aḥmad Ḥusaynī Ashkūrī*, ed. Aḥmad Khāma-Yār and Rasūl Ja'faryān (Tehran: Nashr-i 'Ilm, 2013), 459–462; and idem, *Sharḥ bāl wa-rashḥ ḥāl (Risāla ilā Muḥyi al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī)*, Los Angeles, UCLA Library, Special Collections, Caro Minasian MS 32, fols. 99–108. See also pp. 66 ff. in Chapter 1, Section 4.

6 See, for example, Şā'in al-Dīn 'Alī Iṣfahānī Turka, "Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam," in *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, by Muḥyi al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī, ed. Muḥsin Bīdārfar, 2 vols. (Qom: Intishārāt-i Bīdār, 2000), 1. 385 ff.; and Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Kitāb al-Maḥbūb*, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (SBB), MS Or. fol. 4084, fols. 28a–28b. fols. 28^a–28^b.

7 See Şehit Ali Paşa MS 1342 (dated AH 837–839; 1434–1436), fols. 145^a–158^a. On June 12, 2019, I had the chance to inspect the treatise in person. The text's ending reads, "This epistle has been completed at the hand of Sa'd al-Ḥamawī." The folia in question appear to be written on a type of paper that differs from the rest of the collection. These folia are lighter in color, narrower, more uniform in quality, lack page rubrics, and display their own pagination. Likewise, they seem to be bound together as part of a distinct unit. They do not, however, seem to originate in the 13th century.

tivate an epistemological sensibility that allows readers to recognize the Real and reproduce Its dynamic modes of self-disclosure across each and every context, discourse, and mode of expression. In what follows, I identify and analyze these strategies through a close reading of Sa'd al-Dīn's and Muḥyī al-Dīn's texts, illuminating how the two Sufis negotiate questions of knowledge, being, and expression through a comparative analysis of representative cases.

The first section of the chapter focuses on Ḥamūya's and Ibn 'Arabī's critiques of philosophers and their methodologies. In identifying an epistemological other against which our two Sufis frame real knowledge, I lay the foundation for a discussion of Sa'd al-Dīn's and Muḥyī al-Dīn's writing and foreshadow the stakes of their claims. From here, I delve into the primary focus of the chapter: an analysis of Ḥamūya's and Ibn 'Arabī's performative strategies. I center my discussion on the science of letters (*'ilm al-ḥurūf*), exploring how the two Sufis use the letters of the Arabic alphabet to negotiate myriad expressive and discursive registers. Ḥamūya manipulates the letters' shapes, sounds, and allusive/semantic qualities to reveal the fundamental interrelation, utter instability, and infinite ontological-semantic potential of all created beings. By continually drawing together, breaking apart, and recontextualizing a plurality of interconnected possibilities, Sa'd al-Dīn leaves readers without any stable hermeneutical ground. Though Ibn 'Arabī exploits the letters' sonic and visual qualities as well, he positions them as pivot points between discrete and infinitely complex conceptual frames. Unlike Ḥamūya, Ibn 'Arabī articulates his relational approach by exploiting the sense of dissonance that arises from juxtaposing incommensurable, yet fairly stable, structures.

After comparing their approaches, I demonstrate how Sa'd al-Dīn appeals to shared relational commitments to contest Ibn 'Arabī's authority. The former parochializes his interlocutor's approach to the science of letters, accusing him of stabilizing interpretive possibilities and limiting the dynamic potential of Reality. Against Ibn 'Arabī's reified structural frames, Ḥamūya emphasizes the utter unboundedness of his own techniques. A close attention to Sa'd al-Dīn's critique reveals a distinct penchant for deconstruction and highlights the radical openness of his work as a potent strategy of medieval Sufi competition.

1 (In)coherence of the Philosophers

Despite overlapping conceptual vocabulary, similar metaphysical mechanisms, and a shared concern with divine unity and cosmic multiplicity, Ḥamūya and Ibn 'Arabī inveigh against the language and methodologies of the philosophers, who in the wake of Ibn Sīnā had become largely synonymous with Muslim Peri-

patetics.⁸ A close look at the two Sufis' critiques reveals a deep epistemological divide that I argue cannot be reduced to mere doctrinal squabbles or terminological nitpicking. Sa'd al-Dīn and Muḥyī al-Dīn take issue just as much with what philosophers say as with their fundamental premises vis-à-vis how knowledge is to be cultivated and produced, accusing their Peripatetic counterparts of ossifying God's presence in the world and mistaking skeletal structures for the infinite complexity of animate reality.⁹ This is not to say that contemporary philosophical systems were rigid, hidebound, or inadequate; 13th-century Peripatetic (or Peripatetic-adjacent) thinkers like Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 1274) and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1210) developed nuanced systems of metaphysics and ethics dedicated to exploring the subtle intricacies of life at micro- and macro-cosmic scales.¹⁰ Nevertheless, Ḥamūya and Ibn 'Arabī's polemics give us insight

8 For *falsafa*, *kalām*, and Ibn Sīnā, see Frank Griffel, "Al-Ghazālī's (d. 1111) *Incoherence of the Philosophers*," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Khaled el-Rouayheb and Sabine Schmidtke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 191–209.

With respect to shared terminology and metaphysical mechanisms, Ḥamūya, Ibn 'Arabī, and their Peripatetic rivals draw to varying degrees from Neoplatonic metaphysical principles, which by the 13th century had become familiar to a wide range of thinkers writing in Arabic and Persian. The general outline of Neoplatonic emanation was pioneered by the Greek philosopher Plotinus (d. 270), whose *Enneads* drew upon Platonic and Aristotelian principles to articulate a distinct ontological and soteriological vision. In the 9th century, the Christian Ibn Nā'ima al-Ḥimsī (fl. 9th c.) translated the *Enneads* into Arabic as *The Theology of Aristotle (Uthūlūjīyā Aristātālīs)*, reworking Plotinus' claims to suit the needs of the small circle of philosophers that had gathered around al-Kindī (d. 870). Although later philosophers, theologians, and Sufis modified the so-called "classical" hierarchy of Neoplatonic hypostases, the basic framework and terminology of emanation remained fairly consistent from the 9th to the 13th centuries. For Plotinus' metaphysics see Dominic J. O'Meara, "The Hierarchical Ordering of Reality in Plotinus," in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, ed. Lloyd P. Gerson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 66–81. For general studies, see Pierre Hadot, *Plotinus, or The Simplicity of Vision*, trans. Michael Chase (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1993); and Lloyd P. Gerson, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). For the Arabic adaptation of Plotinus *Enneads*, ironically entitled *The Theology of Aristotle*, see Cristina D'Ancona, "The Theology Attributed to Aristotle: Sources, Structure, Influence," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Khaled el-Rouayheb and Sabine Schmidtke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 8–29; and Peter Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus* (London: Duckworth, 2002).

9 Ibn 'Arabī himself draws a similar analogy in Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya* (وف), ed. Osman Yahia, 14 vols. (Cairo: al-Hay'a al-Miṣriyya al-Āmma li-l-Kitāb, 1972–1992), II.228 and idem, *The Meccan Revelations, Volume 1*, ed. Michel Chodkiewicz, trans. William C. Chittick and James W. Morris (New York: Pir Press, 2002), 36.

10 For the latest study of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's life and work, see Sayeh Meisami, *Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī: A Philosopher for All Seasons* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2019). For Ṭūsī's engagement with Ibn Sīnā, see Jon McGinnis, "Naṣīr Al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 1274), *Sharḥ al-*

into how these two Sufis imagined knowledge and their relationship with it, illuminating the ways through which they sought to define their projects over and against those of their opponents.

In Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Meccan Revelations* (*al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*), the shaykh relates an incident in which he was so disgusted by what he found in al-Fārābī’s (d. 950) *Virtuous City* (*al-Madīna al-fāḍila*) that he flung the pages back at their owner and refused to engage with the text again.¹¹ Muḥyī al-Dīn writes:

ولقد رأيت بعض أهل الكفر في كتاب سمّاه المدينة الفاضلة رأيت به بيد شخص
بمرشاة الزيتون ولم أكن رأيت به قبل ذلك فأخذته من يده وفتحت له لأرى ما فيه فأول
شيء وقعت عيني عليه قوله وأنا أريد في هذا الفصل أن ننظر كيف نضع إلهًا في
العالم ولم يقل الله فتعجبت من ذلك ورميت بالكتاب إلى صاحبه وإلى هذا الوقت
ما وقفت على ذلك الكتاب

I saw some of the unbelievers’ views in a book entitled *The Virtuous City*, which I saw in the hands of an individual in Marchena and had never seen

Ishārāt,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Khaled el-Rouayheb and Sabine Schmidtke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 326–347. While Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī may not have been an “Avicennist,” strictly speaking, his commentaries and philosophical-theological works demonstrate a virtuosic knowledge of and sustained engagement with Ibn Sinā and Aristotelian philosophy, broadly speaking. See Ayman Shihadeh, *The Teleological Ethics of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī* (Leiden: Brill, 2006); idem, “Al-Rāzī’s (d. 1210) on Avicenna’s *Pointers: The Confluence of Exegesis and Aporetics*,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Khaled el-Rouayheb and Sabine Schmidtke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 296–325; Frank Griffel, “Was Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī an Averroist After All? On the Double-Truth Theory in Medieval Latin and Islamic Thought,” in *Studying the Near East at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, 1935–2018*, ed. Sabine Schmidtke (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2018), 205–216; and Nora Jacobsen Ben Hammed, “Knowledge and Felicity of the Soul in Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī” (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 2018).

- 11 On Ibn ‘Arabī’s familiarity with Arabic philosophy, see Claude Addas, *Quest for the Red Sulphur: The Life of Ibn ‘Arabī*, trans. Peter Kingsley (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1993), 102–110. For an introduction, translation, and edition of *The Virtuous City*, see al-Fārābī, *al-Fārābī on the Perfect State: Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī’s Mabādī’ āra’ ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*, ed. Richard Walzer (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985). For studies of al-Fārābī’s metaphysics, see Damien Janos, *Method, Structure, and Development in al-Fārābī’s Cosmology* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); Thérèse-Anne Druart, “al-Fārābī, Emanation, and Metaphysics,” in *Neoplatonism and Islamic Thought*, ed. Parviz Morewedge, Studies in Neoplatonism (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 127–148; and Herbert Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, on Intellect: Their Cosmologies, Theories of the Active Intellect, and Theories of Human Intellect* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

before. I took it from him and opened it up to see what was inside. The first thing I came across was the following: “In this section, I would like to examine how we might postulate [the existence of] a deity in the world.” He didn’t even use the word “God”! I was astonished at this and hurled the book back at its owner; to this day I haven’t consulted it again.¹²

While Ibn ‘Arabī’s invective could be read as a generic charge of unbelief premised upon a willful misunderstanding of technical terminology, I argue that the broader context of his comments belies a fundamental ontological claim with respect to the unity of the Divine Essence, the infinite multiplicity of the divine self-disclosure, and the nature of human perfection.

As a prelude to the passage cited above, Ibn ‘Arabī expounds upon his understanding of the Perfect Human (*al-insān al-kāmil*) as a reflection of the Divine Attributes:

فالكامل ينصبغ بكلّ صورة في العالم ويتستّر بما يقدر عليه ... فينبغي لصاحب
هذا المقام أن لا يظهر لشخصين في صورة واحدة أبداً كما لا يتجلّي الحقّ
لشخصين في صورة واحدة أبداً فإنّ الدرجات هي الدرجات فإن كفره وزندقه من
لم ير اختلاف الصور عليه فذلك جهل منه وحسد ...
وذلك الواقع فيه من المفترين فإنّه ما حكم عليه إلا بما شاهدته منه

The perfect one is dyed with each form [while he is] in the world and veiled by whatever comes over him ... The master of this state must never appear to two individuals in the same form, just as the Real never manifests Itself to two individuals in the same form; these degrees are truly [*different*] degrees. If one who does not see the diversity of forms vis-à-vis [the Perfect Human] charges him with unbelief and apostasy, then this is out of ignorance of him and envy ...¹³

The calumny brought against [the Perfect Human] by the slanderers is only leveled upon him due to [the incomplete aspect] of what they see in him.¹⁴

12 Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ‘Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya* (SD), ed. Aḥmad Shams al-Dīn, 9 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1999), v.264.10–14. For longer passages and block quotes from the *Futūḥāt*, I provide citations to this nine-volume 1999 edition (SD) and Osman Yahia’s fourteen-volume 1972–1999 edition (OY) of the text. Because Yahia’s edition finishes with Chapter 161, however, citing from both is not always possible.

13 Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt* (SD), v.263.25–28.

14 Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt* (SD), v.263.30.

For Muḥyī al-Dīn, human perfection entails understanding and actualizing the totality of the Divine Attributes (or Names) such that one transforms oneself into a complete microcosm of the universe and a veridical reflection of the Divine Essence.¹⁵ In Ibn ‘Arabī’s view, these Attributes/Names are not concrete elements that inhere in the Essence, but rather *relationships* that emerge between the Essence and its loci of manifestation—i.e., the infinite entities that populate the material and immaterial realms.¹⁶ In addition to the relationships that pertain between entities and the Essence, the entities themselves exist in a plurality of shifting associations with one another, such that the qualities of each vary in accordance with the particular context in which they are considered.¹⁷ As a complete manifestation of these relationships, the Perfect Human mirrors the Divine Essence, revealing himself according to an ever-shifting array of attributes. According to Ibn ‘Arabī, therefore, those who level charges of apostasy against the Perfect Human do so primarily because they are unable to recognize the dynamic and contextually dependent character—i.e., the “relationality”—of how the Divine Attributes are made manifest in his states and actions.¹⁸

Muḥyī al-Dīn implies that those who slander the Perfect Human likewise misconstrue the nature of the divine self-disclosure on a cosmic scale with dire consequences. Continuing the passage above, he expounds:

فدرجات الحقّ ما هو العالم عليه ... والله غنيّ عن العالمين فلا يدخله تنكير والإله يدخله التنكير فيقال إله فاجعل بالك لما نهيتك عليه لتعلم الفرقان بين قولك الله وبين قولك إله فكثرت الآلهة في العالم لقبولها التنكير والله واحد معروف لا يجهل

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- 15 For studies of the Perfect Human in Ibn ‘Arabī’s thought, see Michel Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints: Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn ‘Arabī*, trans. Liadain Sherrard (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1993); and Gerald T. Elmore, *Islamic Sainthood in the Fullness of Time: Ibn al-‘Arabī’s Book of the Fabulous Gryphon* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).
- 16 See Mohammed Rustom, “Philosophical Sufism,” in *The Routledge Companion to Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Richard C. Taylor and Luis Xavier López-Farjeat (London: Routledge, 2016), 403–405; and William Chittick, “The Central Point: Qūnawī’s Role in the School of Ibn ‘Arabī,” *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi Society* 35 (2004), 38.
- 17 See William C. Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s Cosmology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 242; and idem, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-‘Arabī’s Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 33 ff.
- 18 See also Michael Sells’ discussion of Ibn ‘Arabī’s critique of dogmatism, rationalism, and all “static” modes of ontological inquiry in idem, *Mystical Languages of Unsayng* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), esp. 79, 83, 90–92, 97 ff. Sells frames the critique in terms of “binding” (*taqyīd*)—i.e., imagining the Real as fixed to any category or frame of reference.

The degrees of the Real are those upon which the universe is founded ... God (*Allāh*) is completely independent from the worlds and thus indefiniteness does not befall Him. Indefiniteness *does* befall the deity (*al-ilāh*)—for this reason, it is called a deity. Fix your mind on what we have told you in order that you may know the difference between saying “God” and saying “a deity.” Deities proliferate in the world since they admit indefiniteness, while God is one and always definite.¹⁹

Just as they mistake the Perfect Human’s individual acts for his entire spiritual state, these skeptics confuse a single facet of the divine self-disclosure for the Essence in and of Itself. Ibn ‘Arabī epitomizes his discussion of being, manifestation, and multiplicity in a concise linguistic analysis. Here, the difference between the grammatically definite God (*Allāh*) and the grammatically indefinite deity (*ilāh*) functions as a metonym that stands in for a deeper criticism of the Peripatetics and any others who would limit the Divine Essence to a single aspect of Its manifestation. For Ibn ‘Arabī, al-Fārābī’s attempt to provide philosophical justification for the existence of a (grammatically indefinite) deity in the world is a clear admission of his own ignorance and the shortcomings of his methods *ab initio*. Read in its context, therefore, Muḥyī al-Dīn’s critique of *The Virtuous City* implies a deep frustration with the fundamentals of Peripatetic methodologies whose very premises, he claims, obscure and distort how the Real becomes manifest in the world and embodied in the figure of the Perfect Human.

Sa’d al-Dīn scatters similar calumnies against the philosophers throughout his *Levels of Joy in the Fountains of Power* (*Kitāb Marātib al-qurra fī ‘uyūn al-qudra*). In the main body of this esoteric and often difficult text, Ḥamūya deploys a motif of three darknesses (*ẓulumāt*) to narrate a progression through interpenetrating ontological, temporal, and soteriological schemata.²⁰ Accord-

19 Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt* (SD), v.264.1–4.

20 As a whole, the *Levels of Joy* consists of a main body of text made up of fifteen sections, five appendices of varying length, and a conclusion. The main body deals primarily with the aforementioned three darknesses and emphasizes the reality of the resurrection. In broad strokes, the first appendix expounds upon the creation of Adam; the second treats topics related to sainthood and prophecy; the third explores issues related to authority and divine law; the fourth explains the truth of the divine message; the fifth relates forty *ḥadīths* on such issues as knowledge, purity, prayer, alms, fasting, etc.; and the conclusion outlines several divine sciences. See the text’s *fihrist* in Sa’d al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Kitāb Marātib al-qurra fī ‘uyūn al-qudra* (P), Princeton, Princeton University Library, Garrett Collection MS 3793Y, fols. 1^b–2^a.

Ḥamūya divides the primordial darknesses in the main body of the text according to a variety of classifications that span multiple ontological registers. The first darkness corresponds to light (*al-nūr*), the majesties of God’s face (*subūḥāt wajhihi*), the veil of the names

ing to Saʿd al-Dīn, humanity advances—both historically and in the present moment—through these three darknesses, guided by specific manifestations of God’s elect. As human beings traverse new levels of darkness, they are afforded access to higher truths regarding Reality and, in particular, the nature of the bodily resurrection. Not all individuals, however, are able to pass through all three stages. Ḥamūya singles out the philosophers for explicit and repeated censure, suggesting that despite their grandiose claims, their refusal to follow God’s elect in thought and action mires them in the depths of the first darkness. In a section of the text entitled “On the Unveiling of the First Darkness” (*Injilāʾ al-ẓulma al-ūlāʾ*), Saʿd al-Dīn expounds:

ومنهم من طفق في السير والطير على طريق الضير مستنداً إلى رأيه القابل وغفله
المائل فخطفته الطير وهوت به الريح من مكان سحيق ثم سلك مسلك الأوهام
العاطلة والقضايا الباطلة وستند ظهره إلى البراهين الزائدة والتماثيل الحائلة فرجع
خلياً عن اليقين مُقبِلاً على اليسار ومعرضاً عن اليمين راكباً على متون الظن
والتخمين ... وهو الحكيم الفلسفيّ النفسيّ ومن تابعه هو الخبيث العكسيّ

Among them is whoever rushes to walk (even fly!) down the path of wrongdoing, trusting in his fickle opinion and carelessness; the birds and winds from far away places snatch him up and sweep him away.²¹ He travels the path of vain imagination and null judgements, propping himself up on superfluous proofs and feeble analogies. Thus, he returns empty of certainty, drawing near to the left, turning away from the right, and riding upon the backs of opinion and conjecture ... This is the philosopher-sage [interested only in matters] of the carnal soul; whoever follows him is wicked and disobedient.²²

(*ḥijāb al-asmāʾ*), the veil of existence (*ḥijāb al-wujūd*), and the mosque of the spirit (*masjid al-rūḥ*); the second darkness corresponds to manifestation (*al-zuhūr*), the face (*al-wajh*), the veil of the attributes (*ḥijāb al-ṣifāt*), the veil of what is named (*ḥijāb al-musammā*), and the homeland of the body (*mawṭin al-jasad*); and the third corresponds to clarification (*al-wuḍūḥ*), the reality of the Divine Nature (*ḥijāb al-ḥaqīqa al-ulūhiyya*), the veil of natures (*ḥijāb al-akhlāq*), the veil of the Essence (*ḥijāb al-dhāt*), and the house of the heart (*bayt al-qalb*). See Figure 8 and Ḥamūya, *Marātib*, (P) fol. 3^a.

21 This may be an allusion to Q. 105:3—“He sent ranks of birds against them”—, a verse to which Ḥamūya devotes a short section in the *Lamp of Sufism*. See Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *al-Miṣbāḥ fi al-taṣawwuf*, ed. Najīb Māyil Hirawī (Tehran: Mawlā, 1983), 132–133.

22 Ḥamūya, *Marātib* (P), fols. 4^a.4–4^a.11. Due to errors in the Arabic text, I have collated the passage with idem, *Kitāb Marātib al-qurra fi ʿuyūn al-qudra* (DK), Cairo, Dār al-Kutub MS 2070, fols. 4^b.6–4^b.13.

Later in the *Levels of Joy*, Ḥamūya contrasts philosophers with enlightened individuals from the second darkness, writing:

فدخل أرباب العقول الصحيحة المرتبة الفارغة المتخلّصة عن الظلمة الأولى في
الظلمة الثانية فأدركوا حقيقة الآخرة وأدركوا الجنة والنار والنعم والحميم وعلموا نشأة
الآخرة حقّ والبعث حقّ والإعادة حقّ والحشر والنشور والإخراج حقّ من الله إلى
عبيده فلا بدّ لهم من ذلك فاقبلوا على الله الكريم بكلّيّتهم فتشبهتوا بديل متابعه نبيّهم
بسيرتهم وصورتهم حتّى علموا أن الظلمة الأولى قد أدبرت في عهد نبيّنا المصطفى
وذهبت بحجبها وطرحت بصورها على أهل الأهواء والبدع وأنّ الظلمة الثانية قد
أقبلت ودخل فيها الموحدون المجردون وأدركوا حقائق الآخرة وأحكامها موافقةً
لعقائدهم المأخوذة من صاحب الشريعة

...

والحكيم والفلسفيّ بمعزل عن هذه الأسرار ومصرّ على الإنكار... ومع هذا يزعم
أنّه على الحقّ مبين... واسترخص يبيع دينه بالظنّ والتخمين... أيّها الفاسق دع
عنك الفشار حسبك النار

...

علموا [أرباب العقول] أنّ الله تعالى أوجب على عباده في الدنيا أحكاماً وكلمات
وشيء من قبيل البليات والعقوبات مثل الحجّ والزكاة والصلاة والصوم والتلفظ
بكلمتي النفي والإثبات وإلى غير ذلك من أنواع العبادات... الحكيم الفلسفيّ
في ظلّ الظلمة الأولى متحيراً استخوذ عليه الشيطان وغضب عليه الرحمن عارٍ
عن الإيمان والعيان متمسّك بالبرهان ومتوجّه إلى علّة العلل المؤدّية إلى النيران

Those with sound intellects enter the level of freedom and liberation from the first darkness in the second darkness. They perceive the reality of the afterlife, as well as the garden, fire, blessings, and scalding water. They realize that the final creation is real, that the resurrection is real, that the return is real, and that the gathering, dispersing, and removal are real—this was sent from God to His servants, so it must be [true] for them. Thus, they devote themselves to noble God with their entire selves (*bi-kulliyatihim*). They hold fast to the skirts of following their prophet in what they do and how they appear (*bi-sīratihim wa-ṣūratihim*) until they

know [for sure] that the first darkness had withdrawn in the time of the prophet Muṣṭafā; it was sent off with its veils and cast in its forms upon the people of passion and heresy. They know also that the second darkness has come. The apophatic monotheists (*al-muwaḥḥidūn al-mujarridūn*) enter into it, perceiving that the reality of the afterlife and its rules are in accordance with their doctrines, which were taken from the master of the *sharīʿa*.²³

...

The philosopher-sage is far removed from these secrets and persistent in his denial ... Despite all this he lays claim to clear truth ... He sells his religion (*dīn*) like a cheap trinket, trading it for fancy and conjecture ... O sinner, give up your boasting for you deserve the fire!²⁴

...

[Those with sound intellects] know that God has imposed rules, words, and various trials and punishments upon His servants. These include the hajj, alms, prayer, fasting, negating and confirming, and other religious duties ... The philosopher-sage remains in the shadow of the first darkness. The devil spurs him on and he vexes the Merciful. Stripped of faith and true vision, he grasps at proofs and turns to the “cause of causes,” which drives him into the fire.²⁵

In these passages, Ḥamūya censures philosophers for their assertion that demonstrative proofs alone can give rise to anything but conjecture and opinion. Like Ibn ʿArabī, Ḥamūya’s critique of the philosophers pertains to fundamental questions of epistemology and method as much as it does issues of technical terminology and metaphysical minutiae. For Sa’d al-Dīn, true knowledge must *always* be accompanied by a complete devotion to the Real in accordance with the duties laid out by God and embodied most perfectly in the person of Muḥammad. These duties include not only beliefs and principles, but also specific ritual practices and modes of comportment. The philosophers err not only because they reject fundamental dogmas, but also because of how they carry themselves—or rather, how they choose *not* to carry themselves. Sa’d al-Dīn suggests, therefore, that passing through the levels of darkness and acquiring real knowledge about oneself and the world entails a personal transforma-

23 Ḥamūya, *Marātib*, (P) fols. 4^a.21–4^b.7; collated with (DK) fols. 4^b.4–4^b.13.

24 Ḥamūya, *Marātib*, (P) fols. 4^b.15–21; collated with (DK) fols. 5^a.5–5^a.11.

25 Ḥamūya, *Marātib*, (P) fols. 5^a.4–7 and 5^a.16–18; collated with (DK) fols. 5^a.15–5^b.2 and 5^b.10–12.

tion that is simultaneously epistemological and ontological, inseparable from modes of comportment explicitly linked to imitation of the Prophet Muḥammad.²⁶

These two Sufis are not identical in their critique of rational methodologies, however. Although Ibn ‘Arabī censures Peripatetic philosophers for their myopic approach to the Real and the Perfect Human, he makes room for their theories and methods within his epistemological framework. In the passage cited above, Ibn ‘Arabī does not argue that the philosophers’ claims are wholly divorced from Reality, only that they mistake a static image of a single point for the infinite complexity of a dynamic whole. When deployed within a holistic (read: Sufi) epistemological vision, the shaykh suggests that philosophical argument and speculation can be useful tools through which one may approach *particular* manifestations of the divine self-disclosure.²⁷ Ḥamūya, on the other hand, is fundamentally opposed to formal philosophical argument, framing the approach as the quintessential marker of the *falāsifa* as a social and intellectual group. At best, rationalist methodologies yield fanciful delusions unmoored from Reality; at worst, they cultivate ways of being fundamentally opposed to the attitudes, practices, and modes of comportment intrinsic to real knowledge. As we will see below, Ḥamūya’s own use of philosophical terminology and metaphysical structures is resolutely deconstructive—a direct challenge to the syllogistic reasoning upon which the *falāsifa* stake their authority.

If Ḥamūya and Ibn ‘Arabī reject rational methods as insufficient modes of producing and achieving ultimate knowledge, how then, we may ask, do they propose to communicate what they know to their readers? Moreover, what exactly is the character of the knowledge they aim to convey? As I will argue in the following sections of this chapter, a comparison of Ḥamūya and Ibn ‘Arabī’s work reveals a shared “relational” conception of the cosmos and analogous premises vis-à-vis the relationship between knowledge and action. For

26 Ibn ‘Arabī echoes the sentiment in his letter to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. He urges the *mutakallim* to take up the path of ascetic exercise (*riyāda*), inner struggle (*mujāhada*), and spiritual retreat (*khalwa*) to achieve knowledge of God, tracing these practices back to the Prophet Muḥammad. See Mohammad Rustom’s study and translation of the epistle in Mohammad Rustom, “Ibn ‘Arabī’s Letter to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī: A Study and Translation,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 25, no. 2 (2014): 113–137, esp. 132.

27 In Chapter 88 of *The Meccan Revelations* (“The Sources of Law”), for example, Ibn ‘Arabī upholds the value of speculative thought, especially with respect to confirming such fundamentals as God’s existence and unity. See Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, (SD) III.245 and *Revelations* I, 67.

Sa'd al-Dīn and Muḥyī al-Dīn, true knowledge is premised upon a distinct experience of the world rather than a dispassionate analysis of its constituent parts. In producing knowledge about the nature of being, the two Sufis do not organize their texts as stable caches to be mined for discrete facts about God and the cosmos. Instead, Ḥamūya and Ibn 'Arabī develop discursive strategies that demand active engagement, directing readers toward specific ways of imagining and inhabiting the worlds around them. While I have focused thus far on the ways in which the two Sufis critique methods they claim fall short of real knowledge, I turn my attention now to the science of letters (*'ilm al-ḥurūf*) as a primary strategy through which Sa'd al-Dīn and Muḥyī al-Dīn articulate their own ontological claims.²⁸

2 Ḥamūya and the *Ḥurūf*

An almost obsessive attention to letters is one of the most recurring and recognizable features of Ḥamūya's work. Although Sa'd al-Dīn's interests ran the gamut from Sufi devotion to the nature of being, most of his works frame the visual, sonic, and grammatical features of the Arabic language as ciphers for the fundamental secrets of the universe. In analyzing Sa'd al-Dīn's lettrist strategies, I offer a close reading of key passages that illuminate the shaykh's underlying epistemological commitments. I focus on how Sa'd al-Dīn exploits particular features of Arabic letters—shape, sound, feel, and semantic/allusive potential—to bring the hidden realities of the divine self-disclosure to the forefront of readers' experiences. By continually dismantling and recontextualizing

28 For studies of the science of letters in Islamic intellectual history, see Pierre Lory, *La science des lettres en islam* (Paris: Éditions Dervy, 2004); Denis Gril, "Introduction and Chapter Analysis for 'The Science of Letters,'" in *The Meccan Revelations, Volume 11*, by Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī (d. 1240), ed. Michel Chodkiewicz (New York: Pir Press, 2004), 127–147; Gerhard Böwering, "Sulami's Treatise on the Science of Letters (*'ilm al-ḥurūf*)," in *In the Shadow of Arabic: The Centrality of Language to Arabic Culture: Studies Presented to Ramzi Baalbaki on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. Bilal Orfali and Ramzi Baalbaki, *Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 339–398; Martin Nguyen, "Exegesis of the *ḥurūf al-muqatta'a*: Polyvalency in Sunni Traditions of Qur'anic Interpretation," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 14, no. 2 (2012): 1–28; Michael Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy in al-Andalus: Ibn Masarra, Ibn al-'Arabī and the Ismā'īlī Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 77–122; Noah Daedalus Gardiner, "Esotericism in a manuscript culture: Aḥmad al-Būnī and his readers through the Mamlūk period" (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 2014), 166–185; and Matthew S. Melvin-Koushki, "The Quest for a Universal Science: The Occult Philosophy of Ṣā'in al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī (1369–1432) and Intellectual Millenarianism in Early Timurid Iran" (PhD dissertation, Yale University, 2012), 171–216.

letters and their referents, Ḥamūya's performative strategies resist any and all hermeneutical fixity. The experience of Reality that he provokes is a dynamic play of forces whose qualities and boundaries are endlessly reconfigured (and reconfigurable). In light of these deconstructive tendencies, I focus my discussion on passages with an overarching thematic unity in order to maintain a sense of analytical clarity.

In *The Realities of the Letters* (*Ḥaḳā'iq al-ḥurūf*), Sa'd al-Dīn outlines a complex process through which the Real—referred to as the Point (*nuḳṭa*)—becomes manifest in the world. As the Point unfolds, It projects Its Reality through a series of triads:

- (i) the Holy Spirit (*rūḥ al-quddūs*), the Spirit of God (*rūḥ Allāh*), and the Faithful Spirit (*rūḥ al-amīn*)
- (ii) the Existing Soul (*naḥs-i wājida*), the Single Soul (*naḥs-i wāhida*), and the Seizing Soul (*naḥs-i wākhida*)
- (iii) prophecy (*nubuwwa*), sainthood (*wilāya*), and divinity (*ilāhiyya*)
- (iv) seeing (*baṣr*), hearing (*sam'*), and knowing (*'ilm*)²⁹

These triplicate projections of the Point, Ḥamūya continues, merge to form a single principle, which he calls the Divinity (*ilāhiyya*) and the letter *alif*. To illustrate how Divinity/*alif* gives rise to a multiplicity of created beings, the *Realities* outlines two modes of disclosure:

- (i) Divinity (*alif*) projects its being through the Blown Spirit (the letter *bā'*) out of which the Intellect (the letter *tā'*) emerges. The Intellect, in turn, gives rise to Adam as the letter *thā'*, whose three dots represent the triplicate principles that make up the divine *alif* (Figure 1).³⁰
- (ii) Divinity projects its being according to a series of tetrads. Out of *alif*, *lām*, *lām*, and *hā'*—the four letters of the name Allāh—the Heart (*qalb*), Intellect (*'aql*), Spirit (*rūḥ*), and Soul (*naḥs*) emerge. From this tetrad, Ḥamūya forges chains of being that trace each principle across macrocosmic, microcosmic, angelic, ritual, and sacred-historical registers (Figure 2).³¹

Despite minor variations (Figures 3 and 4), Ḥamūya outlines similar frameworks in *The Book of the Point* (*Kitāb al-Nuḳṭa*) and *The Lamp of Sufism*. Rather than attempting to harmonize the ways in which each of these texts diverge, I direct my attention here to an analysis of the fundamental lettrist metaphor

29 Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Ḥaḳā'iq al-ḥurūf*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, MS Petrev Paşa 606 (P), fol. 13^b.

30 Ḥamūya, *Ḥaḳā'iq*, (P) fols. 13^b–14^a.

31 Ḥamūya, *Ḥaḳā'iq*, (P) fols. 15^a–18^a.

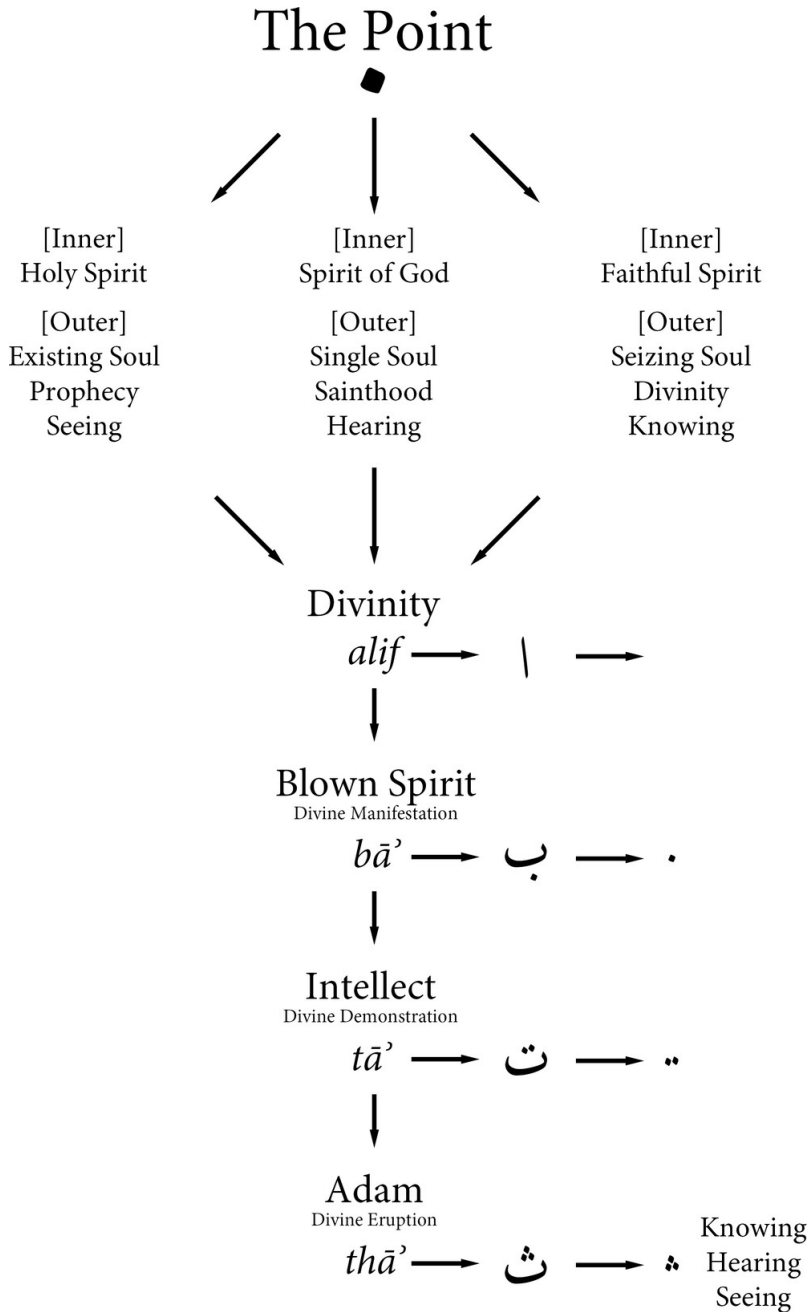


FIGURE 1 Tripartite projection of the Point and linear projection of Divinity as outlined in *The Realities of the Letters*
ḤAQĀ'IQ AL-ḤURŪF

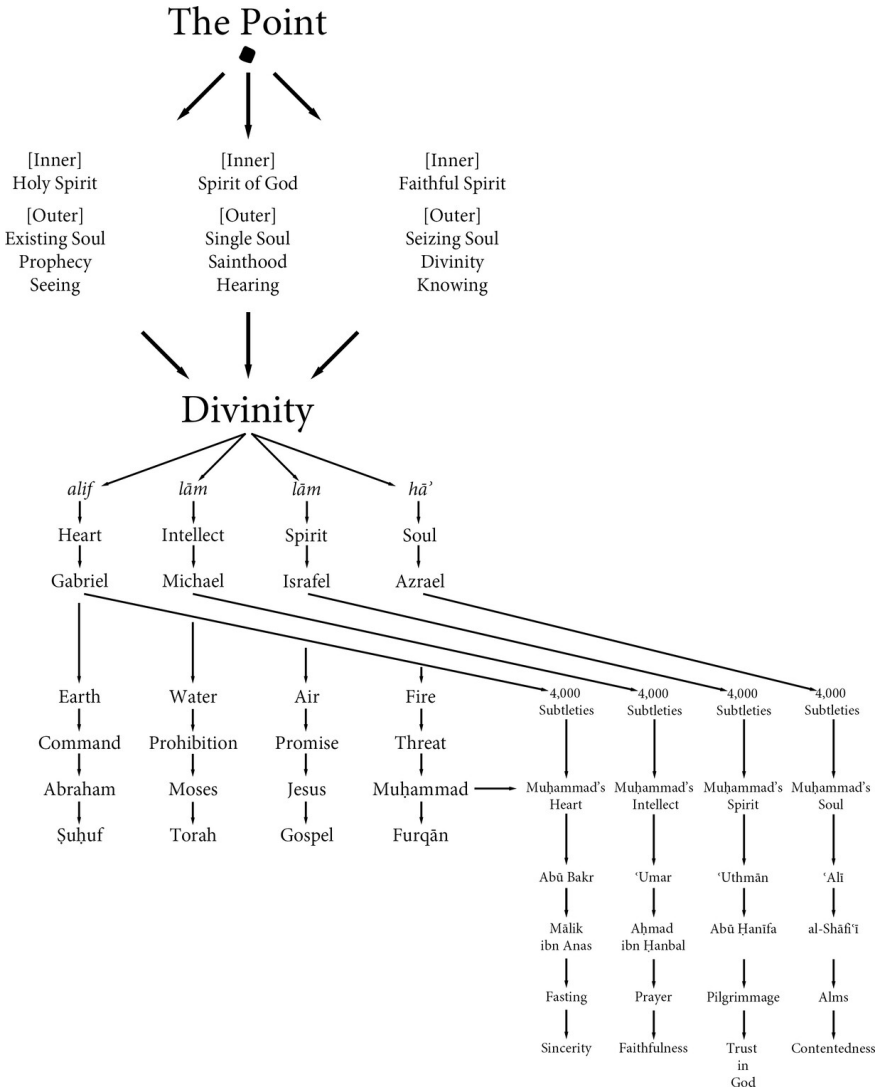


FIGURE 2 Tripartite projection of the Point and fourfold emanation of Divinity as outlined in *The Realities of the Letters*

Note: For the purposes of visual clarity, I have streamlined Ḥamūya’s schemes, omitting several levels of reality and simplifying others. I have left aside, for example, Sa’d al-Dīn’s discussion of the four elements and the formation of the mineral, plant, and animal kingdoms. Likewise, I have diagrammed the realities below Muḥammad as if each stems from a particular aspect of his being. Though Sa’d al-Dīn does not make this connection explicitly, I believe the context and general structure of the scheme justifies such an interpretation.

ḤAQĀ’IQ AL-ḤURŪF

The Point



[----- Alif in the Rank of *Lāhūt* -----]

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| i.
The Black Point of the Essence
(<i>al-nuqṭa al-aṣliyya al-sawādiyya</i> ;
<i>al-nuqṭa al-dhātiyya</i>) | ii.
The White Point of the Attributes
(<i>al-nuqṭa al-bayādiyya</i>
<i>al-ṣifātiyya</i>) | iii.
The Red Point of Dispositions
(<i>al-nuqṭa al-aḥmariyya</i>
<i>al-khalqīyya</i>) |
|--|---|--|

[----- Alif in the Rank of *Malakūt* -----]

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| i.
The Holy Spirit
(<i>rūḥ al-quddus</i>) | ii.
The Spirit of God
(<i>rūḥ Allāh</i>) | iii.
The Faithful Spirit
(<i>rūḥ al-amīn</i>) |
|---|--|---|

[----- Alif in the Rank of *Mulk*-----]

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| i.
Hearing
(<i>al-sam'</i>) | ii.
Seeing
(<i>al-baṣar</i>) | iii.
Knowing
(<i>al-'ilm</i>) |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|

FIGURE 3 Tripartite manifestation of the Point as outlined in *The Book of the Point*. The *Lamp of Sufism* (*al-Miṣbāḥ fī al-taṣawwuf*) presents a similar scheme, though it does not label each rank according to *lāhūt*, *malakūt*, and *mulk*.

KITĀB AL-NUQṬA

common to all three.³² By illustrating creation in terms of written linguistic phenomena, Ḥamūya articulates a sophisticated relational understanding of the Divine Essence and the cosmos; one with profound implications for the production and reception of knowledge as he understands it.

Sa'd al-Dīn's metaphor of the point and the letters operates according to two primary registers, both of which are grounded in the principles of Arabic and

32 In using the term metaphor, I do not wish to suggest that Ḥamūya's lettrist ontological scheme is "merely" rhetorical or allegorical; his relational understanding of both knowledge and being obviates the premises of such a distinction. Instead, I analyze Ḥamūya's work through the lens of metaphor as a way of illuminating how his attention to the allusive potential of language underscores fundamental ontological and epistemological claims. Here, I take methodological inspiration from the work of Hans Blumenberg. See, for example, idem, *Paradigms for a Metaphorology*, trans. Robert Savage (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010) and idem, *Shipwreck with Spectator: Paradigm of a Metaphor for Existence*, trans. Steven Rendall (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1997).

The Four Pillars of *Alif*

Form (*ṣūrat*)

- i. The relationship (*munāsabat*) between *alif*'s beginning and its end; between its manifest and hidden aspects
 - ii. Form is cloaked with hopeful envy (*ḥasad*)
- iii. The inner reality of form is the *mulk* of eternity (*mulk-i ṣāmadiyyat*)
 - iv. Form's secret (*sirr*) is within earth (*turāb*)
 - v. The inner reality of earth is heart (*qalb*)
 - vi. The heart is linked to Gabriel

Likeness (*shakl*)

- i. *Alif*'s apparent (*paydā*) aspects
 - ii. Likeness is cloaked with haughtiness (*kibr*)
- iii. The inner reality of likeness is the *mulk* of unity (*mulk-i waḥdat*)
 - iv. Likeness' secret (*sirr*) is within fire (*nār*)
 - v. The inner reality of fire is soul (*nafs*)
 - vi. The soul is linked to Azrael

Shape (*hay'at*)

- i. *Alif*'s uprightness (*istiḳāmat*)
 - ii. Shape is cloaked with hopeful desire (*amal*)
- iii. The inner reality of shape is the *mulk* of individuality (*mulk-i fardiyyat*)
 - iv. Likeness' secret (*sirr*) is within air (*hawā'*)
 - v. The inner reality of air is spirit (*rūḥ*)
 - vi. The spirit is linked to Israfael

Model (*mithāl*)

- i. That which maintains between one *alif* and another
 - ii. Model is cloaked with greed (*ḥirṣ*)
- iii. The inner reality of model is the *mulk* of transcendence and sanctification (*mulk-i tanzih wa taqdīs*)
 - iv. Model's secret (*sirr*) is within water (*mā'*)
 - v. The inner reality of water is intellect (*'aql*)
 - vi. The intellect is linked to Michael

FIGURE 4 Four pillars of *alif* (abridged) as outlined in *The Lamp of Sufism*
 AL-MIṢBĀḤ FĪ AL-TAṢAWWUF

Persian writing. We catch a glimpse of Ḥamūya's first metaphorical register in his discussion of primordial projection of the Point. In *The Lamp of Sufism*, he explains:

ونقطه حقیقی اصلی یکی است و اینها که گفته شد مراتب او اند و محلّ ظهور نور
حضور وی اند و اوست که بصنوف حروف در می آید از برای کشف اول مظهر
او در حروف الف است

The original, true Point is one. Those [triplicities] that have been mentioned are ranks of [that Point]—the locus for the light of Its presence to become manifest. By means of disclosures, [the Point] comes to be in the varieties of the letters. The first place of its manifestation is in the letter *alif*.³³

Here, Ḥamūya's discussion of the Real Point, Its triplicate projections, and Its manifestation in the form of the divine *alif* resonates with Neopythagorean theories, yet textures these processes through sustained allusions to the physical process of writing (Figure 5).³⁴ In medieval Arabic scripts, the point is foundational, yet never exists by itself. Instead, it becomes manifest only through the act of producing and differentiating letters.³⁵ Through an act of extension, the initial point of the nib pressing down on the page is drawn out into a line—that is, the *alif*.³⁶ Following Sa'd al-Dīn, we may imagine that in moving from point to line, the point is not multiplied but rather expanded or projected, such that its hidden attributes or ranks become discernible in the line. As an extended line, the *alif* then forms the foundation for all other written letters as it is twisted, bent, looped, and curved into their shapes. While each act of writing begins with a single point, the point itself only becomes visible when the pen is set in motion; not as point *qua* point, but rather as an extension of its latent qualities.

33 Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 58.

34 For a brief summary of the Neopythagorean conception of the one and the numbers, see Cyril V. Uy II, "Introduction to Epistle 49," in *On God and the World: An Arabic Critical Edition and English Translation of Epistles 49–51*, by Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' (Oxford: Oxford University Press in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2019), 8–9.

35 This, of course, excludes the various technical symbols used to organize manuscripts and to produce figures and diagrams.

36 See also Gril's notes on Ibn 'Arabī and the *alif* in *Revelations II*—passage on 158, note on 203, n. 199.

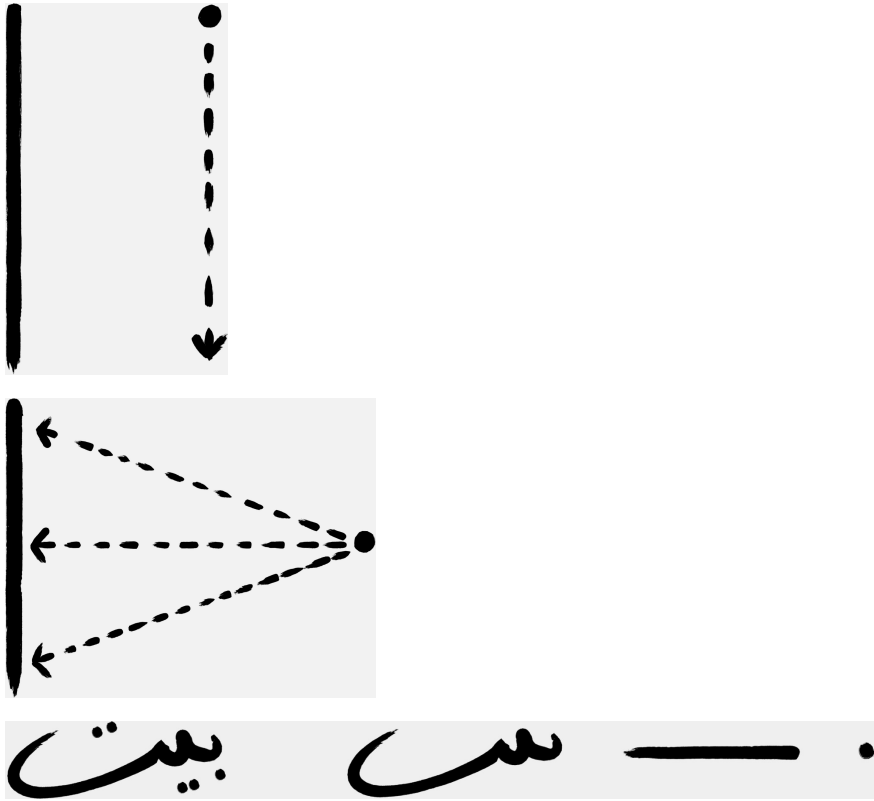


FIGURE 5 Illustrations of the movement from the point to the line; the manifestation of the point's levels in the line; and the relationship between the point, the line, and the letters

In the second register of Ḥamūya's metaphor, the point is used as a means to differentiate between letters. Again in *The Lamp of Sufism*, Sa'd al-Dīn reveals:

پس الف مرکّب باشد از اعراب که آن اختلاف آخر کلمه است به رفع و نصب و
خفض و از نقطه که آن موجب است تمییز را بعضی از بعضی و حرفی از حرفی ...

[The *alif*] is composed of the *ī'rāb*—i.e., marking difference at the end of a word according to the nominative, accusative, and genitive case—and the point, which distinguishes between some things and others as well as between some letters and others ...³⁷

37 Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāh*, 135.

Ḥamūya's understanding of the point as a principle of differentiation likewise operates according to the logic of written language. Without the point, the Arabic letterforms cannot be distinguished from one another; without the letterforms, one has no occasion to draw the differentiating point.³⁸ In this context, the point *qua* point always stands outside of the letterforms, yet its varying spatial relationships with their shapes allows them to be distinguished from one another. While Sa'd al-Dīn only offers brief accounts of this metaphorical register, its logic illuminates important aspects of his ontological and epistemological vision, as we will see below.

Finally, Sa'd al-Dīn expands his linguistic-ontological framework beyond the point and the *alif*, characterizing the multiplicity of the cosmos as a proliferation of written words. He explains:

فی الجمله نقطه به الف درآمد و الف بمراتب حروف درآمد و حروف کلمات
گشت و کلمات کلام شد و کلام صحف و طومار گشت و این مجموع آینه
صفات گشتند و صفات مشکات انوار اسرار ذات شدند و از کثرت روی به
وحدت نهادند و از تفرقه بجمعیت رسیدند

In sum, the point enters into the *alif* and the *alif* enters into the ranks of letters. The letters become words and the words become a book and pages. This totality becomes a mirror for the Attributes, the Attributes themselves being niches for the lights of the Essence's secrets. From multiplicity they turn towards unity, and from dispersion they reach wholeness.³⁹

Read as a whole, Ḥamūya's metaphor of written language illuminates complex and often contradictory character of the divine self-disclosure. While the Real forms the foundation of all being, Its Attributes can only be recognized through acts of extension and transformation that magnify, warp, or otherwise distort as they reveal. At the same time, the Real is known through distance, difference, and separation. Just as letters are distinguished by their spatial relationships with the point, so too are beings identified through their relationships with the Real; marked as entities by the very fact of their separation and differentiated according to the specific relationships they reflect.

38 Here, I bracket various forms of writing that deliberately avoid the use of points for effect.
39 Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 136.

If we follow the implications of Ḥamūya's metaphor beyond his explicit comments, a relational ontological and epistemological framework emerges. Sa'd al-Dīn characterizes the entirety of the universe—from the highest metaphysical principles to the lowest terrestrial creatures—as an infinite collection of letters and words. To understand the meaning of any entity, the metaphor suggests, one must “read” it in the context of other beings. Taken on their own, letters—and thus entities—only become intelligible when brought together and inflected to form words. These words, in turn, are capable of expressing a rich range of meanings— affective, conceptual, abstract, sensible—as they are fashioned into sentences, passages of prose, and couplets of poetry. As the same letters and words are brought together in new relationships, new layers of meaning emerge. Finally, the totality of these diverse meanings are integrated into the pages of a single universal text. Such a framework demands a dynamic approach to the knowledge of individual entities and metaphysical structures; an “ontological fluency” familiar with the infinite language games of cosmic discourse.

In his more advanced lettrist discussions, Ḥamūya uses performative strategies to bewilder his readers, pulling any sense of conceptual stability out from under them. Meaning, these strategies suggest, arises only from relationships between entities and these relationships are *always* in flux. To illustrate how Ḥamūya performs the vertiginous experience of divine self-disclosure, I will focus on a rather lengthy excerpt from *The Lamp of Sufism*. In what follows, Sa'd al-Dīn deploys an extended lettrist meditation on the letter *kāf* to explore how the Real becomes hidden by the very mechanisms that make It manifest. He explains:

(۱) و بسط نور الله ظهور كلمه فالله اصل الله از ﴿إِنِّي أَنَا﴾ باشد و ﴿إِنِّي أَنَا اللهُ﴾ (القصص ۳۰؛ طه ۱۴) سه الف است و دو نون سه الف اشارت است به استوی و احاطت و ارادت و آن دو نون اشارت به دو نفس و آن نبوت است و ولایت و نبوت صورت قوت است و ولایت مظهر قدرت و به قوت فتح دایره ملکوتی می کند و به قدرت فتح دایره جبروتی و اشخاص دایره ملکوتی ابراراند و اشخاص دایره جبروتی اشرار و ابرار از طرف معروفات و اشرار از طرف منکورات [اند] و هر نفسی را از این ساقی و شهیدی همراه است و سابق همه نبی است و شهید ولی چنان که می فرماید ﴿کلّ نفس معها سائق وشهید﴾ (ق ۲۱) آن سه الف ﴿إِنِّي أَنَا﴾ محتجب اند به حرف کاف و کاف کسوت ﴿کن﴾ کلّ کون کلّ کلمه انسانی است

(۲) و هر الف از آن مرکب است از سه نقطه و آن سمع است و بصر و نطق و روح الله و روح القدس و روح الامین [و] 40 واحده و واجده و واخذه و اماره و لوامه و مطمئننه [و] علم یقین و عین یقین و حق یقین و نبوت و ولایت و الهیت و آدم و حوا و اولاد و شمس و قمر و کواکب و بحر و نهر و عین و ذات و صفات و اسماء

(۳) کاف کسوت این کلیات است اما کون کاف وقتی روشن شود که کاف کفر به کاف فکر برخیزد و کشف گردد و ظهور کنز مخفی از کاف کنت به کن پدید آید جمله مکونات در کاف ممکن است و متکون ظاهراً و باطناً و سرّاً و جهراً کاف صورت شیخوختی الف است و سه نقطه گشته است شاخ الف و صار کافاً پس به حقیقت مخزن کنز مخفی کاف است

(۴) و کاف کلمه کون حق است و الف کاف احدیت است و فاء فردیت است و فوقیت و قاف و کاف عرض بلد کرار [است] که شیطب و قسطب گویند و هر دو یک معنی دارد

(۵) پس قاف قدرت و قوت کاف است و قرار مکین و قول مبین و کیمیای سعادت ابدی و اقبال سرمدی هم در وی است کمال کلی و کفایت جزوی و کبریای کبیر و کنه اشیا و کرور نعمت و کرم جمله از اوست و کشف ستور [نیز از اوست] چنان که می فرماید اِنَّ فِي جوفِ ابنِ آدمٍ لمضغَةٌ إذا صلحت صلح سائر البدن و إذا فسدت فسدت سائر البدن ألا وهي القلب

(i) The unfurling of God's light is the manifestation of the words "So, God ..." (*fa-Llāh*). The word "God" stems from "Verily, I am." "Verily, I am God" (Q. 28:30; 20:14) has three *alifs* and two *nūns*. The three *alifs* are tokens of mounting (*istiwā*), encompassing (*iḥāṭat*), and volition (*irādat*), while the two *nūns* are tokens of the two souls (*naḥs*)—i.e., prophecy and sainthood.⁴¹ Prophecy is the form of power (*quwwat*) and sainthood is the locus where potency (*qudrat*) becomes manifest. The circle of *malakūt* is opened with power and the circle of *jabarūt* is opened with potency. The individuals in the circle of *malakūt* are the righteous and those in the circle of *jabarūt* are the wicked. The righteous stem from

40 The interpolated conjunctive *wāws* in this paragraph are my own additions.

41 I translate *istiwā* as "mounting" here, since Ḥamūya usually uses the term with reference to the Qur'anic verses in which God mounts the throne. See, for example, Q. 25:59.

the side of what is known (*ma'rūfāt*) and the wicked stem from the side of what is denied (*mankūrāt*). Each of these souls will have a driver and witness—the driver is the prophet and the witness is the saint—just as He says, “Each soul will have a driver and a witness.” (Q. 50:21) The three *alifs* of “Verily, I am” are veiled by the letter *kāf*. For all of existence, the *kāf* of the garment “Be!” is the word of the human being.

(ii) Each of those *alifs* is composed of three points. These are: hearing, seeing, and speaking; the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, and the Faithful Spirit; the singular, seizing, and existing [soul]; the commanding [soul], accusing [soul], and the [soul] at rest; the knowledge of certainty, the essence of certainty, and the truth of certainty; prophecy, sainthood, and divinity; Adam, Eve, and [their] children; the sun, the moon, and the planets; the sea, the river, and the fountain; and the essence, the attributes, and the names.

(iii) *Kāf* is the garment (*kiswat*) of these universals (*kullīyyāt*). However, when the existence of *kāf* (*kawn-i kāf*) becomes evident, the *kāf* of unbelief (*kāf-i kufr*) rises up to the *kāf* of contemplation (*kāf-i fikr*) and becomes unveiling (*kashf gardad*). The appearance of the hidden treasure (*kanz-i makhfi*) becomes manifest on account of *kāf*'s shift from “I was” (*kuntu*) to “Be!” (*kun*). In *kāf*, the totality of generated beings (*mukawwanāt*) is contingent (*mumkin*) and brought into being (*mutakawwan*) in a way that is manifest and hidden, secret and open. *Kāf* is thus the form of *alif*'s shaykhliness (*shaykhūkhīyyat*)—i.e., when it has become three dots (*sih nuqta gashta ast*). “When the *alif* reaches full maturity (*shākha*), it becomes *kāf*.” So, in reality, the storehouse of the hidden treasure (*ba-ḥaqīqat makhzan-i kanz-i makhfi*) is *kāf*.

(iv) The *kāf* of the word [*kāf*] (*kāf-i kalimat*) is the being of the Real (*kawn-i haqq*). The *alif* of *kāf* is unity (*aḥadīyyat*). Its *fū*' is uniqueness (*fardīyyat*) and supremacy (*fawqīyyat*), and *qāf* and *kāf* are the latitude lines of the tiny bead (*'ard-i balad-i karār*). These are called Shayṭab and Qaşṭab, for each of the two have a single meaning.

(v) So, the *qāf* of potency and power (*qudrat wa-quwwat*) is *kāf* and the firm dwelling (*qarār-i makīn*), the clear speech (*qawl-i mubīn*), the alchemy of happiness eternal (*kīmīyā-yi sa'ādat-i abadī*), and the endless arrival (*iqbāl-i sarmadī*) are all within it. The universal perfection (*kamāl-i kullī*), particular sufficiency (*kaḥāyat-i juz'ī*), magnificent grandeur (*kib-rīyā-yi kabūr*), the core of things (*kunh-i ash'yā'*), the return of grace (*karūr-i ni'mat*), and the nobility of the whole (*karm-i jumlat*) come from [*kāf*], as does the removal of covers (*kashf-i sutūr*). This is just as [the Prophet] said, “Within the son of Adam is a morsel of flesh (*muḍgha*); when it is

sound, so is the rest of the body, and when it is corrupt, so is the rest of the body. Certainly, this [morsel] is the heart (*al-qalb*).⁴²

As noted above, the passage as a whole outlines the simultaneous manifestation and concealment of the Real as It unfolds into the world and marks the special role of the human being in this divine self-disclosure. The opening paragraph likewise offers an extended aside into the nature of prophecy and sainthood, positing the two as primordial principles linking Divine Attributes (mounting, encompassing, and volition), higher ontological realms (*malakūt* and *jabarūt*), and the salvation of individual souls (drivers and witnesses for the righteous and the wicked).⁴³ While the themes of prophecy and sainthood will be analyzed in depth in Chapter 5, it is important to note here that even Ḥamūya's most abstract cosmogonies are inextricable from questions of soteriology and human perfection. Rather than disciplining this passage into a coherent narrative, situating its technical terminology within an overarching metaphysical framework, or distilling its elements into a series of dogmatic assertions, I will concentrate in what follows on Ḥamūya's use of sound, citation, and allusion as critical features of his textual performance.

As he explores the tension between the manifest and the hidden, Sa'd al-Dīn manipulates *kāf* as a sound, repeating and reorienting the letter *qua* name (*kāf*) and the letter *qua* phoneme ([k]) in diverse permutations. As we work through paragraph 3, for example, we hear *kāf kiswat-i ʾin kullīyyat, kaw-n-i kāf, ki kāf-i kufr, kāf-i fikr, kashf, kanz, kāf-i kuntu, kun*. The same paragraph finds Ḥamūya drifting between *kāf* and neighboring palatals *khāʾ, gāʾ*, and *qāf*, presenting readers with *kashf gardad, kanz-i makhfī, shaykhūkhīyyat, nuqṭa gashta, shākha*, and finally *ba-ḥaḥīqat makhzan-i kanz-i makhfī*. (We should also point out the nuanced sonic and visual play between *kāf* and *gāf*, whose written forms were typically indistinguishable in medieval scripts.⁴⁴) In paragraph 4, he breaks *kāf* into its constituent parts—that is, *kāf, alif*, and *fāʾ*—, associating each of these letters with specific Divine Attributes.⁴⁵ The letter *qāf* in the Attribute of supremacy (*fawqīyyat*) inspires another series of shifting

42 Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 81–82.

43 For more on *malakūt* and *jabarūt*, see note 75 on p. 63.

44 I thank Oludamini Ogunnaike for this insight. We might also note that Ḥamūya's use of *kāf* and *gāf* here inverts the kind of sonic and visual play enacted by Derrida's term "différance". See Jacques Derrida, "Différance," in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass, Reprint edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 1–28.

45 For the technique of breaking apart words into constituent letters as a hermeneutical strategy in Muslim and Jewish exegetical texts, see Sara Sviri, "Kun—The Existence-Bestowing Word in Islamic Mysticism: A Survey of Texts on the Creative Power of

palatals in paragraph 5: *qāf*, *qudrat*, *quwwat*, *kāf*, *qarār-i makīn*, *qawl*, *kīmīyāʿ*, *iqbāl*, *kamāl*, *kafāya*, *kibrāya*, *kunh*, *karūr*, *karm*, *kashf*, *qalb*. Recited *clara voce*, the constant repetition of *kāf*, its constituent parts, and adjacent palatal consonants allows readers to hear and feel how cosmic principles are continually broken apart, transmuted, reoriented, and refashioned in new contexts through the divine self-disclosure.

Ḥamūya couples this sonic play with myriad allusions and citations. Apart from clear references to the Qurʾānic verse “Verily, I am God” (Q. 28:30), paragraphs 1 and 3 allude to the passages in which God creates through speech—that is, “He says ‘Be,’ and it is” (e.g., Q. 2:117, 3:47, 3:59, 6:73, 14:60). Paragraph 3 likewise includes an allusion to the hidden treasure *ḥadīth*, a favorite among medieval Sufis. As the letter *kāf* moves from the word *kuntu* (“I was”) to the word *kun* (“Be!”), the hidden treasure—i.e., the Real—becomes manifest, albeit cloaked in the garment (*kiswat*) of creation and, ultimately, the letter *kāf* itself.⁴⁶ On the one hand, Ḥamūya’s citation adds an affective dimension to the divine self-disclosure (“I was an unknown treasure, yet *longed* to be known”), encouraging readers to understand the play of manifestation and concealment through the drama of emotional experience. On the other, the shaykh’s Qurʾānic allusions intimate a link between readers’ own voices (here, repeating the letter *kāf*) and the divine speech (*kun*) through which the entire cosmos is brought into being.

Sa’d al-Dīn textures his discussion with allusions to concepts from outside the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth* corpora as well. Paragraph 3, for example, expands Ḥamūya’s triplicate projections of the point while also drawing upon such philosophical terminology as universals (*kulliyāt*), generated creatures (sing. *mukawwan*), and contingent beings (sing. *mumkin*).⁴⁷ The shaykh sprinkles the passage as a whole with an array of obscure concepts and technical terms—

Language,” in *The Poetics of Grammar and the Metaphysics of Sound and Sign*, ed. David Shulman and Sergio La Porta (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 48–49.

46 The hidden treasure *ḥadīth* is widely attested in Sufi works, yet absent from major *ḥadīth* collections. The *ḥadīth* is commonly formulated as follows: “I was an unknown treasure, yet longed to be known.” See also Ibn ‘Arabī’s citation in Ibn ‘Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, ed. Abū al-‘Alā ‘Afīfī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, n.d.), 203; and idem, *Ibn al-‘Arabī: The Bezels of Wisdom*, trans. R.W.J. Austin (Mahwah: Paulist, 1980), 257. According to Moeen Afnani, the oldest attestation of the *ḥadīth* can be found in ‘Abd Allāh Anṣārī’s (d. 1089) *Generations of the Sufis (Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya)*. See Moeen Afnani, “Unraveling the Mystery of the Hidden Treasure: The Origin and Development of a Ḥadīth Qudṣī and Its Application in Ṣūfī Doctrine” (PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2011), 10.

47 The triplicate projections of the point outlined in the *Miṣbāḥ* most closely resemble the scheme presented in *The Book of the Point (Kitāb al-Nuqṭa)*. See Figure 3 and Sa’d

malakūt and *jabarūt*, the maturation and visual transformation of the letter *alif*, Shayṭab and Qaştab, universal perfection and particular sufficiency—, many of which are mentioned, but never fully explained. Finally, paragraph 5 includes a brief reference to al-Ghazālī's (d. 1111) *Alchemy of Happiness* (*Kīmīyā-yi sa'ādat*), whose opening chapters probe the nature of the human heart.⁴⁸ Here, the microcosmic heart mirrors the macrocosmic *kāf* as a storehouse for the entirety of the Divine Attributes. As in paragraph 1, Sa'd al-Dīn emphasizes the human being as the focal point of creation, the nexus through which cosmic processes (and lettrist strategies) intersect. Ḥamūya underscores this intertextual allusion with a *ḥadīth* outlining role of the heart in the body, deploying the citation as a way to propel his readers toward his a sustained discussion of the heart in the following section of the text.

While it is clear that Ḥamūya's discussion outlines a general progression from unity to multiplicity, the knowledge he produces about the nature of being is not of a systematic or logical quality. One could, of course, stabilize elements of the passage to construct a general metaphysical scaffolding, colating this conceptual edifice with comments scattered throughout *The Lamp of Sufism* and other texts to discern particular patterns of cosmogenesis. Inconsistencies could be glossed, concepts explained, and technical terms defined to clarify and illuminate the features of "Ḥamūya's metaphysical system." Sa'd al-Dīn's textual strategies, however, belie an epistemological position that defines itself *against* such system building. Instead, these modes of exposition offer readers an experiential knowledge of how the Real becomes manifest in the world through a textual performance of a limitless divine self-disclosure. By coupling a dynamic set of aural transformations with an array of fleeting scriptural, intertextual, and technical allusions, Ḥamūya effectively pulls the reader in several directions at once. Each word in the passage analyzed above offers a world of interpretive possibilities, presenting itself as a potential site for excursus, innuendo, or lettrist transmutation *ad infinitum*. At the same time, by spinning these shifting forms and associations around a single set of symbols and sensations, Ḥamūya balances the experience of dynamic transformation with a sense of sonic, visual, and corporeal-experiential unity.

Occasionally, Ḥamūya *does* seem to operate in a systematic manner. Despite a few modifications within and across texts, he offers a fairly consistent development of the cosmogonic framework centered around triplicate projections

al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Kitāb al-Nuṣṣa*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehid Ali Paşa MS 1364, fols. 76^b–77^a.

48 Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī, *Kīmīyā-yi sa'ādat*, ed. Ḥusayn Khidīw-Jam, 2 vols. (Tehran: Shari-kat-i Intishārāt-i 'Ilmī wa Farhangī, 2001), 15 ff.

of the Point. Likewise, such treatises as *The Epistle on the Explanation of the Expansion of Absolute Existence Upon the Sites of Manifestation of the Existing Beings* (*Risāla fī bayān inbisāṭ al-wujūd al-muṭlaq ‘alā maẓāhir al-kā’ināt*) define and explain key metaphysical concepts in a methodical and fairly straightforward fashion (Figure 6).⁴⁹

If we work across or even within single texts, however, it becomes clear that Sa’d al-Dīn’s ostensibly systematic metaphysical arguments almost always entail the possibility of transformation or abrogation.⁵⁰ We have already noted the two incommensurable mechanisms through which Divinity is said to unfold in *The Realities of the Letters* (see Figures 1 and 2). The same text includes yet another framework in which Divinity is bifurcated according to its higher and lower aspects, incorporating elements from previous schemes with little concern for harmonizing discrepancies (Figure 7). Moving between treatises, these differences can be even more jarring—*The Levels of Joy* and *The Book of the Beloved* do away with projections of the point altogether, outlining ontological hierarchies founded upon systems of overlapping darknesses and concentric letterist circles, respectively (see Figures 8 and 9).⁵¹

Even technical terms are subject to revision and reinterpretation. In the *Lamp of Sufism*, for example, Ḥamūya divides the divine *alif* according to four pillars (sing. *rukṅ*, pl. *arkān*)—form (*ṣūrat*), likeness (*shakl*), shape (*hay’at*), and model (*mithāl*)—which he then maps according to a fourfold schema similar to the ones we have already encountered (Figure 4).⁵² Here, Sa’d al-Dīn suggests, the four pillars stand on equal ontological footing, serving as the foundation for several other fourfold principles. *The Levels of Joy* weaves these same pillars into a new framework, developing a complex understanding of affinity rooted in notions of relation (*nisba*), relationship (*munāsaba*), and relation-

49 Sa’d al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Risāla fī bayān inbisāṭ al-wujūd al-muṭlaq ‘alā maẓāhir al-kā’ināt*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, MS Hacı Selim Ağa 491, fols. 1^b–3^b.

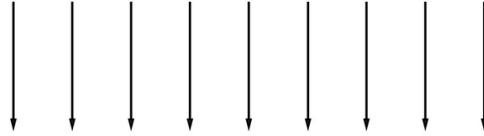
50 My point here is *not* that the “content” of Ḥamūya’s statements is completely irrelevant, nor is it that he never revised particular ideas or concepts over the course of his life. Rather, as I outline in the Introduction, my goal is to foreground and analyze a fundamental (and consistent) approach to knowledge that suffuses Ḥamūya’s writing.

51 While some of the principles associated with the three darknesses in *The Levels of Joy* resemble the triplicate projections of the point outlined in *The Book of the Point*, there are several inconsistencies between the two schemes that resist easy harmonization. *The Book of the Point* groups Essence (*dhāt*), Attributes (*ṣifāt*), and Disposition (*khalq*) within the same rank, for example, but *The Levels of Joy* groups Attributes and Dispositions with Names (*asmā’*), associating Essence with another group consisting of Existence (*wujūd*) and “What is Named” (*al-musammā*).

52 See also Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, esp. 58 and 96–97.

Divinity (*ilāhiyyat*)

[Aspect]	[Name]
i. Form (<i>ṣūra</i>)	i. Intellect (<i>‘aql</i>)
ii. Meaning (<i>ma‘nā</i>)	ii. Spirit (<i>rūḥ</i>)
iii. Superiority (<i>fawqīyyat</i>)	iii. Soul (<i>nafs</i>)
iv. Place of Manifestation (<i>maẓhar</i>)	iv. Human (<i>insān</i>)
v. Intermediary (<i>wāsiṭa</i>)	v. Angel (<i>malak</i>)
vi. Blackness (<i>sawād</i>)	vi. World (<i>dunyā</i>)
vii. Whiteness (<i>bayāḍ</i>)	vii. Afterlife (<i>ākhirā</i>)
viii. Knowledge (<i>‘ilm</i>)	viii. Throne (<i>‘arsh</i>)
ix. Inner Reality (<i>bāṭin</i>)	ix. Dais (<i>kursī</i>)
x. Impression (<i>naqsh</i>)	x. Preserved Tablet (<i>lawḥ-i maḥfūz</i>)



Heart of the Human Being (*dil-i insān*)

FIGURE 6 Ontological principles and correspondences as outlined in *The Epistle on the Explanation of the Expansion of Absolute Existence Upon the Sites of Manifestation of the Existing Beings*
RISĀLA FĪ BAYĀN INBISĀṬ AL-WUJŪD AL-MUṬLAQ ‘ALĀ MAẒĀHIR AL-KĀ’INĀT

Divinity (*ilāhiyyat*)

Side of Higher Things
(*ṭaraf-i ‘ulwiyyāt*)

The Face (*wajh*)
The Spirit (*rūh*)
Sainthood (*wilāyat*)
Darkness (*zulmat*)—Veil of the Face
Light (*nūr*)

Side of Lower Things
(*ṭaraf-i ‘sufliyyāt*)

The Essence (*dhāt*)
The Soul (*nafs*)
Prophecy (*nubuwwat*)
Hell (*jahīm*)—Veil of the Essence
Darkness (*zulmat*)

FIGURE 7 Bifurcation of Divinity (abridged) as outlined in *The Realities of the Letters*
ḤAQĀ’IQ AL-ḤURŪF

ality (*tanāsub*) (Figure 10).⁵³ Ḥamūya links likeness to relationship, shape to relationality, and model to relation, such that the perfect form unites all three modes.⁵⁴ While the shaykh refuses to collapse likeness, shape, and model into form, he nonetheless suggests an ontological hierarchy in which form is set *above* the other three principles.⁵⁵

Apart from these technical discrepancies, *The Lamp of Sufism* and *The Levels of Joy* orient form, likeness, shape, and model within divergent webs of cosmic correspondence. While Figures 3, 4, and 10 offer detailed presentations of each scheme, I have epitomized the most salient features below:

- (i) *The Lamp of Sufism*⁵⁶
 - Form—Heart—Gabriel
 - Likeness—Soul—Azrael
 - Shape—Spirit—Israfel
 - Model—Intellect—Michael
 -
 - Essence—Blackness—Holy Spirit
 - Attributes—Whiteness—Spirit of God
 - Dispositions—Redness—Faithful Spirit

53 See also Ḥamūya, *Marātib*, (P) fols. 15^b ff. and (DK) fols. 80^a ff.

54 Ḥamūya, *Marātib*, (P) fol. 16^a and (DK) fol. 81^a.

55 Ḥamūya *Marātib*, (P) fols. 17^b–18^a and (DK) fol. 83^a.

56 See Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāh*, 58, 95–97.

The First Darkness

- i. Light (*nūr*)
- ii. The Veil of His Face's Majesties (*subuḥāt wajhihi*)
 - iii. The Veil of the Names (*al-asmā'*)
 - iv. The Veil of Existence (*al-wujūd*)
 - v. The Mosque of the Spirit (*masjid al-rūḥ*)

The Second Darkness

- i. Manifestation (*zuhūr*)
- ii. The Veil of the Face (*al-wajh*)
- iii. The Veil of the Attributes (*al-ṣifāt*)
- iv. The Veil of What is Named (*al-musammā*)
- v. Homeland of the Body (*mawṭan al-jasad*)

The Third Darkness

- i. Clarification (*wuḍūḥ*)
- ii. The Veil of His Face (*wajhihi*)
- i.e., the Veil of Divine Nature's Reality (*al-ḥaqīqa al-lāhūtiyya*)
- iii. The Veil of Natures (*al-akhlāq*)
- iv. The Veil of the Essence (*al-dhāt*)
- v. The House of the Heart (*bayt al-qalb*)

FIGURE 8 Ontological principles (abridged) linked to the three primary darknesses in *The Levels of Joy in the Fountains of Power*
 KITĀB MARĀTIB AL-QURRA FĪ 'UYŪN AL-QUDRA

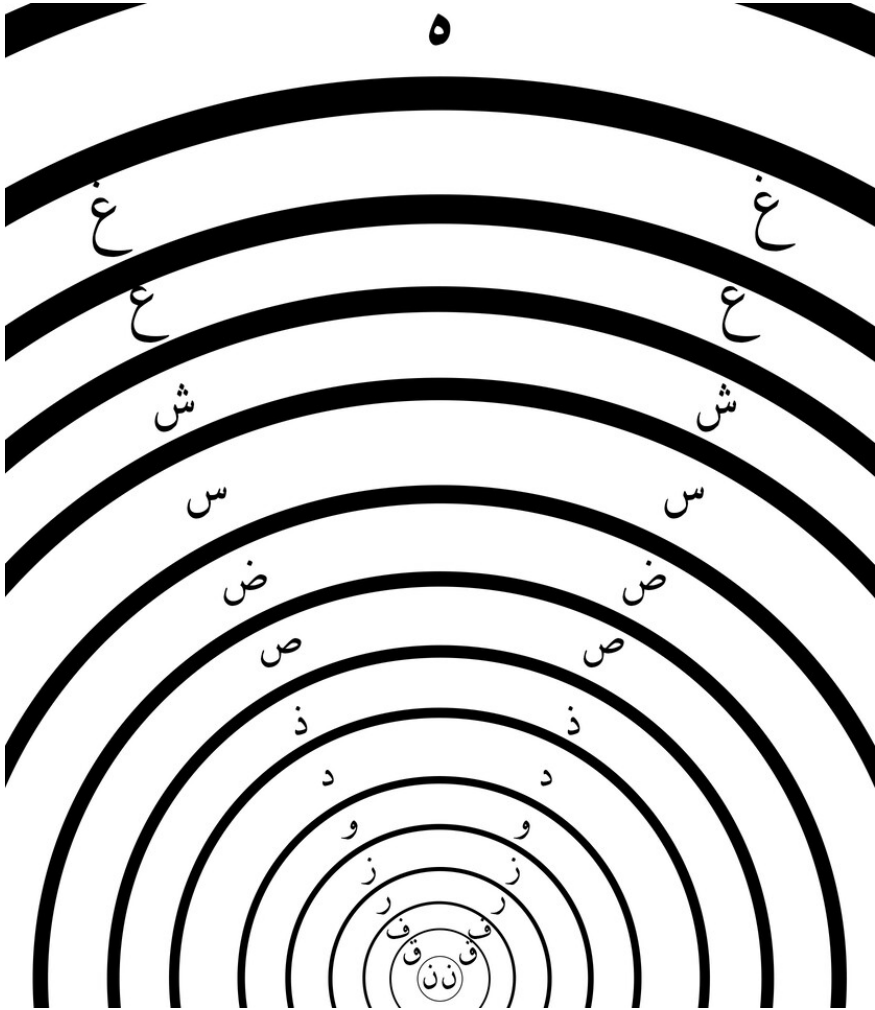


FIGURE 9 Concentric lettrist circles as outlined in *The Book of the Beloved*. According to Ḥamūya, these fifteen concentric circles exist one on top of the other. Each is made up of two letters, except the circle of *hā'*, which encompasses the others and serves as their ultimate foundation.

KITĀB AL-MAḤBŪB

The Three States of Form

(aḥwāl al-ṣūra)

Form in the Loins of Likeness

(al-ṣulb al-shaklī)

- i. Locus of explanation and the tongue
- ii. Stems from the Holy Spirit (*rūḥ al-quddus*), which corresponds to the intellect (*al-ʿaql*)
- iii. Linked to relationship (*munāsaba*)

Form in the Womb of Shape

(al-raḥīm al-hayʿatī)

- i. Locus of the Qurʾān's *muḥkamāt*
- ii. Stems from the Faithful Spirit (*al-rūḥ al-amīn*), which corresponds to the heart (*al-qalb*)
- iii. Linked to relationality (*al-tanāsub*)

Form in the Belly of Model

(al-bāṭin al-mithālī)

- i. Locus of the Furqān's *mutashābihāt*
- ii. Stems from the Spirit of God (*rūḥ Allāh*), which corresponds to the face that is face to face with God (*al-wajh alladhī yuwājih bi-Llāh*)
- iii. Linked to relation (*al-nisba*)

FIGURE 10 Three states of form as outlined in *The Levels of Joy in the Fountains of Power*
KITĀB MARĀTIB AL-QURRA FĪ ʿUYŪN AL-QUDRA

(ii) *The Levels of Joy*⁵⁷

Form—Contains aspects of likeness, shape, and model

Likeness—Intellect—Holy Spirit

Shape—Heart—Faithful Spirit

Model—Face—Spirit of God

Azrael—Blackness, whiteness, and redness

Gabriel—Blackness—Holiness—Action—Intellect

Michael—Whiteness—Capacity—Essence—Spirit

Israfael—Redness—The Face—Prayer—Soul

Unlike the *Lamp of Sufism*, which incorporates complimentary mechanisms of threefold and fourfold projection (Figures 3 and 4), *The Levels of Joy* consistently sketches unique frameworks that reorient elements from the other two modes. Not only do these new schemas blur otherwise distinct webs of affinity, they do so in a way that disrupts or directly contradicts the fundamental connections upon which other models are based.

In short, while Ḥamūya may deploy the science of letters as the most succinct way to articulate his ontological vision, his manipulation of concepts, correspondences, and technical terminology demonstrates analogous epistemological commitments. Sa'd al-Dīn's endless deployment, transformation, and reprisal of letters, ideas, and allusions entices readers with the illusion of a stable order, the possibility that each element may be defined, mapped, or glossed to illuminate a profound, all-encompassing secret. The deeper one delves into his work, however, the more Ḥamūya rearranges the pieces. Each eureka moment is marked with a sense of *déjà vu*, sending readers scrambling back to old landmarks, only to find new paths and possibilities in their place. Here, ontology and epistemology are inextricably intertwined. As is the case with the cosmos, there is no knowable "object" at the core of Ḥamūya's ontological speculation—no doctrine or dogma, no grand fact, no positive creed to be confirmed or denied. Knowledge of the Real—like the Real Itself—is only accessible through the infinite, dynamic, and incommensurable relationships that arise among created entities. Through performative language, the shaykh brings the underlying qualities—the *kayfiyya* or "howness"—of these relationships to the forefront of readers' experiences in order that they too may recognize and engage directly with the Real at all levels of Its manifestation. The knowledge that Sa'd al-Dīn produces is an epistemological sensibility that allows one to see the Real and partake in the dynamic modes of Its self-

57 See Ḥamūya, (P) fols. 11^a ff. and (DK) fols. 12^b ff.

disclosure across each and every context, discourse, and mode of expression. For Ḥamūya, to truly know is to cultivate a unified subjectivity made manifest through an infinite expressive potential; to become a creative nexus through which the self-disclosure is continually reenacted. Sa'd al-Dīn is thus writing the world; not as a Platonic *mimēsis*, but as a creative production of reality enacted through the mechanisms of the divine self-disclosure.⁵⁸

3 The Science of Letters in Ibn 'Arabī's *Meccan Revelations*

I turn now to Ibn 'Arabī's lettrism, a topic that has already garnered some attention in contemporary secondary literature.⁵⁹ The science of letters represents a central feature of Muḥyī al-Dīn's work as the subject of several short treatises and an overture of sorts for his *Meccan Revelations*.⁶⁰ Pierre Lory explains:

If speculations on the spiritual significance of the letters in Ibn 'Arabī's writings are so rich in meaning (*prégnantes*) that he places them as an extensive introduction to his *Meccan Revelations*, it is because they occupy a central role in the process of spiritual transformation that is, when all is said and done, the ultimate goal of the Shaykh al-Akbar's entire *oeuvre*—not mere elaborations of speculative doctrine.⁶¹

As Lory points out, Ibn 'Arabī deploys the science of letters with a pointed purpose: to affect and even transform his readers. I build upon Lory and others

58 For Platonic *mimēsis*, see Plato, *The Republic*, Book x, 596e–602c in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 1202–1206.

59 See, for example, Lory, *Science*, 115–136; Gril, "Introduction"; and Ebstein, *Mysticism*, 77–122. For more recent studies, see also Dunja Rašić, *The Written World of God: The Cosmic Script and the Art of Ibn 'Arabī* (Oxford: Anqa Publishing, 2021); and Elizabeth Sartell, "Mystical Philosophy: Ibn al-'Arabī's Lettrist Cosmogony" (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 2020).

60 Denis Gril, "Introduction," 107. For Ibn 'Arabī's shorter treatises on the science of letters, see, for example, *The Book of the Letter Alif* (*Kitāb al-Alif*), *The Book of the Letters Mīm, Wāw, and Nūn* (*Kitāb al-Mīm wa-l-wāw wa-l-nūn*) and *The Book of the Letter Yā'* (*Kitāb al-Yā'*) in Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī, *Rasā'il Ibn 'Arabī*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Karīm al-Nimrī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2001); and *The Book of the Letter Bā'* (*Kitāb al-Bā'*) in Osman Yahia, *Histoire et Classification de l'oeuvre d'Ibn 'Arabī*, 2 vols. (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1964), 1.180–181.

61 Lory, *Science*, 127. See also Karen Holding's English translation of the passage in Pierre Lory, "The Symbolism of Letters and Language in the Work of Ibn 'Arabī," trans. Karen Holding, *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabī Society* 23 (1998): 32–42.

like Denis Gril, Michel Chodkiewicz, James Morris, Michael Sells, and William Chittick, coupling their findings with my own insights in order to sketch the contours of the shaykh's lettrist strategies as a counterpoint for Ḥamūya's work.⁶² In what follows, I focus primarily on how Ibn 'Arabī shifts between various conceptual frameworks, organizational schemes, and modes of expression to articulate how the letters of the Arabic alphabet relate to fundamental structures of being.⁶³ Within each frame of reference, he builds complex worlds whose minutiae proliferate even beyond the point of exhaustion. The shaykh thus performs the endless dynamism of Reality by overwhelming his readers with a relentless examination of discrete yet infinitely dense conceptual frames. To highlight the performative complexity and universalizing ambitions of the shaykh's work, my analysis deliberately reproduces some of the onerous technicality that characterizes his lettrist approach. Unlike Ḥamūya, Ibn 'Arabī is eager to demonstrate his facility with the logic internal to diverse fields of learning, deploying a mastery of these technical details as evidence of his totalizing hermeneutical sensibilities.

62 See the introductions written by Gril, Chodkiewicz, Morris, and Chittick in Ibn 'Arabī, *Revelations I* and *Revelations II*. See also Sells, *Mystical Languages*; Chittick, *Self-Disclosure*; and idem, *Sufi Path*; Lory, *Science*; Michel Chodkiewicz, *An Ocean Without Shore: Ibn 'Arabī, The Book, and the Law*, trans. David Streight (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993); James W. Morris, "How to Study the *Futūḥāt*: Ibn 'Arabī's Own Advice," in *Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabī: A Commemorative Volume*, ed. Stephen Hirtenstein and Michael Tiernan (Rockport: Element for the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabī Society, 1993), 73–123; and idem, "Ibn 'Arabī's 'Esotericism': The Problem of Spiritual Authority," *Studia Islamica*, no. 71 (1990): 37–64. The work of Michael Ebstein and Sara Sviri have also been crucial in this regard. See Ebstein, *Mysticism*; and Sviri, "Kun," 35–67.

63 In my analysis of Ibn 'Arabī's performative modes of expression, I am particularly indebted to Michael Sells' *Mystical Languages of Unsayings*. Sells argues that Muḥyī al-Dīn uses apophatic discourse to produce "meaning events" that perform the fundamental tension at the heart of both creation and mystical union. See, for example, Sells, *Mystical Languages*, 10. As I will argue below, the meaning Ibn 'Arabī's work seeks to provoke is not an "objective fact," but rather an experience of how the Real manifests in the world; a sense of what the world is *like*. In this respect, Sells' unparalleled attention to Ibn 'Arabī's use of language, especially his virtuosic manipulation and subversion of grammatical, semantic, and discursive expectations, is fundamental to my own understanding of the shaykh's writing. Building upon Sells' work, I analyze Ibn 'Arabī's strategies with an eye toward their broader epistemological and social implications. By reading Ibn 'Arabī in conversation with Ḥamūya, I underscore the particularities of each figure's approach, illuminating how these textual performances could be used to cultivate *differing* experiences of Reality and to contest authority among Sufi colleagues. Likewise, by highlighting the embodied dimensions of the two Sufis' strategies, I theorize a way to link textual performances to specific socio-historical stakes and practices.

While Ibn ‘Arabī devotes several individual treatises to the science of letters, *The Meccan Revelations* contains some of his most sustained and synthetic lettrist expositions.⁶⁴ The opening of the text’s second chapter (“On the Knowledge of the Ranks of Consonants and Vowels ...”) maps an intricate lettrist-astrological cosmogenesis, charting a system of 261 celestial spheres whose rotations and interactions produce the letters of the Arabic alphabet.⁶⁵ Muḥyī al-Dīn organizes these letters and spheres into four ranks:

- (i) Letters brought into being by seven spheres—*alif*, *zāy*, *lām* (three letters)
- (ii) Letters brought into being by eight spheres—*nūn*, *ṣād*, *dād* (three letters)
- (iii) Letters brought into being by nine spheres—*‘ayn*, *ghayn*, *sīn*, *shīn* (four letters)
- (iv) Letters brought into being by ten spheres: the remaining eighteen letters of the Arabic alphabet—[*bā’*, *jīm*, *dāl*, *hā’*, *wāw*, *ḥā’*, *ṭā’*, *yā’*, *kāf*, *mīm*, *fā’*, *qāf*, *rā’*, *tā’*, *thā’*, *khā’*, *dhāl*, *zā’*]⁶⁶

The shaykh goes on to link each of these levels with a pair of elemental qualities—heat, cold, dryness, and humidity—familiar from such fields as astrology, alchemy, medicine, and natural philosophy.⁶⁷ Ibn ‘Arabī explores these associations through a series of astrological-mathematical calculations, linking the production of elemental qualities with the movement of 203, 241, 65, and 27 spheres, respectively. He likewise outlines the spherical interactions that bring about the four classical elements, the celestial movements that produce physical qualities in pairs, a series of several-thousand year cycles associated with particular celestial spheres, and the celestial mansions corresponding to the relationship between the final encompassing sphere and those contained within it.⁶⁸ While Ibn ‘Arabī’s discussion may not follow contemporary astrological theories in all of its details, he deploys the language and methods of astrology—celestial spheres, rotational cycles, mansions, mathe-

64 For individual treatises on the science of letters, see note 60 on p. 58.

65 The full title of this chapter is “Chapter 2: On the Knowledge of the Ranks of Consonants and Vowels in the Universe and their Counterparts Among the Divine Names; and on Knowledge of Words and of Knowledge Itself, of the Knower, and of the Object of Knowledge” (*al-bāb al-thānī fī ma’rifat marātib al-ḥurūfi wa-l-ḥarakāt min al-‘ālam wa-mā lāhā min al-asmā’ al-ḥusnā wa-ma’rifat al-kalimāt wa-ma’rifat al-‘ilm wa-l-‘ālim wa-l-ma’lūm*). See Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt* (OY), 1.231 ff. and (SD), 1.85 ff. See also Gril’s partial translation in Ibn ‘Arabī, *Revelations II*, 150 ff.

66 Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, (OY) 1.232 and (SD) 1.86; idem, *Revelations II*, 150–151.

67 Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, (OY) 1.232–233 and (SD) 86; idem, *Revelations II*, 151.

68 Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, (OY) 1.234–235 and (SD) 1.86–87; and idem, *Revelations II*, 151–152. Here, Ibn ‘Arabī merely alludes to these mansions, promising readers a more detailed exposition in Chapter 60.

matical operations—to articulate the genesis of the letters and the upper and lower worlds.

Although this passage operates within an overarching astrological—or at least, quasi-astrological—framework, Ibn ‘Arabī colors his account with a range of linguistic and discursive registers. Even before embarking upon his lettrist-astrological cosmogony, the shaykh inaugurates the chapter with a poem that hails the letters as the “imāms of verbal expression” (*a’immat al-alfāz*), foreshadows the later discussion of celestial spheres, and vaunts his own ability to illuminate the names hidden within them.⁶⁹ In his elaboration of elemental qualities, Muḥyī al-Dīn’s characterization of the *alif* as potentially hot, cold, dry, or humid hints both at Neopythagorean, natural-philosophical, and alchemical theories, as well as the metaphor of Arabic writing deployed by Ḥamūya above. As the primordial source, *alif* contains each of the other letters *in potentia* and thus becomes manifest according to the full range their qualities. While the shaykh’s characterization of the *alif* may reflect abstract theoretical principles, he takes another tack with his discussion of *ḥā*, *khā*, ‘*ayn*, *ghayn*, *hā*’, and *hamza*. As he outlines elemental qualities, Ibn ‘Arabī identifies these six figures as fundamentally cold in nature, exempting them from the hot and dry character of the other nine- and ten-sphere letters. Here, the shaykh operates according to an organizing logic that is primarily phonetic and anatomical, grouping these “cold letters”—also the six pharyngeals (*ḥurūf al-ḥalq*) of Arabic phonology—according to a shared point of articulation in the human body.⁷⁰

After promising to resume his discussion of the letters’ astrological qualities in Chapter 60, Ibn ‘Arabī augments his fourfold scheme with new principles situated within an explicitly theological framework:

- (i) The seven-sphere rank of letters (*al-martaba al-sab‘iyya*)—*alif*, *zāy*, and *lām*—the Divine Presence that imposes the Law (*al-ḥaḍra al-ilāhiyya al-mukallifa*)
- (ii) The eight-sphere letters (*al-martaba al-thamāniyya*)—*nūn*, *ṣād*, and *dād*—the human being (*al-insān*)
- (iii) The nine-sphere letters (*al-martaba al-tis‘iyya*)—‘*ayn*, *ghayn*, *sīn*, and *shīn*—jinn (*al-jinn*)
- (iv) The ten-sphere letters (*al-martaba al-‘ashariyya*)—[*bā*, *jīm*, *dāl*, *hā*, *wāw*, *ḥā*, *ṭā*, *yā*, *kāf*, *mīm*, *fā*, *qāf*, *rā*, *tā*, *thā*, *khā*, *dhāl*, *zā*]—angels (*al-malā’ika*)⁷¹

69 Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, (OY) 1.231 and (SD) 1.85. Gril omits the poem from his translation.

70 See also Gril’s note in Ibn ‘Arabī, *Revelations II*, 151n166.

71 See Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, (OY) 1.235ff. and (SD) 1.87ff.; idem, *Revelations II*, 152. For Chap-

As he traces links between these four levels of being, Ibn ‘Arabī deploys Qur’-ānic allusions, intertextual references, and Sufi technical terminology while also manipulating the graphic, semantic, and numerical qualities of the Arabic letters. The Divine Presence and the human being, for example, each have three letters specific to them since humans are made in the image of God; these letters differ because humans *qua* humans and God *qua* God are distinct in their manifestation. The shaykh extends the comparison with an excursus on the graphic possibilities of the letter *nūn*, demonstrating how *alif*, *zāy*, and *lām*—the letterforms of the Divine Presence and the word eternity (*azal*)—can be identified within its shape.⁷² In the right hands, he suggests, the semantic potential of human language and the specific properties of Arabic letters *qua* graphemes offer up real secrets about the nature of being.⁷³ While we have seen the *hurūf* as cosmogonic matrices, ontological principles, and physically articulated sounds, Ibn ‘Arabī now takes advantage of the semantic and visual properties of each group of letters to layer new levels of meaning upon his four-tiered metaphysical scaffolding.

Despite the rich complexity with which he articulates this astrological framework, Muḥyī al-Dīn cuts short his discussion of fourfold lettrist schemes, abruptly shifting gears to let his readers in on a secret. The elementary spheres are only divided into four groups of letters for those who rely primarily on their intellects; for those who understand the reality of things (*al-muḥaqqiqūn*), they are divided into six.⁷⁴ Ibn ‘Arabī outlines the new structure as follows:

- (i) The One who imposes the Law, i.e., the Real (*al-mukallif al-ḥaqq*)—*nūn*
- (ii) The human being (*al-insān*)—*mīm*
- (iii) Jinn (*al-jinn*)—*jīm*, *wāw*, *kāf*, and *qāf*
- (iv) Animals (*al-baḥā’im*)—*dāl*, *zāy*, *ṣād*, *‘ayn*, *ḍād*, *sīn*, *dhāl*, *ghayn*, and *shīn*
- (v) Plants (*al-nabāt*)—*alif*, *hā’*, *lām*
- (vi) Minerals (*al-jamād*)—*bā’*, *hā’*, *ṭā’*, *yā’*, *fā’*, *rā’*, *tā’*, *thā’*, *khā’*, *zā’*

ter 60, see Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, (OY) IV.479 ff. and (SD) I.441 ff. The full title of chapter reads, “Chapter 60: On the Knowledge of the Elements and the Power of the Higher World Over the Lower World; In Which of the Celestial Spheres’ Revolutions Does This Human World Exist? Which Spiritual Force Is Particular to Us? (*fī ma’rifat al-‘anāshir wa-sultān al-‘ālam al-‘ulwī ‘alā al-‘ālam al-suflī wa-fī ayy dawra kāna wujūd hādhā al-‘ālam al-insānī min dawrāt al-aflāk wa-ayya rūḥāniyya lanā*). With respect to the ten-sphere rank, Ibn ‘Arabī lists these letters in full according to their ascending *abjad* values on *Futūḥāt* (OY) I.241 and (SD) I.89.

72 Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt* (OY) I.237–240 and (SD) I.87–88; *Revelations II*, 152–155. See Gril’s diagrams in *Revelations II*, 148–149.

73 Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt* (OY) I.239–240 and (SD) I.88.

74 Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt* (OY) I.253–259 and (SD) I.93–95; idem, *Revelations II*, 159–160.

Though readers have likely struggled—as I must admit I have—through logical leaps, multi-digit calculations, and visual exercises, Ibn ‘Arabī leaves all of this behind, opening up a *terra incognita* in which to chart new cosmic cartographies. Even in categories carried over from the fourfold framework, Muḥyī al-Dīn completely reorganizes his groups of letters, offering little to harmonize these divergent points of view.

These are not the only incongruous lettrist metaphysical hierarchies that Ibn ‘Arabī sketches, even in the *Meccan Revelations*. Chapter 2 introduces a few more organizational schemes, including an account of the letters as a “community” (*umma*) of messengers, verifiers, elites, and common folk, as well as a classification based on ontological realms that Ibn ‘Arabī associates with Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 996).⁷⁵ Chapter 198 (“On Knowledge of the Soul through Revelation of the *Fā’*”) charts yet another lettrist-cosmological framework: a twenty-eight stage Neoplatonic emanation scheme, with each stage corresponding to a level of being, a Divine Name, a lunar mansion, and of course, a letter of the Arabic alphabet.⁷⁶ The overlap between the letter-level

75 Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt* (OY) 1.260 ff. and (SD) 1.95 ff.; idem, *Revelations II*, 161 ff. These realms include *jabarūt*, *malakūt*, *mulk*, and a few others. For more on Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, see Louis Massignon, “Abū Ṭālib Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Ḥārithī al-Makkī” in *ELI2*; and Alexander Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History* (Boston: Brill, 2000), 121–123. Despite their ubiquity as technical terms for specific ontological realms, *mulk*, *malakūt*, and *jabarūt* carry a range of valences in the writings of medieval Sufis, philosophers, and theologians. Sufis tend to order the three hierarchically, though the relative rank of each realm is far from stable, even within the work of a single thinker. See Ridgeon’s illuminating discussion in Lloyd V.J. Ridgeon, *‘Azīz Nasafī* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1998), 42–48. In the same vein, Ibn ‘Arabī and Ḥamūya deploy *mulk*, *malakūt*, and *jabarūt* (along with related terms like *lāhūt*) according to a loose ontological hierarchy, but never pin them down with consistent definitions. For their use in Ḥamūya’s work, see, for example, Figure 3 and Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 63–64, 72, 81, 87, 98, 112, 121, 123, and 131. In the wake of Ibn ‘Arabī, such followers as Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī, Sa’īd al-Dīn Farghānī (d. ca. 1300), Mu’ayyad al-Dīn al-Jandī (d. ca. 1300), Kamāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī (d. 1329), and Sharaf al-Dīn Dāwūd al-Qaysarī (d. 1350) synthesized these realms into a fairly stable system of five (or six) divine presences (*ḥaḍarāt ilāhīyya*), though usage remained inconsistent across texts and thinkers. See William C. Chittick, “The Five Divine Presences: From al-Qūnawī to al-Qaysarī,” *The Muslim World* 72 (1982): 107–128. Cf. also Jamal Elias, who explores ‘Alā’ al-Dawla al-Simmānī’s (d. 1336) complex metaphysics organized around these realms and suggests that he “appears to have been the *first* thinker to apply them consistently in a hierarchical fashion.” Jamal J. Elias, *The Throne Carrier of God: The Life and Thought of ‘Alā’ ad-Dawla as-Simmānī* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 62n1. Emphasis mine.

76 Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, (SD) IV.29 ff. For a brief introduction and partial English translation by William Chittick, see Ibn ‘Arabī, *Revelations I*, 50–56. See also Chittick, *Self-Disclosure*, xxviii ff.; Ebstein, *Mysticism*, 94 ff.; and Sara Sviri, “*Kun*,” 49–52.

correspondences in this hierarchy and those presented in Chapter 2 are virtually non-existent.

As with the four- and six-tiered cosmologies outlined above, these new frameworks use the letters as pivot points, so to speak, allowing Ibn ‘Arabī to drift back and forth between a variety of discourses and modes of expression, layering each atop a set of dynamic and adaptable cosmic principles. These new frameworks likewise emphasize a key feature of the letters only implicit in our previous discussions. Even at their most abstract, Muḥyī al-Dīn rarely severs the conceptual tether that links letters as cosmic principles or semantic units to letters as graphemes and phonemes—i.e., physically articulated sounds. In his later schemes, the shaykh correlates the unfolding of the Divine Essence with a general progression of letters whose point of articulation shifts from the depths of the chest (*ḥā*) to the tips of puckered lips (*wāw*). This progression is most pronounced in Chapter 198; as Ibn ‘Arabī moves one by one through all twenty-eight letters, he effectively encourages his readers to imagine their bodies as sites for the totality of the divine self-disclosure.

Though we have considered only a small snapshot of Ibn ‘Arabī’s lettrist output, a general picture of the dynamism and flexibility of his strategies has begun to emerge. Taken together, the shaykh’s discursive bricolage, inspired digressions, poignant allusions, and careful attention to detail offer a sense of infinitely expanding possibilities. He refuses to remain wedded to a single structural or conceptual framework, adopting and discarding concepts and modes of expression in order to subvert the ontological primacy of any single metaphysical structure. Even the exhaustive accounts he has provided, Muḥyī al-Dīn reveals, are but a few examples of his own limitless potential.⁷⁷ What type of knowledge, then, is Ibn ‘Arabī trying to convey? What is the *point* of all of these letters?

In his introduction to the *Futūḥāt*, the shaykh divides knowledge according to three broad categories: knowledge via the intellect (*‘ilm al-‘aql*), knowledge via states (*‘ilm al-aḥwāl*), and knowledge via divine secrets (*‘ulūm al-asrār*). It is this third type of knowledge, of course, that he seeks to cultivate through writing the *Futūḥāt*. While Ibn ‘Arabī characterizes knowledge via intellect and states as that which is acquired through proof (*al-dalīl*) and spiritual experience (*al-dhawq*), respectively, he describes knowledge via divine secrets as something else entirely:

77 Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, (OY) I.255–256 and (SD) I.94. See also Gril’s translation in *Revelations II*, 160.

وهذا الصنف الثالث الذي هو علم الأسرار العالم به يعلم العلوم كلها ويستغرقها
وليس صاحب تلك العلوم (الأخرى) كذلك فلا علم أشرف من هذا العلم المحيط
الحاوي على جميع المعلومات

Whoever knows this third type of knowledge—i.e., the knowledge of divine secrets—knows all knowledge and is completely immersed in it (*yastaghriqūhā*). Those who master the other types of knowledge are not like this. Thus, there is no knowledge more noble than this all-encompassing knowledge that gathers together the totality of knowable things.⁷⁸

With respect to the relationship between this knowledge and its manifestation in the *Futūḥāt*, he explains:

أما التصريح بعقيدة الخلاصة فما أفردتها على التعيين لما فيها من الغموض ولكن
جئت بها مُدّدة في أبواب هذا الكتاب مستوفاةً مبيّنةً ولكنّها كما ذكرنا متفرّقة فمن
رزقه الله الفهم فيها يعرف أمرها ويميّزها من غيرها

As for explicitly stating the doctrine of the quintessence [of the spiritual elite], the abstruseness of this doctrine has prevented me from laying it all out in one place according to its particulars. Instead, I have spread it clearly and in full detail throughout the chapters of this book, albeit in a scattered manner. Whomever God blesses with understanding will recognize it and distinguish it from all the rest.⁷⁹

To truly know, therefore, is to cultivate a subjectivity (or as we suggested above, an epistemological sensibility) that conditions one to experience self and cosmos as infinitely expandable webs of association reaching across any and all forms of thinking, knowing, and being. The ultimate aim of Muḥyī al-Dīn's lettrist exercises is thus not for students to keep a running tally for each letter, nor is it to memorize and recite each and every possible association. This would be physically impossible, for as Ibn 'Arabī continually reminds us, "Creation is renewed with every breath, both in this world and in the afterlife" and, "The

78 Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, (OY) 1.140 and (SD) 1.55. See Morris' translation in "How to Study," 77.

79 Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, (OY) 1.173 and (SD) 1.55. See also citations, translations, and discussions in Gardiner, "Esotericism," 107–108; Morris' introduction to Ibn 'Arabī, *Revelations 1*, 16; Morris, "How to Study"; and idem, "Esotericism," 42.

degrees of the Real have no end.”⁸⁰ Instead, shaykh’s lettrist expositions represent a performative mode of knowledge production that leads readers through the infinitely complex and seemingly incongruous mechanisms according to which the Divine Essence becomes manifest in the world.

The knowledge that Ibn ‘Arabī articulates through the *Futūḥāt* cannot be laid out in a single place because, like the Real, it fundamentally depends on drawing connections and juxtaposing points of view across multiple frames of reference. The letters—and, the shaykh implies, all aspects of Reality—become intelligible only through the myriad relationships and frameworks of analysis (semantic, theological, metaphysical, experiential, astrological) according to which they are imagined and articulated. Muḥyī al-Dīn’s lettrist analyses perform the relationality of the Divine self-disclosure, bringing together opposing attributes, layering multiple meanings, blurring discursive boundaries, and pivoting between ontological realms and modes of revelation that are all paradoxically *real*. Although the meaning and implications of Ibn ‘Arabī’s operations shift from one point of view to another, the form and sound of the letters always remains constant. Thus, graphic manipulations and the embodied experience of articulating letters links readers to the fundamental ontological principles that express themselves at all levels of being. By conditioning readers to experience the world through the analogizing logics of these principles in all their possible relationships, Ibn ‘Arabī prepares them to engage with the Real through Its endless modes of self-disclosure: that is, to master all that can be known.

4 Dynamism and Difference

As we have seen above, the lettrist strategies developed by Ḥamūya and Ibn ‘Arabī suggest a relational ontological framework inextricably linked to an understanding of knowledge as epistemological sensibility. In identifying these shared epistemological presuppositions, however, we must be careful not to erase difference. First of all, the webs of association that Sa’d al-Dīn and Muḥyī al-Dīn spin are not haphazard or random; they manipulate specific links and allusions to create the sense of infinitely expandable, yet interrelated and self-referential systems. An attention to how each figure forges these connections, moreover, reveals key points of irritation.

In “The Wisdom of Exaltation in the Word of Noah” (*Faṣṣ ḥikma ṣubūḥiyy fī kalima Nūḥiyya*) from *The Bezels of Wisdom* (*Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*), Ibn ‘Arabī

⁸⁰ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, (SD) IV.85, v.265.

proposes a kind of bewilderment (*ḥayra*) that he argues is characteristic of Muḥammad and his heirs.⁸¹ He writes:

﴿إِلَّا ضَلَالًا﴾ (نوح ٢٤) إِحْيَاةَ الْمُحْمَدِيِّ زِدْنِي فِيكَ تَحْيِيرًا ﴿كَلِمَا أَضَاءَ لَهُمْ
 مَشَوْا فِيهِ وَإِذَا أَظْلَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَامُوا﴾ (البقرة ٢٠) فَالْحَائِرُ لَهُ الدُّورُ وَالْحَرَكَةُ الدُّوْرِيَّةُ حَوْلَ
 الْقُطْبِ فَلَا يَبْرُحُ مِنْهُ وَصَاحِبُ الطَّرِيقِ الْمُسْتَطِيلِ مَائِلٌ خَارِجٌ عَنِ الْمَقْصُودِ طَالِبٌ
 مَا هُوَ فِيهِ صَاحِبُ خِيَالٍ إِلَيْهِ غَايَتُهُ
 فَلَهُ مِنْ وَاِلَى وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَصَاحِبُ الْحَرَكَةِ الدُّوْرِيَّةِ لَا بَدَأَ لَهُ فَيَلْزِمُهُ مِنْ وَلَا غَايَةَ
 فَتَحْكَمُ عَلَيْهِ إِلَى فَلَهُ الوجودُ الْأَتَمُّ وَهُوَ الْمُؤْتَى جَوَامِعُ الْكَلِمِ وَالْحِكْمِ

“... Except in swerving (*dalālan*)” (Q. 72:24), that is, except in Muḥammadan bewilderment—“Lord, increase my bewilderment in You!” “Whenever [lightning] flashes on them they walk on and when darkness falls around them they stand still.” (Q. 2:20) The bewildered one orbits, moving in an orbital fashion around the pole (*al-quṭb*), which he never leaves. One on the protracted path tilts away from the [true] goal and seeks what is already within him (*mā huwa fīhi*). He is a master of the fantasies that he makes his aim, and thus has a “from”, a “to”, and whatever exists between them. One with an orbital motion has no beginning that would necessitate a “from” and no aim that would determine a “to”. Thus, his being is most complete, having been given the totality of words and wisdom.⁸²

Echoing what we have seen above, Ibn ‘Arabī suggests that real knowledge resists the linear sequence of logical argument. When one attempts to draw Reality (or knowledge) out into a definite sequence, one has already missed the mark, grasping only at the phantoms of one’s own fantasy. Real knowledge—a perfect type of *being*—is a state of bewilderment characterized by constant

81 For illuminating discussions of bewilderment in Ibn ‘Arabī’s work, see Sells, *Mystical Languages*, 100–105 (from whom I draw here) and Gregory Vandamme, “The ‘Veil of Glory’: Perplexity (*Ḥayra*) and Revelation in the Qur’ānic Hermeneutics of Ibn ‘Arabī,” in *Philosophical Hermeneutics and Islamic Thought*, ed. Sylvain Camilleri and Selami Varlik (Cham: Springer, 2022), 79–94.

82 Ibn ‘Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 73. For English translations, see Ibn ‘Arabī, *Bezels*, 79; and idem, *The Ringstones of Wisdom (Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam)*, trans. Caner K. Dagli (Chicago: Great Books of the Islamic World, 2004), 46–47. For a partial translation and illuminating discussion of the passage, see Sells, *Mystical Languages*, 101.

motion. One so bewildered is continually swept up in the current of the Real. For such a wayfarer there is no *terra firma* from which to plot one's course, no enduring isles to mark one's progress, no final shore to call home. The question of how exactly such a state of bewilderment should be provoked and experienced, however, is the central point that differentiates Ibn 'Arabī and Ḥamūya.⁸³

On the one hand, Muḥyī al-Dīn is prone to feats of Borgesian world-building, crafting intricate realms and frameworks whose inner workings may be explored or expanded *ad infinitum*. As he overlays these worlds with a range of technical details, the shaykh exploits the sense of dissonance that results from moving between these conceptual arenas or layering them on top of one another. Though we have focused on an astrological example above, *The Meccan Revelations* finds Ibn 'Arabī engaging with case studies, theoretical frameworks, and technical terminology from philosophy, medicine, legal theory, ritual practice, Sufi hagiography, and scholastic theology, just to name a few.⁸⁴ Despite his often vehement critiques, Muḥyī al-Dīn implicitly legitimizes and reifies how these disciplines imagine and engage with the world, if only to theorize a mode of knowing that subsumes and surpasses them all.⁸⁵ As we saw in Chapter 1, Section 1, for example, the shaykh does not argue that philosophical metaphysical schemes are wrong per se, but rather that the philosophers mistake their methods for certain knowledge and their hierarchies for ultimate truth. Ironically, revealing the simultaneous, yet incommensurable, reality of each new horizon—no matter how comprehensive it might seem—provokes the bewildering (and *agitating*) sense that none is stable in and of itself. Ibn 'Arabī's epistemological sensibility is thus a mode of negotiating infinite, ostensibly incommensurable, and paradoxically *real* points of view: the ability to reorient oneself within, above, or between realms according to the exigencies of a particular situation.

83 The discussion of knowledge, bewilderment, and motion will be taken up and expanded in Chapter 5, "Real Talk: Language, Revelation, and Human Perfection."

84 For brief discussions of Ibn 'Arabī's engagement with legal theory, for example, see Michel Chodkiewicz, *Ocean*, 54–57; Morris, "Esotericism"; and Cyrille Chodkiewicz, "Introduction to 'The Law and the Way,'" in *Revelations II*, 59–61.

85 Morris contextualizes these techniques as a means of addressing and converting adepts in each of these fields. See Morris, "Esotericism," 39. Ibn 'Arabī often demonstrates an understanding of the "ins and outs" of each particular field, so to speak, before presenting strategies to encompass and transcend each. In this way, he follows a method similar to that of Sufi predecessors like al-Ghazālī and rationalist contemporaries like Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. See Frank Griffel, *Al-Ghazali's Philosophical Theology* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); and Shihadeh, "al-Rāzī," 310–311.

If Muḥyī al-Dīn works from the “outside in,” Ḥamūya takes the inverse approach. Rather than juxtaposing and undermining relatively stable frameworks to jolt his readers, Sa’d al-Dīn emphasizes pure dynamism and flux—the fundamental interrelation, utter instability, and infinite ontological-semantic potential of all individual entities and disciplines. Unlike Muḥyī al-Dīn, Sa’d al-Dīn rarely engages with particular fields of scholarship in a direct or sustained manner.⁸⁶ Ḥamūya’s epistemological sensibility thus demands negotiating the world as a network of fractalizing possibilities. Here, true knowledge is the ability to partake in these mechanisms *without* reifying conceptual or disciplinary boundaries. While we have dealt so far with fairly coherent passages, many of the shaykh’s treatises amplify the performative and deliberately *alogical* qualities identified above. *The Levels of Joy*, for example, outlines processes in which interpenetrating principles flow in and out of each other as they give rise to new forces and entities. Expounding upon the reality of the resurrection and the afterlife, Ḥamūya explains:

والإعادة إعادة القلب بعينه مع أجزائه ومع أعضاء القلب إلى وجهه الروحي [كذا]
 ويقدر ذلك تصير أجزاء القلب مشروحة فيها وعند ذلك تصير بالقلب مع أجزائه
 مبثوثة في عين العقل وانشقّ البصر وبصر السمع فيهما وارتفع الحائل بينهما
 وبهاتين الحكمتين الحاكمتين للتفرقين والجمعين حصل للقلب والعقل كون بعد
 كون ولون بعد لون

...

86 The chief exception seems to be the field of *tafsīr*. In a section of *The Book of the Beloved* entitled “The Levels of Divinities,” Ḥamūya offers a sustained engagement with forty-four Qur’anic verses (forty-four subsections are listed, only twenty-seven/twenty-eight are extant), beginning with the Throne Verse (Q. 2:255). For many of these verses, Sa’d al-Dīn begins his discussion with lengthy citations from an exegetical text, which I have identified as Ḥusayn ibn Mas’ūd al-Baghawī’s (d. 1122) *Tafsīr al-Baghawī*. See Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb* (SBB), fols. 234^a ff.; and Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn ibn Mas’ūd al-Baghawī, *Tafsīr al-Baghawī* (*Ma’ālam al-tanzīl*) (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2002).

Sa’d al-Dīn seems to have been fond of (or at least intimately familiar with) al-Baghawī’s work. Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ḥamūya’s *Goal of the Seekers* notes that a certain ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Umar b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥākim al-Argḥiyānī (and several other companions and disciples) audited al-Baghawī’s *Book of the Lamps* (*Kitāb al-Maṣābīḥ*) from Ḥamūya in Baghdad’s Maṣūf Mosque in 1232. See p. 237 of Appendix 1: Biographical Essay and Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 164.

وبكمال إعادة العقل وشرحه في القلب يصير نعمة الجنة مجسّمًا بالولدان
والغلمان ﴿وحوار العين كأمثال اللؤلؤ المكنون﴾ (الواقعة ٢٢-٢٣) وعذاب الجحيم
مجسّدًا لشجر الزقوم والحيات والعقارب نعوذ بالله العظيم من عذاب الجحيم

...

لأنّ حشر حقيقة العقل في القلب وحشر حقيقة القلب في العقل يكون بفعل
الله تعالى وتقدّس وفعله دائم لا أنقطاع له في الآخرة

The *i'āda* is the return (*i'āda*) of the heart through its essence—but with its parts and its organs—to the spiritual face. In accordance with that, the parts of the heart are laid open within it and from there, [all of that] is sent out to the essence of the intellect via the heart and its parts. So, the hearing of seeing and the seeing of hearing are broken open between the two and the partition rises up from between them. Through these two wisdoms and adjudicators of the two separations and amalgamations, being after being and color after color appear before the heart and intellect.

...

Through the perfection of the intellect's *i'āda* and its being laid open within the heart, the blessing of heaven is embodied (*mujassam*) through the *wildān*, the *ghilmān*, and “the *hūr al-'ayn* like hidden pearls.” (Q. 56:22–23) The punishments of hell are corporealized (*mujassad*) by the *zaqqūm* tree, serpents, and scorpions—we seek refuge in mighty God from the torments of hell!

...

Because, the gathering of intellect's reality in the heart and the gathering of the heart's reality in the intellect occurs through God's action, and His action is eternal—it does not cease in the afterlife.⁸⁷

Rather than one principle giving rise to the other in a logical or temporal sequence, the realities of the heart and the intellect are both containing and contained, co-generating and interpenetrating for all eternity. By deploying synesthetic language, Sa'd al-Dīn likewise encourages readers to imagine hearing and seeing as interoperable senses, swirling together and breaking apart in concert with abstract cosmic principles. The hidden realities of the world

87 Ḥamūya, *Marātib*, (P) fols. 6^a–6^b. The passages are also present in (DK) fol. 7^a, though the text is too corrupt to read.

to come, Ḥamūya suggests, can be grasped only through shifting relationships that cannot be grounded in any tangible source.

In *The Book of the Beloved*, lettrist operations break away from logical, narrative, or even semantic coherence altogether. The following passage from a chapter entitled “The Circle of *Nūn*” addresses readers with an account of letters and circles before embarking on an impressionistic play of sound and form. Sa’d al-Dīn writes:

أيها الناظر إلى النقطة وفي دائرتها و البالغ إلى جملتها والواصل الفاصل بكلمتها
 جعلك الله غالبًا سالبًا مطلوبًا طالبًا أن الدائرة النونية لما انشقت انفصلت منها
 نونان تبطننا واوين وألفين فنزل بين ذلك معنى الألفين المألوفين وانتظم منه في قضية
 الإشارة وقصبة بقاع العبارة وقصة كتب البشارة صورة قول القائل إن
 أنا في النور أنا وفي أنا النور أنا وفي أنا أن وأنا في الظهور أنا وفي أنا الظهور إن أن
 في أن في النور والظهور نور على نور في نور في صور على طور
 يهدي الله لنوره من يشاء

O you who gaze into the point and its circle, who reach its totality, who unite and divide its word—may God make you victorious and arresting, sought and seeking! When the circle of *nūn* is broken open, two *nūns* (which encompass two *wāws* and two *alifs*) split off from it.⁸⁸ And so, the meaning of the two familiar *alifs* descends among all of that and becomes arranged therein. The form of the Speaker’s speech is in the question of indication (*qaḍīyat al-ishāra*), the pen of the smudges of interpretation (*qaṣabat biqā’ al-ibāra*), and the chronicle of the texts’ joyous proclamation (*qiṣṣat kutub al-bishāra*):

I am in illumination, I; in I is illumination, I; in I is *i*; I am in manifestation, I; in I is manifestation, *i*; *i* is in *i*; in illumination and manifestation is illumination upon illumination, in illumination, in clarion orchestration upon an elevated station.

God guides whomever He will towards His illumination.⁸⁹

88 Here, Ḥamūya analyzes *nūn* according to its constituent letters. *Nūn* is spelled *nūn-wāw-nūn* and *wāw* is spelled *wāw-alif-wāw*. Within two *nūns* there are thus two *wāws* and two *alifs*.

89 Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fol. 12^b; Nuruosmaniye MS 2577 (NO), fol. 11^b; Carullah MS 1078 (CE78), fol. 13^b; Ayasofya MS 2058 (AS58), fol. 11^b; and Yeni Camii MS 726 (YC), fol. 28^b.

While the first section of the passage deploys letrist techniques analogous to those we have analyzed in Chapter 1, Section 2, Ḥamūya slips into a series of cryptic alliterative rhymes—*qaḍīyat al-ishāra, qaṣabat biqā' al-'ibāra, qiṣ-ṣat kutub al-bishāra*—before delving into an enigmatic word game centered around the juxtaposition of *anā, a-na*, and words ending in *-ūr*.⁹⁰ Here, Sa'd al-Dīn inverts grammatical relationships (*anā fī l-nūr anā wa-fī anā l-nūr anā*), duplicates syllables (*a na a na fī a na*), and juxtaposes similar sounds (*wa-fī anā a na wa-anā*), leaving readers with a skittering array of phonemes whose parsing remains ambiguous. Although the shaykh repeats key motives, he synopates their rhythm to disrupt any sense of steady meter. In so doing, Ḥamūya plays with the conceptual structures through which language is conventionally produced, encouraging readers to experience words and letters—and thus entities and attributes—as infinitely rearrangeable forms and sounds.

Just as Ḥamūya and Ibn 'Arabī frame true knowledge as an epistemological sensibility in order to distinguish themselves from philosophers and rationalist theologians, an ability to identify and manipulate infinite webs of association functions as a means through which these two Sufis could negotiate knowledge and authority among themselves. In an epistle addressed to Ibn 'Arabī, Ḥamūya takes the shaykh to task over some of his letrist speculations, writing:

اكتحلت عيني بمطالعة تصنيفك لطائف الأذكار وانحرف خاطري عن إدراك ما
 ذكر الشيخ الكبير والبدر المنير في بعض مصنفاته أنّ الحروف بعضها مركّب مثل
 الباء من ذالين وأنّ الباء وجود العقل الخاصّ وهو أوّل مرتبته
 والذي تراءى لهذا الضعيف أنّ الحروف كلّها مركّبة والياء مركّبة من دالين
 وحروف أخرى والنقطتين عليها ظهرت بطريق العكس والانعكاس والذي يشهد
 لذلك أنّ فيها عالم اليبدين وأنّ الباء أوّل مرتبة بالنسبة إلى الصورة الباطلة
 وأمّا بالنسبة إلى صورته تعالى وتقدّس فهو وجود المرتبة الأولى وقد وجدنا بحمد
 الله ومنه أنّ لكلّ حرف روحاً وعقلاً وسراً وألسنةً وأزلاً وأبداً وميلاً وطاعةً وظهراً وبطناً
 وحداً ومطلعاً وأمزجةً ولو شرحنا ذلك لطال الكلام ولا يفني بشرحه الأقلام وما رأيت
 في القرآن حرفاً متكرّراً ثمّ وجدنا علم البياض أقوى من علم الحروف وعلم النقطة

90 In my translation, I have rendered *anā* and *a-na* as I and *i*, respectively, and words rhyming in *-ūr* with the English suffix *-ation*. Though the meanings of some Arabic words have been stretched in the process—e.g., *ṣūr* (horn; trumpet) as clarion orchestration and *tūr* (mountain) as elevated station—I believe these choices emphasize the rhythm and idiosyncratic semantics of the passage.

I have blackened my eyes through careful examination of how you classify the subtleties of *dhikrs* and my mind has swerved from what the Great Skaykh and Shining Moon has mentioned in some of his treatises—i.e., that some of the letters are composite, like the *yā'* [composed of] two *dhāls*; and that the *bā'* is the existence of the Particular Intellect and that it is His first level.

It seems to this wretch that *all* of the letters are composite! The *yā'* is composed of two *dāls*, but also of other letters.⁹¹ The two points with which it is equipped are apparent by way of inversion and reflection. That to which [this wretch] bears witness, therefore, is that within [*yā'*] is the world of the two hands (*‘ālam al-yadayn*), and that the *bā'* is [only] a first level with respect to the false form (*al-ṣūra al-bāṭila*).

With respect to His almighty and blessed form—which is the [true] existence of the first level—we have found through God’s praise and blessing that each letter has a spirit, an intellect, a secret, languages, an eternity, a sempiternity, an inclination, a submissiveness, a exterior (*ẓahr*), an interior (*baṭn*), a limit (*ḥadd*), a starting point (*maṭla‘*) and a mixture (*amzija*). If we were to explain all of that, we would carry on for far too long, for pens cannot exhaust its explanation and I have not seen a repeated letter in the Qurʾān. What is more, we have found that the knowledge of the blank space (*al-bayād*) is more powerful than the knowledge of letters and points.⁹²

While Ḥamūya agrees with Ibn ‘Arabī’s basic claims, his critique mirrors the latter’s own appraisal of the philosophers’ methods outlined in Chapter 1, Section 1. On one level, he explains, Muḥyī al-Dīn is correct—*yā'* is composed of two *dāls* and *bā'* does correspond to the Intellect. Ibn ‘Arabī’s error, however, is that he limits his understanding of these letters to a single interpretation. *Yā'* is not only composed of two *dāls*, but of a host of other letters as well. Likewise, Ḥamūya avers, each and every letter is composite, made up both of other letters and a range of principles and qualities. To analyze a single letter, Sa’d al-Dīn suggests, is to open up a world of ever-expanding possibilities. The association of the letter *bā'* with the Intellect, therefore, only holds in a limited capacity—i.e., with respect to the “false form” (*al-ṣūra al-bāṭila*). With respect to the form of the Real upon which the entirety of existence is founded, Ḥamūya avoids definitive claims altogether, directing Ibn ‘Arabī instead to the infinite potential

91 Both the manuscript and printed edition have *dhāls* followed by *dāls* here. See also Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 61 for a discussion of the letter *yā'* as composed of two *dāls*.

92 Ḥamūya, “Makātīb,” 460–461; and idem, *Sharḥ bāl*, fols. 103–104.

of the letters. To underscore his own spiritual authority, Sa'd al-Dīn implicitly equates his insights with Qur'ānic revelation before framing the letters themselves as constraints upon the infinite potential of his knowledge. Although the epistle concludes with a note of polite conciliation—"There is no dispute between us with respect to the Reality"—the majority of its contents work to parochialize al-Shaykh al-Akbar's purportedly universal claims.⁹³ In short, Ḥamūya turns Ibn 'Arabī's commitment to bewilderment against him, charging him with an act of *terra*-forming that risks damming the flow of *real* knowledge.⁹⁴

5 Conclusion

As the last section tied together most of the key themes from this chapter, I conclude by teasing out one final thread. Our analysis of the lettrist strategies employed throughout *The Lamp of Sufism*, *The Book of the Beloved*, and *The Meccan Revelations* suggests that engagement with the Real through the medium of text demands a heightened awareness of one's own body and an ability to negotiate meaning fluidly across abstract and phenomenal frameworks. How Ibn 'Arabī and Ḥamūya synthesize embodied and intellectual possibilities reflects the particularities unique to each. While Ibn 'Arabī integrates the phenomenal qualities of letters into systematic elaborations of incommensurable points of view, Ḥamūya skitters across ideas, allusions, and points of articulation with reckless abandon. The latter's deconstructive techniques mark the boundaries between these (and all) phenomena as completely fungible, provoking readers to experience Reality as unbounded abstract-experiential potential.

93 See Ḥamūya, "Makātīb," 462; and idem, *Sharḥ bāl*, fol. 106.

94 The point here is not to affirm Ḥamūya over Ibn 'Arabī, or to suggest that the latter's work is marred by an unreflective fixity. Rather, my aim is to highlight the values and strategies through which medieval Sufis contested knowledge and authority.

It is unclear whether Ibn 'Arabī ever penned a rebuttal to the epistle. Although there is no extant evidence of Ibn 'Arabī's direct engagement with Ḥamūya's work, Jāmī reports an incident involving the two shaykhs and Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī in which Muḥyī al-Dīn implicitly asserts his superiority over Sa'd al-Dīn by parochializing his ontological claims. Jāmī's report may reflect the ideals of 15th-century Sufis looking back at a formative period, but the interaction he relates nevertheless supports my argument that an infinite interpretive sensibility functioned as a primary means through which figures like Ḥamūya and Ibn 'Arabī contested questions of knowledge and authority, even among Sufi colleagues. See Jāmī, *Nafahāt*, 431–432.

Circling back to the critiques of philosophers and rational methodologies with which we began this chapter, both Ḥamūya and Ibn ‘Arabī agree on a fundamental point: perfect knowledge must become manifest through attitudes, practice, and comportment. That is to say, what one knows is inextricable from how one moves through the world and presents oneself to others. The following chapters take up these themes in full, reading the performative qualities of Ḥamūya’s strategies against the ritual and social contexts that made them meaningful. As we will see, the embodied dimensions of knowledge are not limited to the science of letters as a mode of expression; they are fundamental to the broader epistemological worlds built by Ḥamūya and his interlocutors.

Sufi Free Jazz: Prayer, Deconstruction, and Boundless Play

... This way is walking, seeing, working, and tasting, not [merely] talking, listening, knowing, and not acting. Work, not talk, constitutes action. Knowing about water alone does not sate one or quench one's thirst—one must also drink it.¹

NAJM AL-DĪN KUBRĀ, *Etiquette for Novices*

•••

Do you (you!) *feel* like I do?²

PETER FRAMPTON, "Do You Feel Like We Do"

••

The following two chapters work as a pair, exploring Ḥamūya's performative deconstruction of established conventions through analyses of his work in dialogue with Sufi supplications, prayer manuals, and liturgical scripts. While Chapter 3 focuses on liturgy proper, this chapter studies *The Levels of Joy in the Fountains of Power* (*Kitāb Marātib al-qurra fī 'uyūn al-qudra*) and *Book of the Beloved* (*Kitāb al-Maḥbūb*) to illuminate how the shaykh's abstract expositions run counterpoint to the embodied concerns of medieval Sufi practice.³ I argue that Ḥamūya situates his texts within the discursive field of his Sufi colleagues, but produces meaning through implicit juxtapositions between generic conventions and his own idiosyncratic formulations. By reading the shaykh's work as avant-garde Sufism or Sufi free jazz, I foreground the per-

1 Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, *Ādāb al-murīdīn*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya MS 4792, fol. 746^b.

2 Peter Frampton, "Do You Feel Like We Do," *Frampton Comes Alive!* (A&M: 1976).

3 An earlier version of this chapter appeared in *History of Religions*. See Cyril V. Uy II, "Prayer, Deconstruction, and Boundless Play: Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya's Avant-Garde Sufism," *History of Religions* 63, no. 3 (February 2024): 290–320.

formative and deconstructive dimensions of his writing, analyzing the knowledge he produces as self-consciously bound to the subjectivities and expectations of his readers. Through a performative deconstruction of established conventions, Ḥamūya opens up a dialogical interplay between text and audience, transforming the bodies of his readers into laboratories within which the meaning of his words could become manifest as boundless play. At the same time, Sa'd al-Dīn's dense intertextuality restricts the interpretation of his work to an elite cadre of readers familiar enough with Sufi literature and practice to recognize his allusive references and playful manipulation of forms. Like the free jazz of John Coltrane's (d. 1967) *Ascension* and *Meditations*, it is precisely *through* these ubiquitous forms—from *within* this shared field of play—that the shaykh's avant-garde strategies produce their most compelling effects. Sa'd al-Dīn's deconstructive engagement with established conventions thus reflects a creative approach to inter-Sufi competition. While his contemporaries attempt to prove their superiority by subsuming a diversity of embodied practices and metaphysical frames within their manuals, Ḥamūya recruits advanced readers to imagine and expand these possibilities for him.

As I argue below, Ḥamūya models the fifth appendix of *The Levels of Joy* according to contemporary and classic manuals, priming readers to receive his discussion as a conventional elaboration of the Sufi path in all its phenomenal, spiritual, and intellectual dimensions. Conventional manuals penned by colleagues like Najm al-Dīn Kubrā (d. 1221), Ibn 'Arabī (d. 1240), and Shihāb al-Dīn 'Umar al-Suhrawardī (d. 1234) paired meticulous bodily instructions with dynamic theoretical frameworks, transforming embodied sensation into meaningful experience. Against this horizon of expectations, Ḥamūya twists embodied practices to the point of utter abstraction, stripping *The Levels of Joy* of a stable hermeneutical center.⁴ As readers double back through his labyrinthine text in search of familiar embodied and experiential cues, they

4 My approach to generic conventions aligns closely with Jonathan Culler's structuralist approach to literature. According to Culler, "To read a text as literature is not to make one's mind a *tabula rasa* and approach it without preconceptions; one must bring to it an implicit understanding of the operations of literary discourse which tells one what to look for." See idem, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics, and the Study of Literature* (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2002), esp. 131–152 ("Literary Competence"), quotation on 132. I thank Jason Protass for this reference.

I borrow the term "horizon of expectations" from James Secord, whose use refers to the textual conventions through which particular texts become meaningful. He explains, "We write as though the author speaks to us directly ('Einstein says,' 'Descartes says') when we know perfectly well that what we are actually reading is a narrative voice aimed at a particular horizon of expectations." James A. Secord, "Knowledge in Transit," *Isis* 95, no. 4 (2004), 661.

continually reconfigure ontological and phenomenological relationships to enact the infinite possibilities of divine self-disclosure within themselves.

While the fifth appendix to *The Levels of Joy* engages Sufi praxis through allusion and ironic erasure, *The Book of the Beloved* incorporates practices of prayer and supplication directly into the body of its text. For medieval Sufis, supplication was more than just a means of seeking God's favor; it was a regimented and divinely ordained *askēsis* through which individuals disciplined particular spiritual and emotional states.⁵ Sufi manuals and litanies demanded that prayers be recited aloud, prescribing specific instructions for posture, intonation, repetition, and reflection that focused scrupulous attention to one's body and affect. The affective states generated by these prayers—humility, fear, longing, sincerity, etc.—were framed both as prerequisites for and markers of advanced experiential knowledge. Ḥamūya writes supplication directly into *The Book of the Beloved*, yet weaves Sufi liturgical language into a swirl of chaotic abstraction. While his contemporaries composed manuals, liturgies, and diaries devoted exclusively to prayer practices, Ḥamūya recontextualized them as vehicles for advanced Sufi theory. In so doing, the shaykh puts the affective tools of Sufi *askēsis* towards abstract speculation, encouraging readers to use his text as a catalyst for new experiential and existential possibilities.

1 Body and Soul: The Sufi Manuals of Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī, and Shihāb al-Dīn 'Umar al-Suhrawardī

Sa'd al-Dīn's 13th-century interlocutors dedicated considerable time to delineating, explaining, and justifying the embodied practices and social performances of the Sufi path. In so doing, they engaged with handbooks produced by earlier renunciants, pietists, and Sufis, reworking a rich archive of material to suit their own programs. The texts they produced not only offered disciples models to guide their physical practices; they also sketched frameworks through which these practices and their effects could be made meaningful. While it is possible to trace recurring thematic centers, technical terminology, and organizational principles across 13th-century Sufi treatises, Ḥamūya's colleagues tend to play fast and loose with details. What was important was that seekers learned to use their bodies to interface between a plurality of

5 Here, I follow Hadot in his definition of *askēsis* as a physical, discursive, or intuitive exercise designed to enact a transformation in the participant. See Pierre Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?*, trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2002), esp. 6, 163–168.

interrelated realms, negotiating corporeal and spiritual realities in whatever form they appeared.

Ḥamūya's master Najm al-Dīn Kubrā penned several treatises for novices and Sufis actively engaged in spiritual training.⁶ *The Epistle on Spiritual Retreat* exemplifies recurring elements of the shaykh's *modus operandi*, merging embodied practice, spiritual experience, and abstract theory into a brief but pithy guide.⁷ The text includes detailed instructions for students, outlining rules for where they should undertake their practices, how they should sit to remain wakeful, when they should repeat their ritual ablutions, and how they should break their fasts. Kubrā urges wayfarers to cultivate a steadfast focus on their bodies, engaging each movement and posture with mindful awareness and disciplined control. Such regimented physical training and fastidious attention to the body encourages a heightened perception of corporeal sensations, which the shaykh uses as starting points for abstract interpretations.⁸ As the epistle progresses, Najm al-Dīn presents his readers with a detailed spiritual itinerary replete with visions and sensations to be encountered, theoretical frameworks through which to understand these phenomena, and specific exercises with which to gauge their validity.⁹ Along with visions of elemental and cosmological phenomena, for example, wayfarers are taught how to parse impressions of flashing colors, identifying specific hues as indications of the dominance, interaction, or transformation of subtle forces within one's inner being.¹⁰ Molded under the practices and postures of Kubrā's training, therefore, the body becomes a laboratory in which one can explore the wonders of Reality and progress along an ascending hierarchy of spiritual stages.

6 See, for example, *The Epistle on Spiritual Retreat (Risāla fī al-khalwa)* in Böwering, "Seclusion".

7 For *The Epistle on Spiritual Retreat*, see Böwering's edition and translation of the text in Gerhard Böwering, "Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā on Ṣūfī Seclusion, *Risāla fī 'l-khalwa*," *Ishraq: Islamic Philosophy Yearbook*, no. 5 (2014): 268–291. See also *Etiquette for Novices (Ādāb al-murīdīn)* in Kubrā, *Ādāb*, as well as *The Ten Fundamentals (al-Uṣūl al-'ashara)* and *The Epistle to the Bewildered, Fearful of the Censurer's Censure (Risāla ilā al-hā'im al-khā'if min lawmat al-lā'im)* in idem, "Traité des mineurs de Naǧm al-Dīn Kubrā," ed. Marijan Molé, *Annales Islamologiques* IV (1963), 15–22 and 23–37. *The Ten Fundamentals* has also been translated into English in Cyrus Ali Zargar, "The Ten Principles: Theoretical Implications of Volitional Death in Najm al-Dīn Kubrā's *al-Uṣūl al-'Ashara* (A Study and Translation)," *The Muslim World* 103 (2013): 107–130.

8 See e.g. Böwering, "Seclusion," 283–286 (English) and 289–291 (Arabic).

9 For imaginative exercises, visionary experiences, and interpretive frameworks, see for example, Kubrā's differentiation between true vision (*wāqī'a*) and imaginary apparition (*khayāl*), as well as his explanation of the colors to be experienced by wayfarers after moving beyond the realm of imagination and representation in Böwering, "Seclusion," 283–284 (English) and 289–290 (Arabic).

10 Böwering, "Seclusion," 283–284 (English) and 289–290 (Arabic).

A sustained focus on the human body was not limited to renowned “training masters” like Kubrā. Even Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ‘Arabī, the Sufi theoretician *par excellence*, rooted his abstract speculations in the embodied practices of the Sufi path. In his *Essence of What the Novice Needs* (*Kitāb Kunh mā lā budda li-l-murīd minhu*), Ibn ‘Arabī teaches would-be Sufis to engage with the body as a site of both corporeal and emotional discipline.¹¹ His discussion of Qur’ānic recitation brings together a close focus on bodily sensations—the position of the text in one’s lap, the movement of one’s fingers across the page, the feeling and sound of one’s voice—with exercises rooted in affect and imagination. Alongside touching, reading, and reciting words from the Qur’ān, Ibn ‘Arabī asks novices to question themselves, take heed, call out to God, and take stock of their characters.¹² He demands that his readers *feel* what they recite, both physically and emotionally. Throughout the text, Ibn ‘Arabī encourages novices to continually regulate their emotions, exhorting them to suppress anger and cultivate compassion.¹³ He likewise prescribes specific imaginative exercises to treat spiritual stubbornness, entreating readers to meditate on death with each passing breath and offering them a script through which to admonish their souls.¹⁴ Because Ibn ‘Arabī directs this particular text to novices, he eschews advanced theoretical principles in favor of corporeal and affective propaedeutics. Nevertheless, the shaykh’s point is clear: even from the earliest stages of the path, the body and all of its senses are central to the Sufi project.

Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Epistle on the Lights* (*Risālat al-Anwār*) offers Sufi adepts a more advanced guide to spiritual retreat that begins with precise instructions for how to shut oneself up in a cell, perform *dhikr*, and regulate the intake of food.¹⁵ Muḥyī al-Dīn urges readers to strike a middle ground between utter fullness

11 Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ‘Arabī, *Kitāb Kunh mā lā budda li-l-murīd minhu*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehid Ali Paşa MS 1342, fols. 217^b–220^a. See also Jeffrey Arthur’s translation in Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ‘Arabī, “Instructions to a Postulant,” in *A Reader on Islam: Passages from Standard Arabic Writings Illustrative of the Beliefs and Practices of Muslims*, ed. and trans. Arthur Jeffrey (The Hague: Mouton, 1962), 644–645. On the basis of Arthur’s translation, it seems his source text—a 1962 Cairo edition of the text, edited by Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Kurdī and appended to al-Ghazālī’s *Risāla al-ladunīyya*—diverges from our manuscript in several places.

12 Ibn ‘Arabī, *Kunh*, fol. 218^a.

13 For suppressing anger, see Ibn ‘Arabī, *Kunh*, fol. 219^a; and idem, “Instructions,” 649. For compassion, especially towards slaves and animals, see idem, *Kunh*, fol. 218b; and idem, “Instructions,” 647.

14 See Ibn ‘Arabī, *Kunh*, fol. 219^a; and idem, “Instructions,” 651.

15 Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ‘Arabī, *Rasā’il Ibn ‘Arabī*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Nimrī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2001), 125. The epistle was likely composed in response to a colleague (likely a Sufi master himself) who had reached a considerable degree of spiritual attainment, yet needed help conceptualizing and communicating the stages of the path

and extreme hunger, prescribing a diet of high-calorie vegan meals to maintain a steady humoral equilibrium. Such a balanced approach, he explains, will ensure that altered sensations are the result of genuine spiritual experiences and not feverish phantasms brought about by the effects of starvation.¹⁶ As Ibn ‘Arabī sketches the contours of the wayfarer’s spiritual ascent, it becomes clear why such sensory clarity is paramount. The heavenly ascension that occurs during spiritual retreat is a turn into one’s own body, an illumination of all the Real’s qualities within one’s own self.¹⁷ During the initial stages of one’s ascent, spiritual experiences become manifest along with particular embodied sensations—coolness and pleasure; the crushing of one’s limbs; pain, distress, and confusion.¹⁸ Wayfarers can only gauge the quality of their progress through a careful regulation of the body and acute awareness of the phenomena that occur within it.

The Epistle on the Lights outlines a full spiritual itinerary for the wayfarer, mapping a microcosmic journey that proceeds from the lowest ontological realms to the majesty of the Divine Presence. As he moves beyond the sensory and imaginal realms, Ibn ‘Arabī leaves behind his discussion of bodily sensations and overwhelms readers with wondrous worlds and abstract qualities. Despite this shift in the epistle’s narrative focus, however, the wayfarer’s disciplined body continues to operate from its darkened cell, powering the entire ascent through the infinite repetition of God’s name. The loftiest stage of the microcosmic journey likewise represents a transformation of the wayfarer’s body: a return to the material and social world as the embodiment of universal Muḥammadan sainthood.¹⁹ Upon unlocking the most profound secrets of being, the newly minted Muḥammadan saint manifests perfect knowledge through perfect action, adapting to the exigencies of each and every moment with perfect decorum.²⁰ Thus, the spiritual ascent and the practices that drive it not only require use of human bodies; they also change how those bodies move through the world.

Apart from guides to spiritual retreat and Sufi praxis, Ḥamūya’s colleagues also outlined instructions for religious duties they shared with other Mus-

to his own disciples. See Ibn ‘Arabī, *Rasā’il*, 123; and James Winston Morris, “The Spiritual Ascension: Ibn ‘Arabī and the Mi‘rāj Part I,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 107, no. 4 (1987), 632.

16 Ibn ‘Arabī, *Rasā’il*, 125.

17 See also Morris, “Ascension I,” 630.

18 Ibn ‘Arabī, *Rasā’il*, 125–126.

19 Ibn ‘Arabī, *Rasā’il*, 129–131. For more on Ibn ‘Arabī’s notion of Muḥammadan sainthood, see Michel Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints: Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn ‘Arabī*, trans. Liadain Sherrard (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1993).

20 Ibn ‘Arabī, *Rasā’il*, 131.

lims. Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ḥaḥṣ ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī’s comprehensive *Kind Gifts of Knowledge* (*‘Awārif al-ma‘ārif*) not only touches upon such topics as the essence of Sufism, Sufi technical terminology, and the performance of forty-day spiritual retreats; it also includes sections on obligatory religious practices like fasting, pilgrimage, and prayer. A chapter entitled “Describing the Prayer of the People of Closeness” (*fī waṣf ṣalāt ahl al-qurb*) couples a meticulous rehearsal of *ṣalāt* with a loose metaphysical framework rooted in unseen realms and the complex interplay between interior and exterior principles.²¹ During such charged moments as divinely ordained ritual prayer, each and every movement, posture, and attitude shapes phenomena in the realm of the unseen. An act as simple as the folding of one’s hands after the *takbīr* becomes a struggle between heaven and earth, faith and nature, spirit and soul, angel and demon.²² To

21 During his discussion of the initial *takbīr*, for example, Suhrawardī couples minute details of one’s physical posture—palms at shoulder height; thumbs aligned with earlobes; fingertips parallel to ears; fingers pressed together (though fingers spread is permissible too)—with an extended discussion exploring interface between the physical body and the realm of the unseen. See Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ḥaḥṣ al-Suhrawardī, *‘Awārif al-ma‘ārif*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Khālīdī (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2016), 182–183.

Minute descriptions of shared religious practices are characteristic of older Sufi manuals as well. See, for example, Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb fī mu‘āmilat al-maḥbūb wa-waṣf ṭarīq al-murīd ilā maqām al-tawḥīd*, ed. Maḥmūd Ibrāhīm Muḥammad al-Riḍwānī, 3 vols. (Cairo: Maktabat Dār al-Turāth, 2001). See also al-Ghazālī’s *Revival of the Religious Sciences* (*Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn*) and Persian *Alchemy of Happiness* (*Kīmīyā-yi sa‘ādat*), both of which also contain rich descriptions of Muslim ritual practice. Idem, *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-Dīn*, 10 vols. (Jedda: Dār al-Minhāj, 2011) and idem, *Kīmīyā-yi sa‘ādat*, ed. Ḥusayn Khidīw-Jam, 2 vols. (Tehran: Sharikat-i Intishārāt-i ‘Ilmī wa Farhangī, 2001).

Though not a Sufi training manual per se, Ibn ‘Arabī’s monumental *Meccan Revelations* also contains extensive discussions of the so-called “Pillars of Religion” (*arkān al-dīn*). Chapters 67–72 present detailed elaborations of embodied practice, weaving together corporeal, legal, imaginal, and abstract metaphysical registers. The section on raising one’s hands during prayer (*raf‘ al-ayday*), for example, includes an extensive discussion of moments, manner, degree, and duration, surveying a range of scholarly opinions and evidence from the *ḥadīth* corpus. See Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ‘Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkīyya* (SD), ed. Aḥmad Shams al-Dīn, 9 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1999), 11.89–90; and idem, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkīyya* (OY), ed. Osman Yahia, 14 vols. (Cairo: al-Hay’a al-Miṣriyya al-‘Āmma li-l-Kitāb, 1972–1992), VI.364–369. The section outlining which parts of the body to press to the ground in ritual prostration (*sujūd*), likewise, includes a precise elaboration of corporeal minutiae—what should touch the ground, in what order, etc.—and surveys scholarly opinions about the legal implications of different configurations. From here, Ibn ‘Arabī launches into a discourse on the relationship between Divine Attributes and the movement of the body’s limbs in prayer. See Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, (SD) 11.94–95 and (OY) VI.389–393. Although the shaykh’s discussion reaches a high level of abstraction, he maintains a careful attention to the human body *qua* body.

22 Suhrawardī, *‘Awārif*, 183.

unlock the true transformative potential of ritual prayer, therefore, Suhrawardī suggests that one must cultivate a disciplined attention to one's body and mind, a keen understanding of diverse metaphysical principles, and an imaginative capacity to negotiate between these worlds in real time.

Like Kubrā's *Epistle on Spiritual Retreat*, "Describing the Prayer of the People of Closeness" forgoes a stable theoretical framework through which to situate the various metaphysical principles it introduces. By bringing together material from the Qur'an, *ḥadīth*, pious forefathers, and Sufi masters, Suhrawardī presents readers with a bricolage of language games and theoretical concepts. When read in polyphonic harmony, these voices generate an overarching worldview centered around the human being as a locus for fundamental ontological principles. What matters here is that readers learn to engage in a specific set of prescribed practices and experience their bodies battlegrounds for opposing forces across all levels of being. Suhrawardī implicitly deploys the universalizing hermeneutical range of his methods to present himself and his Sufi colleagues as the arbiters of the revelation as communicated to Muḥammad. The dynamic flexibility of his approach allows him to encompass a plurality of interpretive possibilities, subsuming a variety of diverse positions within his own exegetical vision. For Suhrawardī, only the embodied sensibilities of Sufism can fully realize the generative potential of Muslim practice. The Sufis are thus the real '*ulamā*' of the Muslim community: the inheritors of the Prophet and the only individuals truly qualified to understand, perform, and teach fundamental religious rites.²³

2 Both Directions at Once: *The Levels of Joy* as Sufi Free Jazz?

Ḥamūya's work engages with the Sufi guidebooks of his contemporaries, but deconstructs their generic conventions to open up new experiential and intellectual possibilities. The shaykh identifies the principal theme of his *Levels of Joy in the Fountains of Power* as uncovering the reality of darkness and driving it away, which, he elaborates, refers generally to stripping oneself of the veils that obscure the light of the Real.²⁴ The treatise's fifth appendix takes the form of an *arbaʿīniyyāt* text, outlining the contours of the Sufi path through an exe-

23 Such claims about the role of Sufis vis-à-vis the broader Muslim community are characteristic of the *Kind Gifts of Knowledge* as a whole. See Erik Ohlander, *Sufism in an Age of Transition: Umar al-Suhrawardī and the Rise of the Islamic Mystical Brotherhood* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 142.

24 For more on *The Levels of Joy*, see note 20 on p. 31.

genesis of forty *ḥadīths*.²⁵ Although the shaykh's introduction to the appendix is characteristically difficult, a perusal of its contents demonstrates a considerable thematic and structural overlap with both contemporary and classic Sufi handbooks.²⁶ In order to strip away the darkness of one's particularity, Ḥamūya implies, wayfarers must hold fast to obligatory acts of worship, engage daily norms with proper etiquette, turn away from the moral vices, and progress through the various states and stations of the Sufi path.

While the themes and structure of Sa'd al-Dīn's appendix locate him within the discursive field outlined above, his discussion frames the human body and its senses in completely abstract terms. The text's entire discussion of prayer, for example, runs as follows:

الفصل الثالث في باب الصلوة
قال عليه الصلوة والسلام ما افترض الله تعالى على خلقه بعد التوحيد أحب إليه من
الصلوة ولو كان شيء أحب إليه منها لتعبّد به ملائكته فمنهم راعع ومنهم ساجد
وقائم وقاعد

25 For *arbaʿīniyyat* texts, see Muḥammad Zubayr Ṣiddīqī, *Ḥadīth Literature: Its Origin, Development and Special Features* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1993), 12–13 and 141n95.

In what follows, I focus my attention on cases that highlight the radical deconstructive potential of Ḥamūya's writing. Even when operating in a more conventional mode, however, the shaykh's work disrupts generic expectations. As Sārā Kashfī argues, the shaykh's *Repose of the Righteous*—his only extant manual—stands out for its unique, remarkably synthetic approach to Sufi praxis, visionary experience, and ontological principles. She writes, "One could say ... that Ḥamūya struck upon something new and succeeded in it." See Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Sakīnat al-ṣāliḥīn*, ed. Sārā Kashfī (Qom: Majma'ī-i Dhakhā'ir-i Islāmī, Mu'assasat-i Tārikh-i 'Ilm wa Farhang, 2015), 30–31. Ḥamūya's *Mirror of Spirits and Signs on Tablets* likewise offers detailed instructions for a Sufi liturgy, but couples these prayers with a series of talismanic diagrams and letterist operations absent from other texts of the same genre. See Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Sajanjal al-arwāḥ wa-nuqūsh al-abwāḥ*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Fatih MS 2645 (F) and Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Carullah MS 1541 (CE).

26 For a table of contents, see Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Kitāb Marātib al-qurra fī 'uyūn al-qudra* (P), Princeton, Princeton University Library, Garrett Collection MS 3793Y, fols. 7^b–117^a. In its progression of themes, the text bears a close affinity to Suhrawardī's *Kind Gifts of Knowledge* and classical manuals like al-Ghazālī's *Revival of the Religious Sciences* and *Alchemy of Happiness*. The similarities between the contents of Ḥamūya's appendix and the forty chapters of the *Revival* are particularly striking, reflecting the shaykh's broader engagement with al-Ghazālī's work. As Sārā Kashfī has noted, for example, Ḥamūya's *Repose of the Righteous* quotes liberally from both the *Revival* and the *Alchemy* in its section on Sufi conduct. See Kashfī's introduction to the *Repose* and her extensive notes on the text—esp. Ḥamūya, *Sakīna*, 30, 55–75.

اعلم وفقك الله تعالى أنّ صفة اتصال صفات²⁷ السمع والقدرة القويّة والقوّة القادرة بمحلّ الكلام في الملائكة الذين يعبدهم الله تعالى بالصلوة وجعل منهم راکعًا وساجدًا وقائمًا وقاعدًا وصفة اتصال صفات الركوع والسجود والقيام والقيود من الملك بصفات نفس البشر وهي الأُمّاريّة واللواميّة والمطمئنيّة فإذا اتّصلت تلك الصفات بعدها ببعض وبرز القلب بحال الملك وآدم عليه الصلوة والسلام وتجمع عليه حال الملك وحال آدم في صورة واحدة فيكون حال آدم عليه الصلوة واللام نقطة دائرة الأحياء وحال الملك نقطة دائرة الأموات فيكون القلب بين الدارين مورد السرّ²⁸ ومحلّ نزوله وكلّ قلب هذا شأنه فإذا نهض لله وهجم على شيء كرهته نفسه ورضيته يقيم الربوبيّة هناك وهو أن يرى صنائعه هو الذي صنعها قبل كلّ صانع

Section Three: The Chapter on Prayer

The Messenger of God said, "After *tawhīd*, God has not made anything obligatory for His creation that is more beloved to Him than prayer. If there were anything more beloved to Him than [prayer], the angels would worship Him in that way instead. But, among them there are those who bow, prostrate, stand, and sit."

Know that one Attribute links the [Divine] Attributes of hearing, all-powerful capacity (*al-qudra al-quwwiyya*), and all-capable power (*al-quwwa al-qādira*) with the locus of speech about the angels whom God makes worship through prayer and whom God makes bow, prostrate, stand, and sit. Another Attribute links the attributes of the angels' bowing, prostrating, standing, and sitting with the attributes of the human soul, which are commanding [evil], blaming, and being at peace. When these Attributes are joined, the heart emerges through the angelic and Adamic states (*bi-hāl al-malak wa-Ādam*). The angelic and Adamic states are brought together within a single form, such that the Adamic state becomes the point in the circle of the living and the angelic state becomes the point in the circle of the dead. Between the two circles, the heart becomes the site of the secret's arrival and the locus of its descent. For each heart in this state, when it rises up to God and forces out whatever the soul hates and desires, it erects lordship (*al-rubūbiyya*) there [in

27 There is a marginal note that corrects صفات to صفة. In light of the parallel construction that follows, I have chosen to adopt the original reading.

28 Reading السرّ for الشرّ.

its place]. This is to witness [in] His crafts Him who crafts them before any craftsman.²⁹

Ḥamūya imagines the four primary postures of prayer—bowing, prostrating, standing, and sitting—as an angelic tetrad entangled in a series of connections across multiple levels of being. This tetrad mediates between divine and human realms, forging a link between a triad of Divine Attributes and the three primary states of the human soul. While each of these realms may be imagined as its own distinct ontological level, Ḥamūya frames the human being as their ultimate point of intersection: the stage at which all qualities may be perfected to reveal the unified Reality that undergirds them. Through the proper negotiation of angelic and human principles, wayfarers can annihilate the inclinations and qualities characteristic of created beings, transforming themselves (and their bodies) into vessels for the Real.

Although the section on prayer is one of the clearer passages from the appendix, its contents are characteristically slippery. The divine, angelic, and human realms are dynamic in their interactions: they merge, transform, split open, and give rise to new principles. These new principles, in turn, move spatially—emerging, descending, ascending, driving out, erecting—though without any clear point of orientation. When one attempts to map any of these referents to the cosmogonic myth with which Sa’d al-Dīn introduces the appendix, one encounters only etymological experiments, shifting frameworks, obscure terminology, subtle allusions, and interpenetrating principles.³⁰ Despite similarities with the tripartite realms of *lāhūt*, *malakūt*, and *mulk* from *The Book of the Point* and *The Lamp of Sufism* (see e.g., Figures 1–3), the triads and tetrads introduced in the section on prayer from Appendix 5 cannot be easily correlated with the principles outlined in those texts.

The abstract quality of Ḥamūya’s style becomes even more apparent when his work is read against that of his teachers and colleagues. In the Sufi texts analyzed above, dynamic theoretical frameworks are grounded in concrete physical practices, teaching readers to navigate the shifting tempest of Reality through a careful attention to their own embodied experiences. While Suhrawardī stretches exhaustive accounts of the postures, sequences, attitudes, and utterances of prayer across three chapters of his *Kind Gifts of Knowledge*, Ḥamūya offers only a cursory mention of four basic forms.³¹ What’s more, his

29 Ḥamūya, *Marātib*, (P) fol. 89^b.

30 For the introduction to Appendix 5, see Ḥamūya, *Marātib*, (P) 82^b–87^b.

31 We could extend this comparison to Ibn ‘Arabī’s discussion of prayer in the *Futūḥāt* as well. See note 21 on p. 82 above.

specific references to bowing, prostrating, standing, and sitting have to do primarily with the attributes and activities of angels, not the fleshy bodies of human beings. Whereas Kubrā and Ibn ‘Arabī employ training programs and narrative structures that anchor experiential knowledge of the unseen in the sensations of the disciplined Sufi body, Ḥamūya unmoors his readers from any explicit reference to such programs or practices. Without references to concrete physical cues, it is difficult to ascertain how—or even if—the embodied performance of ritual prayer enacts the metamorphoses Ḥamūya describes. The delicate balance between theory and practice seems to have been disrupted in Sa’d al-Dīn’s text, shutting him off from the usual strategies through which his colleagues seek to transform the subjectivities of their readers.

I argue that it is precisely by priming and subverting these generic conventions that Sa’d al-Dīn’s texts produce their transformative effects. The thematic flow of Ḥamūya’s appendix is almost identical to the structure of al-Ghazālī’s 12th-century *Revival of the Religious Sciences*, a practical handbook that brings together *fiqh*, philosophical ethics, and extensive material from such earlier Sufi manuals as Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī’s *Nourishment of the Hearts*.³² By the 13th century, both al-Ghazālī and Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī’s texts had become “classic” points of reference, even outside Ḥamūya’s immediate circle. A document of investiture (*taqlīd*) from the Ayyūbid-cum-Mamlūk-funded Sa’īd al-Su’adā’ *khānaqāh* in Cairo, for example, describes the office of the institution’s highest ranking Sufi with the following words: “He searches in the *tafsīr* and the *ta’wīl* in order to make the secrets of the [Qur’ān] clear. He speaks of [al-Ghazālī’s] *Revival of the Religious Science*, and obtains from it *The Nourishment of Hearts*.”³³ Ibn ‘Arabī and Suhrawardī likewise rework material from these classics to suit new ideological goals, intellectual frameworks, and social contexts, drawing as much from technical terminology and metaphysical frameworks as from the authors’ careful attention to embodied practice.³⁴

32 See note 26 on p. 84. For a brief description of the *Revival* and its use of earlier manuals, see Frank Griffel, *Al-Ghazali's Philosophical Theology* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 48.

33 Nathan Hofer, *The Popularisation of Sufism in Ayyubid and Mamluk Egypt, 1173–1325* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 46–47. The specific *taqlīd* quoted here refers to Shams al-Dīn al-Aykī (d. 1298), who became Chief Sufi at the Sa’īd al-Su’adā’ in 1286. Though the document itself does not survive, it is preserved in both Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir’s (d. 1293) *Tashrif al-ayyām* and Ibn al-Furāt’s (d. 1405) *Tārīkh*. I have relied on Hofer’s translation, with minor modifications.

34 As Addas notes, Ibn ‘Arabī mentions al-Ghazālī by name and quotes his work quite often. See Claude Addas, *Quest for the Red Sulphur: The Life of Ibn ‘Arabī*, trans. Peter Kingsley (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1993), 102–103. Both Ibn ‘Arabī and Suhrawardī also

By deploying such overt thematic and conceptual allusions to what had become fundamental and oft-cited texts, Sa'd al-Dīn situates his work within contemporary conversations on the nature of the Sufi path and frames his discussions within a specific set of generic conventions. Although Ḥamūya does not explicitly inscribe Appendix 5 of *The Levels of Joy* with the minutiae of embodied practice, his structural and thematic allusions nevertheless presume—or perhaps even *demand*—a thorough familiarity with classic Sufi literature and the practical realities of Sufi training. We could say that the shaykh plays free jazz to the bebop of his contemporaries, using strategic bursts of shared vocabulary to evoke established conventions while simultaneously deconstructing the forms expected to accompany them. Like Coltrane's *Meditations* (1966), each skittering phrase or abrasive texture from Ḥamūya's *Levels of Joy* becomes meaningful not only through the cacophonous blur in which it is immediately situated, but also through the familiar frameworks it twists, warps, exaggerates, or negates through implication. That is to say, the full import of Ḥamūya's avant-garde meditations on these forty *ḥadīth* is almost impossible to grasp without an advanced understanding of the material with which he is in dialogue. To continue with our *Meditations* analogy, the meaning that emerges from such a juxtaposition is not reducible to a set of propositions that can be decoded and mapped to more conventional forms. While a well-trained musician or critic recognizes particular melodic motives and harmonic allusions in Trane's lines, such a discerning listener understands that mapping, say, "The Father And The Son And the Holy Ghost" according to the familiar changes of bebop standards alone does not offer a satisfying analysis of what the piece is actually *doing*. Returning to the matter at hand, I argue that reading Ḥamūya's fifth appendix to the *Levels of Joy* is not simply a question of unlocking a normative matrix of theory and practice within which his claims would suddenly click into place. A more productive approach is to ask how the shaykh's conspicuous omission of embodied practice could have been produced and received in light of contemporary expectations and generic possibilities.³⁵

make frequent reference to Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī. See, for example, Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, (oy) 1.260 and (sd) 1.95 and Suhrawardī, *Awārif*, 24.

35 While such intertextual (or, *intermusical*) forms of meaning making are especially pronounced in Coltrane's later work, Ingrid Monson argues that strategies of playful/ironic allusion are central to jazz traditions writ large. Drawing from Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s concept of "signifying"—i.e., "repetition with a signal difference"—Monson suggests that jazz performers deploy strategies of allusion, quotation, and transformation in conversation with musical (and social) conventions shared by communities of listeners and performers. These strategies open up complex layers of meaning that are by no means limited to

As we have seen above, medieval manuals couple meticulous bodily instructions with imaginative exercises and dynamic theoretical frames, teaching readers to frame their own experiences of Sufi practice through the subjective, epistemological, or existential realities articulated by a particular master. Though the classical form and thematic progression of Ḥamūya's appendix prime readers to forge links between his words and their own embodied experiences, he denies them the corporeal tethers with which they would typically ground their readings. At the same time, the shaykh continually reorganizes the conceptual frameworks through which he articulates his abstract discourse, disrupting all sense of interpretive stability. Ḥamūya's manipulation of shared conventions thus provokes readers to double back upon his labyrinthine passages in search of familiar embodied cues, forcing them to map and remap tentative correlations across shifting abstract and phenomenal realms. His approach targets advanced readers intimately familiar with Sufi discourse and exploits their knowledge of established conventions to generate an endless array of spiritual, existential, and experiential possibilities. It is thus in dialogue with the generic conventions of his contemporaries that the shaykh's words emerge as radically open to interpretation and, implicitly, as the ultimate articulation of Sufi practice vis-à-vis a boundless self-disclosure.

Ḥamūya's approach to the diverse possibilities of Sufi practice locates him squarely within the competitive field of his contemporaries. In Kubrā's *Etiquette for Novices* (*Ādāb al-murīdīn*), for example, the Khwārazmī shaykh offers a range of complementary yet incommensurable interpretations that link Sufi garb and accoutrements to inner spiritual states, deploying several lettrist operations in the process.³⁶ As Meier notes, "... Surely, Kubrā's list ... is only one possibility which he himself could replace at any time with another."³⁷ By writing these diverse possibilities and interpretations into his text without attempting to harmonize them, Kubrā frames himself as privy to a dynamic way of knowing capable of encompassing an infinite number of embodied Sufi possibilities. At other points, Najm al-Dīn evokes the infinite possibilities of Sufi practice, synthesizing them into broader trends and adjudicating their relative merits before highlighting his own particular approach as the most efficient and effec-

the intentions of a single performer. See Ingrid T. Monson, *Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), esp. 97–132.

36 See Kubrā, *Ādāb-i khūrqa-pūshīdan*, fols. 131^b–134^a and Fritz Meier's "close paraphrase" in Fritz Meier, "A Book of Etiquette for Sufis," in *Essays on Islamic Piety and Mysticism*, ed. Bernd Radtke, trans. John O'Kane (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 49–92.

37 Meier, "Book of Etiquette," 59.

tive.³⁸ Suhrawardī and Ibn ‘Arabī take a similar tack in their discussions of Sufi practice. Shihāb al-Dīn’s *Kind Gifts of Knowledge* outlines a range of possible *dhikr* practices and their theoretical justifications, while Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Epistle on the Lights* suggests that the dimensions of the Sufi path differ in accordance with diversity of wayfarers’ states.³⁹ In short, each of these Sufis evokes and orders an infinite diversity of practice within his work to demonstrate mastery of the Sufi field and the relative superiority of his own methods. Read against his colleagues, therefore, we may understand Ḥamūya’s use of allusion and his refusal to outline a specific program of embodied practice in Appendix 5 of the *Levels of Joy* as creative approach to a legible strategy of Sufi competition. The shaykh essentially turns the techniques of his contemporaries against them, deconstructing their strategies to parochialize the universalizing pretensions of their claims.

3 Meditations: Prayer as Spiritual Technology?

If the fifth appendix to Ḥamūya’s the *Levels of Joy* operates through an ironic erasure of the body, *The Book of the Beloved* deconstructs established conventions through its performances of embodied Sufi practice in text. In addition to the introductory encomia that were a standard feature of medieval Arabic and Persian texts, Sa’d al-Dīn’s text invokes God directly, interspersing prayers and supplications amongst dizzying lettrist investigations, esoteric diagrams, and intimate conversations (*munājāt*) expressed in poetic language. The shaykh’s invocations typically begin with the vocative formula *Allāhumma* (“O God!”), followed by requests for knowledge, protection, forgiveness, or transformation, and general words of exaltation and praise. The form of these prayers mirrors that of the supplications transmitted by Sufi classics like *The Nourishment of the Hearts* and *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*, as well prayer books penned by 13th-century Sufis like Ibn ‘Arabī and Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī.⁴⁰ While

38 See, for example, Kubrā, “Traité mineurs,” 15, where the shaykh explains that the paths to God are equal to the number of created souls.

39 See Suhrawardī, *Awārif*, 127 ff. and Ibn ‘Arabī, *Rasā’il*, 123.

40 See Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, *Qūt*, e.g. 28–37; al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā’*, e.g. II.341–451, translated as idem, *Invocations and Supplications (Kitāb al-adhkār wa’l-da’awāt): Book 1X of the Revival of the Religious Sciences (Iḥyā’ ulūm al-dīn)*, trans. Kojiro Nakamura, 4th ed. (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2016); Ibn ‘Arabī, *The Seven Days of the Heart: Prayers for the Nights and Days of the Week*, trans. Pablo Beneito and Stephen Hirtenstein (Oxford: Anqa Publishing, 2008); and Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī, *Awrād-i Sayf al-Dīn-i Bākharzī*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehid Ali Paşa MS 1382 and *Majmū’a-yi āthār-i shaykh al-‘ālam Sayf al-Dīn-i*

modern readers may be tempted to ignore such passages as incidental to the primary ontological and hagiological concerns of *The Book of the Beloved*, I read Ḥamūya's invocations as performative strategies that provoked Sufi audiences to interpret his abstract discourses through the experiential frames of their own subjective states.

In classic manuals like *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*, these prayers and supererogatory supplications were both tools through which Sufis could call upon God for favors and spiritual technologies intended to discipline supplicants' subjectivities. Al-Ghazālī clarifies the etiquette (*adab*) of supplication in "On Invocations and Supplications" (*Kitāb al-adhkār wa-l-da'awāt*), outlining a series of embodied practices with which to inculcate an attitude of humble submission. He instructs readers to petition God quietly while facing the *qibla*, urging them to lower their eyes and raise their arms or else to prostrate themselves completely.⁴¹ Al-Ghazālī likewise forbids supplicants from expressing their petitions in an ornate rhymed prose (*saj'*), arguing that such showy language and affected performance contradict the self-abasement that the act of prayer is supposed to cultivate.⁴²

Apart from these physical prescriptions, al-Ghazālī demands that supplicants undertake their prayers while channeling specific affective or emotional states. He requires humility, submissiveness, longing, and fear; firm belief and sincere hope for a response; earnestness; and an inner decorum characterized by repentance, rejection of wrongdoing, and turning towards God with the utmost zeal.⁴³ For al-Ghazālī, therefore, supplication is a holistic regimen of physical and emotional discipline. The goal of such a practice is to cultivate proper etiquette with respect to God—i.e., states of attentive humility and yearning hopefulness which are, in turn, prerequisite conditions for experiential Sufi knowledge.⁴⁴

Ḥamūya's 13th-century colleagues continued to uphold supplication and supererogatory prayer as fundamental Sufi practices. Ibn 'Arabī's chief disciple and Ḥamūya's close friend Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī composed treatises that integrated supplications and intimate dialogues with God as a means of articulating specific experiential dimensions of the Sufi path and the real-

Bākhārzi, ed. Ghulām-Nabī Tawakkulī Pushta-ī, 'Āmir Tawakkulī Pushta-ī, and Muḥammad Nāṣir Mawdūdī (Tehran: Dībāya, 2018), 45–52. For an example of Ḥamūya's supplications, see the discussion below (p. 93 ff.).

41 al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, II.379–381 and *Invocations*, 36–38.

42 al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, II.382–384 and *Invocations*, 38–41.

43 al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, II.384–393 and *Invocations*, 41–54.

44 al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, VIII.560–561.

ities unveiled therein. In an epistolary exchange between Qūnawī and the Peripatetic philosopher Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 1274), Qūnawī's messenger erroneously included such a text—entitled *Expectoration of an Ailing Breast and Gift of One who is Thankful* (*Naḫṫhat al-maṣḍūr wa-tuḫḫat al-shakūr*)—along with the Sufi's initial letter critiquing the epistemological capacities of the intellect.⁴⁵ Ṭūsī is bemused by the treatise and questions why his interlocutor would produce such a mawkish composition. While he acknowledges the utility of supplication and intimate conversation for novices, Ṭūsī suggests that these practices should be unnecessary for an accomplished Sufi shaykh like Qūnawī.⁴⁶

In his rejoinder to Ṭūsī, Qūnawī explains that the supplications and intimate conversations contained in the *Expectoration* articulate divine revelations (*naḫḫāt ilāhiyya*) that he received during moments of spiritual retreat, expressing Attributes of the Real—necessity and contingency, lordship and servanthood—as they became manifest to/through him.⁴⁷ Qūnawī frames spiritual retreat as a journey in which wayfarers traverse the entirety of the microcosm within their own selves and explore the divine self-disclosure as a series of stages and states that alternate between two primary poles of Being. On one side, there is necessity and lordship; on the other, contingency and servanthood.⁴⁸ Qūnawī explains that each of these states and stages has a language and etiquette through which it is to be experienced and expressed. Despite being recognized as an accomplished shaykh, he argues that the Real continues to unfold Itself to him through all of Its dynamic and affective qualities. Articulating the knowledge revealed to him at this particular moment of spiritual retreat—i.e., a specific Attribute of lordship from the perspective of a corresponding Attribute of servanthood—thus demands a language of hum-

45 For an edition of the exchange (which does not include the *Expectoration*), see Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī and Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *al-Murāsālāt bayna Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī wa-Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī / Annäherungen: Der mystisch-philosophische Briefwechsel zwischen Ṣadr ud-Dīn-i Qūnawī und Naṣīr ud-Dīn-i Ṭūsī*, ed. Gudrun Schubert (Beirut: Franz Steiner, 1995). For a full discussion of the exchange, see William C. Chittick, "Mysticism versus Philosophy in Earlier Islamic History: The al-Ṭūsī, al-Qūnawī Correspondence," *Religious Studies* 17, no. 1 (1981): 87–104. For the *Expectoration*, see Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, *Naḫṫhat al-maṣḍūr wa-tuḫḫat al-shakūr*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Amcazade Hüseyin MS 447, fols. 1–17. For a brief description of the text, see Richard Todd, *The Sufi Doctrine of Man: Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī's Metaphysical Anthropology* (Boston: Brill, 2014), 39–49, 188.

46 al-Qūnawī and al-Ṭūsī, *al-Murāsālāt*, 89–90.

47 See al-Qūnawī and al-Ṭūsī, *al-Murāsālāt*, 135–136.

48 Ḥamūya characterizes these poles as conquering (*qahr*) and kindness (*lutf*). See, for example, Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Kitāb al-Maḥbūb*, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (SBB), MS Or. fol. 4084, fols. 23^b ff.

ble supplication. Anything else would not only breach the rules of etiquette; it would be clear evidence against the veracity of his experience.

With this context in mind, let us return to Ḥamūya's *Book of the Beloved*. Unlike the examples found in Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī's *Nourishment*, al-Ghazālī's *Revival*, al-Suhrawardī's *Kind Gifts*, and Bākharzī and Ibn 'Arabī's *Prayers*, Ḥamūya's petitions are not transmitted within a context of self-conscious liturgical instruction or elaboration. He does not locate his prayers within broader discussions of ritual practice, nor does he explicitly mark them as paradigmatic models for performance.⁴⁹ Unlike Qūnawī's *Expectoration*, furthermore, Ḥamūya does not frame *The Book of the Beloved* as a diary of his own supplications and experiences. Sa'd al-Dīn's prayers only occur at key sections of the text, scattered amongst ecstatic poetry and intimate conversations, arcane diagrams, spiritual visions, and lettrist investigations into a range of themes including hagiology, ontogenesis, apocalypticism, prophetic lore, and Qur'anic exegesis.

By excising the language of prayer from its conventional contexts and grafting it into the abstract discourses of *The Book of the Beloved*, Ḥamūya manipulates Sufi supplication to generate new interpretive possibilities. The shaykh retools Sufi technologies to explore the affective dimensions of Reality, encouraging readers to interpret his words through their own dynamic subjective states. Such strategies divorce the meaning of his words from a single authorial vision while simultaneously restricting their ideal audience to readers with advanced knowledge of Sufi practice.

To give a clearer sense of Ḥamūya's invocations, I transcribe and translate a brief example from *The Book of the Beloved* here:

اللّهُمَّ بِحُرْمَةِ مَحْبُوبِكَ وَمَا كَشَفْتَ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ آثَارِ مَحْبُوبِكَ وَأَنْوَارِ مَرْبُوبِكَ وَطَفْلِ
لَطْفِكَ وَضَيْفِ فَضْلِكَ وَدَرَّةِ بَحْرِ جُودِكَ وَقُوَّةِ سُلْطَانِ عَسَاكِرِكَ وَجُنُودِكَ أَنْ تُخْرِجَنَا
إِلَى سَعَةِ رَحْمَتِكَ وَعِلْمِكَ وَكَرْسِيِّكَ مِنْ مَضَائِقِ إِطْلَاقِكَ وَإِمْسَاكَ وَقِيُودِكَ
تَمَسِّكُنَا بِذَيْلِ الْمَحْبُوبِ فَاجْعَلْنَا مِنْهُ فِي الْعُقُولِ وَالْقُلُوبِ وَالْغُيُوبِ لَا شَكَّ وَلَا
إِخْلَاجَ وَلَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ أَخْرَجَ مِنْ وَجُودِنَا مَنَافِيهِ وَمَا يَنَافِيهِ نَحْنُ الضَّيِّاعُ فِي بُوَادِي
الطَّلَبِ وَالْهَلْكَى عَلَى أُمَّتِ الْعَلْبِ فَأَدْرِكُنَا بِهِ وَمَا فِيهِ مِنْكَ وَخَلِّصْنَا مِنْ مَوَاطِنِ
السُّلْبِ

49 Cf., for example, Bākharzī, *Majmū'at*, 45.

O God—by the sanctity of Your beloved and his traces You have uncovered for us; by the lights of Your scion, the child of Your kindness, the recipient of Your virtue, the pearl from Your generosity’s sea, the power from Your armies and soldiers’ might—bring us out to the expanse of Your mercy, knowledge, and throne from the narrow straights of your losing, seizing, and binding. Make us grasp the beloved’s skirts, and thereby make us without doubt, trembling, or misgivings with respect to him in [our] hearts, intellects, eyes, and hidden aspects. Remove incompatibility with him and whatever contradicts him from our existence. We are lost in the deserts of seeking—perishing, too weak to overcome. Make us perceive him and whatever is Yours within him. Liberate us from the lawless lands of denial.⁵⁰

This particular prayer occurs near the beginning of *The Book of the Beloved*, following Ḥamūya’s preliminary discussion of the beloved’s “ten faces/aspects” (sing. *wajh*) and his relationship with the Real. After continuing his supplication for about another folio, the shaykh concludes by naming God the true speaker of the text’s words and beseeching Him to clarify their meanings for readers who have undergone the proper preparation.⁵¹ From here, Ḥamūya launches into a discussion of the fifteen lettrist circles that make up the bulk of the treatise.

A surface reading of Ḥamūya’s petitions sensitizes readers to key themes that will be explored later in the text. At this level, his supplications mirror the elaborate introductory encomia found in both Sufi and non-Sufi texts written in Arabic and Persian. The prayer translated above, for example, foreshadows many of the themes that follow: the intimate relationship between the Real and the beloved, the equation of true knowledge with recognition of the beloved, and the intellectual, sensory, phenomenal, and spiritual aspects of this recognition. At the same time, by embedding his supplications amidst arcane, often incomprehensible passages that engulf readers in a swirl of letters, discourses, and allusions, Ḥamūya inscribes the relationship between prayer, invocation, and revelation at the heart of Sufi practices directly into his text.⁵² *The Book of the Beloved* thus becomes a model for the humble supplications of the Sufi aspirant and the divine outpourings that follow, rendering Ḥamūya’s dizzying anal-

50 Ḥamūya, *Mahbūb*, (SBB) fol. 9^a; Carullah MS 1078 (CE78), fol. 9^a; Nuruosmaniye MS 2577 (NO), fol. 8^a; Ayasofya MS 2058 (AS58), fol. 7^b; Yeni Camii MS 726 (YC), fols. 17^b–18^a.

51 Ḥamūya, *Mahbūb*, (SBB) fol. 9^b; (CE78) fol. 9^b; (NO) fol. 7^b; (AS58) fol. 8^a; (YC) fol. 19^a.

52 For an in-depth discussion of the bewildering qualities of Ḥamūya’s *Beloved*, see Chapter 5, esp. pp. 198 ff.

yses and poetic outbursts textual manifestations of experiential knowledge—i.e., the direct words of God. As he states explicitly, “O God, truly *You* are the One Who speaks in what is spoken; You are the One Who knows what I say.”⁵³ In this way, it is possible to discern certain affinities between the *Book of the Beloved* and Qūnawī’s *Expectoration*. Though their forms may differ, each text uses prayer as a means of expressing the dynamic interplay between the Real’s Attributes as they become manifest within one’s own self.

Ḥamūya’s supplications offer more than just a two-dimensional map or objective model for the relationship between Sufi knowledge and practice. Following the widespread Sufi notion that individuals only receive revelation in accordance with their spiritual capacity, Sa’d al-Dīn suggests that the meaning of his words—themselves instantiations of revealed knowledge—is likewise dependent upon the capabilities of his readers. At the end of the prayer translated above, he asks, “O God, uncover the secret truth of what is written here of *The Book of the Beloved* for the lovers of Your beloved *inasmuch as they have stepped into the circle of the one You seek*.”⁵⁴ Ḥamūya frames stepping into the circle of [the beloved] as a manifestation of spiritual achievement, thus rendering full knowledge of what he articulates accessible only to accomplished Sufis. For these advanced readers—who would be well-versed in the exigencies of Sufi training and the generic conventions of Sufi texts—I suggest that Ḥamūya’s supplications function as ritual cues that catalyze phenomenal and affective effects. For sections in which supplications are inscribed, readers may have been expected to perform Sa’d al-Dīn’s prayers according to the conventions outlined above, coupling his words with specific embodied and affective practices to produce the feelings of humility, submissiveness, longing, fear, or sincere hopefulness intrinsic to (or necessary for) particular kinds of knowledge.⁵⁵

I argue that these supplications orient readers toward spiritual stages and stations through which his words may be interpreted. It is here that we can sharpen our distinction between Ḥamūya’s text and Qūnawī’s *Expectations*. I suggest that the prayers recorded throughout the *Expectations* offer readers a means of cultivating spiritual states linked to realities *as Qūnawī experienced them*. The meaning of the text’s words become legible only to the degree that one can perform Qūnawī’s prayers and achieve the specific experiential states

53 Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fol. 9^b; (CE78) fol. 9^b; (NO) fol. 7^b; (AS58) fol. 8^a; (YC) fol. 19^a.

54 Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fol. 9^b; (CE78) fol. 9^b; (NO) fol. 7^b; (AS58) fol. 8^a; and (YC) fol. 19^a.

55 Diagrams, for example, seem particularly prone to occur near supplications throughout the text. See, for example, Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fols. 1^b–2^a, 8^a–8^b (the prayer is from Q. 3:26–27), 80^a.

he aims to communicate. Such an interpretation is well suited for Qūnawī's *Expectoration*, which purportedly binds its supplications and intimate conversations to a distinct spiritual event. The expansive form and diverse thematic range of *The Book of the Beloved*, however, resists such a particularized reading. In a characteristically deconstructive move, Ḥamūya removes Sufi supplications from manuals, liturgies, and spiritual diaries, then recontextualizes them within the disorienting twists and turns of the *Beloved*.⁵⁶ In their new context, the shaykh's prayers do not project his spiritual experiences onto his audience; they provoke readers to produce meaning by bringing his arcane words into dialogue with their own ever-changing subjective states.

4 Ascension: Ḥamūya's Prayers as Free Jazz Improvisation?

To develop a more textured account of the *Beloved's* prayers and their performative effects, we must first delve deeper into the text's avant-garde style. Thus far we have analyzed how Ḥamūya playfully deconstructs the conventions of Sufi handbooks and prayer manuals to engage advanced readers in an active process of meaning making. In my account, Sa'd al-Dīn's erasure of the body and reworking of Sufi prayer are not immutable features of his work, but rather self-conscious performances that become meaningful through the specific "horizons of expectation" within which he contextualizes them. As we explore the role of prayer in *The Book of the Beloved*, however, a new set of generic conventions becomes discernible. Taken altogether, *The Book of the Beloved* has more in common with the dizzying theoretical speculation of Ibn 'Arabī's *Meccan Revelations* than it does the careful didacticism of *The Essence of What the Novice Needs*. Here we might ask: Does *The Book of the Beloved* still hold up as Sufi free jazz when read in conversation with other works of abstract Sufi theory? Although the primary goal of this chapter is to explore Ḥamūya's deconstructive engagement with Sufi handbooks and manuals, a brief attention to this question will illuminate how the *Beloved's* prayers amplify the radical openness of the text as a whole.

Let us reprise our discussion from Chapter 1, turning to Ibn 'Arabī's advanced treatises for comparison. Like Ḥamūya, Ibn 'Arabī's discursive bricolage, inspired digressions, poignant allusions, and careful attention to detail offer readers a sense of infinitely expanding possibilities. Muḥyi al-Dīn refuses to remain wedded to a single structural or conceptual framework, adopting and

56 For more on the deliberately disorienting strategies of *The Book of the Beloved*, see Chapter 5.

discarding concepts and modes of expression to subvert the ontological primacy of any single metaphysical structure. *The Meccan Revelations* thus unfolds like the maximalist bebop of Coltrane's *Giant Steps*, blazing through intricate frameworks and progressions whose inner workings and interconnections may be explored or expanded *ad infinitum*.

Even when read against Ibn 'Arabī, Ḥamūya stands out for his playful subversion of stabilizing structures.⁵⁷ Like Ibn 'Arabī, Ḥamūya overlays passages with dense allusive overtones whose implications and intertexts are virtually inexhaustible. At the same time, however, he breaks down structural, conceptual, and disciplinary conventions almost completely, letting the harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic motives of his Sufi free jazz wash out into uncharted territories. Rather than juxtaposing and undermining relatively stable conceptual centers, *The Book of the Beloved* emphasizes pure dynamism and flux—the fundamental interrelation, utter instability, and infinite ontological-semantic potential of all individual entities and disciplines.

Although *The Book of the Beloved* employs a wide range of performative strategies, Ḥamūya's avant-garde approach can be gleaned most clearly in the poetics and structure of his writing. A section titled "The Circle of *Wāw*" (*dā'irat al-wāw*), for example, begins with a discourse on the relationship between the saint (*al-walī*), God's face (*al-wajh*), and being (*al-wujūd*). Swept up in the outpourings of those who contemplate God's face, Ḥamūya engulfs readers in waves of poetry; ecstatic visions; Qur'anic allusions; astrological terminology; lettrist exegesis; abstract metaphysics; hagiology; and prayer. In many cases, it is difficult to discern who is talking, and at which register of Reality. Because the passage slowly mutates over several folia, I transcribe and translate an abridged section here, beginning *in media res*:

شعر

دولت آنرا بود که روی تو دید؛ ذوق آنرا بود که از تو چشید
عاشق عشق تو کسی باشد؛ که طمع از همه جهان ببرد
هرکه او جز تو دید کافر شد؛ نه ترا دید و نه ز تو بشنید

...

اعلم أنّ القصيدة الملمّعة رائيّة والتي يعقبها من العربية هائية والفارسية المتأخرة
عنهما دالّية والذال والراء والهاء في التركيب والنظم ذرّة الوجود وهي الذرّة المحيّنة

57 See Chapter 1, Section 4, "Dynamism and Difference," above (p. 66).

يوم الميثاق والإشهاد والشهود ومقامات الذرّة مبتدأ مقامات الحجود عند طلوع
 طلّاع كوكبه كواكب سماء علوّ كَلِيَّةِ الأمور المدرجة في مجمل نقطة الوجود وأنا
 أحكي إن شاء الله تعالى بتوفيقه بعض إشارات حكايته في سلك الحدود والقيود
 الذرّة الأولى لها سِمِسمَة وخرذلة وصلصلة وهذا لا يتم إلا بالله الرحمن الرحيم
 الذي بما رحمته يطعي نار حركة الزلزلة والقلقلة

اللهمّ إنّنا نعوذ بك من محرّكٍ غالبٍ وغالبٍ سالبٍ ومن شرّ الوقوع في لوازم النار
 وسواكن الدار ورواكب العار والشنار ونستعيذ بك مما لا نطيق ونفرّ منك إليك فيما
 يليق بنا ولا نليق فأنت بإحسان إلى عبيدك جدير وحقيق يخرج لنا من مكونات
 خزائنك ما لا يطالع عليه أحد من أهل التحقيق وتكشف عن ذلك لنا بيمن التسديد
 وحسن التوفيق فنقول يا رب أنت لنا في ذلك معين ورفيق قبل النزول وقبل الوصول
 نعصم بك وبحبلك الذي هو الرسول اللهمّ لك الحمد ولك الشكر فيما علمنا
 منك وما لم نعلم حمداً يزيد لنا هدايةً خواصّ العبيد وشكرًا يحرسنا ويكلاءنا كلاة
 الوليد اللهمّ صل على محمد ... اللهمّ أنا عبدك وابن عبدك وابن أمّتك اتّخذت
 عندك عهداً ومآباً وسيقلاً أسألك بفضلك أن تحافظ على المودع والمودع قليلاً
 قليلاً محافظةً لا يجد العدو إليه سبيلاً

اعلم إنّ الذال حرف الاعتماد والراء حرف الاعتقاد والهاء حرف المراد وهو
 المجرد عن الإضداد وهو بالحقيقة دار المعاد وهو حرف الكناية ومن دونه انتهاء
 الحكاية وهناك سرّ الولاية لأنّ الذال أوّل حرف الذات واعتماد كلّ شيء على ذاته
 والراء أوّل حرف الروح ورجوع كلّ شيء إلى صفاته والهاء أوّل حرف الهوية ومنه
 مراد كلّ شيء في آياته

A poem:

Real reign (*dawlat*) is seeing your face, true taste (*dhawq*) is feeling you
 Your love's lover: the one who cut away his lust for the world
 All who see him alone are now apostates, for they refuse to see or hear
 you

...

Know that the bilingual poem (*al-qaṣīda al-mulamma'a*) was in *rā'*, the
 Arabic one that followed was in *hā'*, and the Persian one that succeeded
 those two was in *dāl*. In this structure and composition (*al-tarkīb wa-l-
 nazm*), *dāl*, *rā'*, and *hā'* are the atom of being (*dharrat al-wujūd*)—i.e.,

the atom present on the day of the covenant, the summons (*ishhād*), and the testimony (*al-shuhūd*).⁵⁸ The atom's stations (*maqāmāt al-dharra*) become the origin of denial's stations (*maqāmāt al-juhūd*) when the ascendants ascend from a star in heaven—i.e., in the sublimity of all things registered in the sum of being's Point. If almighty God wills it through His good fortune, I will spin some of this story's signs into a thread of boundaries and bonds (*silk al-hudūd wa-l-quyūd*).

The first atom (*al-dharra*) contains *simsima* (sesame seed), *khardala* (mustard seed), and *ṣalṣala* (clay).⁵⁹ None of this comes to pass except through God—the Merciful, the Compassionate—Who bestows the motion (*ḥaraka*) of *zalzala* (quake) and *qalqala* (convulsion) through the water of His mercy (*bi-mā' raḥmatihī*).⁶⁰

O God, we seek refuge in You from a dominating agitator (*muḥrik ghālib*) and plundering dominator (*ghālib sālib*); from the evil of tumbling into the fixtures of the fire (*lawāzim al-nār*), the residents of the realm (*sawākin al-dār*), and the drivers of degradation and disgrace (*rawākib al-ār wa-l-shanār*). We cling to You for protection from what we cannot bear. We flee from You to You for that which we deserve, though we are not worthy. Through the beneficence You grant Your servants, You are meet and right (*jadīr wa-ḥaqīq*) for us. From the hidden recesses of Your treasures, You grant us that of which none of the verifiers (*ahl al-taḥqīq*) are aware. Then, You uncover it for us through the delight of right guidance and excellent assistance. We say: O Lord, in that You are our ally (*mu'īn*) and companion (*rafiq*), before both the descent (*al-nuzūl*) and the advent (*al-wuṣūl*). We cling to You and Your rope, the apostle. O God, praise and thanks be to You for what You have taught us and what remains unknown. This praise increases for us the guidance of the elite servants, and this thanks protects and guards us as one guards a child. O God, pray for Muḥammad ... O God, I am Your servant, the son of Your servant, the son of your community. In your presence, I accept an oath (*'ahd*), a point of return (*ma'āb*), and a path (*sabīl*). Through Your favor, I beseech You to protect the one who takes the oath (and the oath taken), for even the tiniest bit of Your protection will stop an enemy from reaching him.

58 The day of the covenant (*yawm al-mūthāq*) is an allusion to Q. 7:172.

59 For *khardala*, see Q. 21:47 and 31:16. For *ṣalṣala*, see Q. 15:26, 15:28, 15:33, and 55:14.

60 For *zalzala*, see Q. 22:1. While *qalqala* can mean shock or convulsion, it is also a technical term in Qur'anic recitation (*tajwīd*). If any of the so-called *qalqala* letters (*qāf*, *tā'*, *bā'*, *jīm*, *dāl*) appears with a *sukūn*, it is read with an "echoing" sound, whether the *sukūn* is in the middle of the word or at the end.

Know that the letter *dhāl* is the letter of reliance (*al-i'timād*), *rā'* is the letter of conviction (*al-i'tiqād*), and *hā'* is the letter of aspiration (*al-murād*). *Hā'* is stripped of opposition (*al-iḍḍād*), for in reality it is the Abode of the Return (*dār al-ma'ād*). It is the letter of allusion (*al-kināya*), and without it narration ends (*min dūnihi intihā' al-ḥikāya*). Herein lies the secret of sainthood (*sirr al-wilāya*). *Dhāl* is the first letter of the Essence (*al-dhāt*), for each thing relies (*i'timād*) on His Essence. *Rā'* is the first letter of the spirit (*al-ruḥ*), for each thing returns (*rujū'*) to His Attributes. *Hā'* is the first letter of ipseity (*huwīyya*), for from it stems the desire (*murād*) for each thing has for His signs (*fī āyātihī*).⁶¹

The poem at the beginning of this passage concludes a long section of poetry (Persian, Arabic, and bilingual) and ecstatic visions that illuminate the relationship between the Real and the beloved saint. Rather than offering a summative exegesis implied by the injunction to know (*a'lam!*), however, Ḥamūya reworks elements from earlier sections to open up new vistas for exploration. The rhyming consonants at the end of each preceding poem (*dāl/dhāl, rā',* and *hā'/tā' marbūṭa*), he reveals, tie their words to the primordial atom (*dharra*)—i.e., the singular point from which God drew out Adam's progeny (*dhurriyya*) to enact His covenant (*mīthāq*) in Q. 7:172. No sooner does Ḥamūya pull these pieces together, however, than he breaks them apart. Though made up of poetic verses just a moment ago, the levels of the atom now fractalize into new registers: quasi-astrological movement (ascendants, stars), Qur'ānic allusion (*mīthāq, khardala, ṣalṣala, zalzala*), letrist exegesis (*dāl, rā', hā'*), abstract metaphysics (Essence, Attributes, ipseity), prayer ("O God!"), and so on.

In the absence of stable boundaries between these diverse registers (and languages), readers are left without a clear frame of reference within which to orient themselves.⁶² Ḥamūya's riffing on quad-consonantal roots, for example, conjures a series of Qur'ānic pericopes whose juxtaposition collapses creation

61 Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fols. 72^a–72^b; (AS58) fols. 57^b–58^a; (NO) fols. 62^a–62^b; and (CE78) fols. 74^b–75^b.

62 Elizabeth Alexandrin notes a similar blurring of boundaries with respect to diagrams, poetry, and prose in the *Book of the Beloved*. She writes, "In this work, there is no clear and decisive demarcation between diagram, poetry, and prose, as the poems and quatrains, divided into two *bayts*, flow like rivers between the sections of prose and the [visual] schemata in the first half of the *Maḥbūb* and visually unify the second half of this work, especially with the verses that end on a single letter." Elizabeth Ross Alexandrin, "Reading and Reciting the Qur'ān: Calligraphic Spaces in Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūyeh's (d. 649/1252) *Kitāb al-Maḥbūb*," in *Visualizing Sufism*, ed. Giovanni Maria Martini, Islamicate Intellectual History (Leiden: Brill, 2023), 164.

and the eschaton into the primordial atom.⁶³ This collapse, in turn, echoes and expands the theme of *coincidentia oppositum* introduced in preceding poems and ecstatic visions.⁶⁴ His analysis of *dāl*, *rā*, and *hā* inflects these letters with human and divine qualities, blurring the distinction between the two. *Dhāl*, for example, is reliance (*i'timād*)—of the primordial atom, the cosmos, the beloved saint—and the Divine Essence (*al-dhāt*) upon which that reliance relies. The constant slippage between *dāl* and *dhāl* also allows us to read the primordial atom (*dharra*) as the primordial pearl (*durra*) familiar to medieval readers from the ubiquitous tales of the prophets (*qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*) literature. In these dramatic accounts, the pearl trembles in awe of God and His command, losing its singular selfhood to melt into the waters out of which the whole world emerges.⁶⁵ Ḥamūya's exegesis and these allusions to the primordial atom/pearl open intertexts with lettrist analyses throughout his own oeuvre as well. In a chapter of *The Lamp of Sufism* titled "On the Creation of the World of Entities" (*Andar takhlīq-i 'ālam-i a'yān*), for example, Ḥamūya's account of the atom and its constituent letters morphs into a lettrist analysis of eternity (*dahr*). Broken up and reconfigured into the letters of eternity, *dāl*, *hā*, and *rā* become the Praised (*ḥamīd*), God (*Allāh*), and the Lord (*rabb*).⁶⁶ Read in dialogue with our passage from *The Book of the Beloved*, this discussion of *dahr*—both fate and eternity—likewise resonates with the astrological language of stars and ascendants through which Ḥamūya articulates the stations of the atom above. Recalling our analysis from Chapter 1, Ḥamūya suggests that the secret of sainthood lies in how one negotiates these shifting webs of letters, entities, and principles.

As each of these registers unfolds, readers must harmonize not only the implications that bubble up here, but the wash of unresolved material—just

63 See, for example, Q. 15:26, "We created man out of dried clay (*ṣalṣāl*) formed from dark mud"; Q. 21:47, "We will set up scales of justice for the Day of Resurrection so that no one can be wronged in the least, and if there should be even the weight of a mustard seed (*khardal*), We shall bring it out—We take excellent account"; and Q. 22:1, "People, be mindful of your Lord, for the quake (*zalzala*) of the Last Hour will be a mighty thing."

64 Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fols. 70^b ff.; (AS58) fols. 56^b ff.; (NO) fols. 61^a ff.; and (CE78) fols. 73^a ff.

65 See, for example, Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Kisā'i, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, ed. Isaac Eisenberg, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1922–1923), II.6 ff.; and idem, *Tales of the Prophets (Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā')*, trans. Wheeler M. Thackston, Jr. (Chicago: Great Books of the Islamic World, 1997), 5 ff. Later in the *Book of the Beloved*, Ḥamūya makes this connection explicit, suggesting that after the primordial pearl melted before God, He blew into it, transforming it into the atom of atoms (*dharraṭ al-dharraṭ*) and the soul of sainthood. Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fol. 248^b; (AS58) fol. 170^a; and (CE78) fol. 236^b.

66 Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 80.

as overwhelming and allusive—that preceded. How do these poems relate to the primordial atom? What do we do with the diverse meanings, rhymes, meters, languages, and ecstatic visions that accompanied them? In what kind of temporal (and ontological framework) does this all unfold? How do we make sense of the different meanings assigned to each letter, both in this text and its intertexts?⁶⁷ And what about the discussion of the saint, God's face, and being with which "The Circle of *Wāw*" began? While Ḥamūya's periodic exhortations to know tease closure—a tying together of loose ends, a contraction of possibilities, or, conversely, a fresh start—his writing reconfigures itself into ever-expansive rhizomatic webs.

The lengthy supplication that Ḥamūya inserts near the end of the passage continues the work of expansion. Unlike what we find in the work of his contemporaries, this prayer is neither an introductory encomium nor a section of a longer liturgical text. Though ostensibly set apart by a typical vocative formula ("O God!"), the prayer's themes are entangled with the material that comes before and after. The dominating agitator (*muḥrik ghālib*) from which the supplicating voice seeks refuge, for example, echoes the earlier characterization of God as the One Who agitates—i.e., Who sets in motion (*yu'ī ḥaraka*) the eschatological quake. The prayer's main themes (utter submission to and trust in God alone as the hallmark of *real* knowledge) likewise reflect both earlier poetic motifs and the letrist exegesis that follow. Finally, the language of progeny and oath stitch the prayer to the primordial atom and covenant—i.e., the thematic thread woven through the passage as a whole.

I suggest that the prayer works to merge the passage's rhizomatic web of meanings with the minds and bodies of its readers. In so doing, Ḥamūya encourages his audience to use their own spiritual states as frames through which to navigate his text and its dizzying proliferation of possibilities. By performing these prayers, readers would use Sufi affective techniques outlined throughout this chapter to strive for the pure servanthood that characterizes the beloved. In this vein, the prayer's final vow—"In Your presence, I accept an oath, a point of return, and a path"—reprises the primordial covenant, blurring the distinction between the supplicant, the beloved, and the primordial atom. To perfect one's submission in this way would thus be to embody a singular state that is both the origin and endpoint of multiplicity.⁶⁸

67 In the passage from *The Lamp of Sufism* cited above, for example, *dāl* is the Praised (*ḥamūd*), *rā'* is the Lord (*rabb*), and *hā'* is God (Allāh). Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 80.

68 Such a paradox is common in medieval Sufi manuals. In a section of his *Kind Gifts of Knowledge* entitled "On the Etiquette of the Divine Presence for the People of Closeness" (*fī adab al-ḥaḍra al-ilāhiyya li-ahl al-qurb*), for example, Suhrawardī explains that it was

As we have seen in the techniques of Sufi prayer surveyed above, however, the proper performance of servanthood is *not* static in its manifestation. That is to say, how one enacts this servanthood depends on the exigencies of one's own spiritual state in a particular context and point in time. Just as Ibn 'Arabī demands that worshipers take stock of their own characters through litanies composed of Qur'ānic verses, Ḥamūya's supplication—and, in fact, his text as a whole—presents the beloved's perfect qualities and intimate relationship with God as points for meditative contemplation. What I propose, therefore, is a historically conditioned “technology of the self” made manifest through the embodied practices and ethical injunctions of 13th-century Sufi supplication.⁶⁹ By forcing readers to juxtapose their own dynamic states with the shifting qualities of the beloved's perfection as articulated throughout *The Book of the Beloved*, Ḥamūya's prayers perform a relational vision of human perfection. How one is to assimilate and embody the beloved's qualities depends on one's relationship with those qualities at a specific point in time. As each reader's subjective state changes, his or her relationship with the words of the text must be continually reoriented and reinterpreted. In short, readers must negotiate between two moving targets: the vertiginous waves of Ḥamūya's avant-garde writing and the endless self-disclosure of their own being. Prayer, according to this reading, is both a tool that calibrates the experimental conditions of one's existential laboratory and a catalyst that drives specific experiential reactions. The goal is not to resolve cosmic contradictions or pin down the beloved's qualities for dispassionate dissection. Instead, Ḥamūya's prayers provoke Sufi readers to merge themselves with his text, using their own shifting states and affective frames of reference to produce, explore, and ultimately incorporate new dimensions of Reality.

Muḥammad's perfect humility that allowed him to ascend beyond all other prophets and into the Divine Presence. See idem, *Awārif*, 169.

69 I use “technology of the self” (or “technique of the self”) in a Foucauldian sense to mark the strategies—embodied, affective, spiritual, intellectual, and so on—through which individuals constitute, transform, or otherwise relate to themselves. On the technologies of the self, which he also refers to as the arts of existence, Foucault writes, “What I mean by the phrase are those intentional and voluntary actions by which men not only set themselves rules of conduct, but also seek to transform themselves, to change themselves in their singular being, and to make their life into an *oeuvre* that carries certain aesthetic values and meets certain stylistic criteria.” Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure: Volume 2 of The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley, *History of Sexuality* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 10–11. See also Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 25–39. With the terms “spiritual technologies” and “devotional technologies”, therefore, I underscore how medieval Sufis used prayer, supplication, and the like in broader processes of self-fashioning.

We might say that Ḥamūya lays out jarring soundscapes, cacophonous percussive blasts, and nebulous harmonic washes, then offers his readers the tones and textures with which to improvise. Like *Meditations-* or *Ascension-*era Coltrane, the shaykh unleashes a disorienting tempest of metric and harmonic content whose jittering rhythms and discordant tonal juxtapositions produce an overwhelming noise that is pregnant with interpretive possibilities.⁷⁰ Trane's post-*Giant Steps* output skews towards a level of melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic abstraction whose individual and gestalt possibilities fractalize in myriad dimensions at once. In his analysis of *Ascension*, Marc Medwin explains, "Atoms [i.e., musical ideas, broadly speaking] appear only to be swallowed up again into the general melee, and as modes, scales, or key centers change nebulously, the procedure remains the same in every ensemble passage ... the ensemble [of musicians], serve as disrupters, themselves a manifestation of multiply-directed linear time in *Ascension's* macrostructure."⁷¹ In my reading, Ḥamūya pushes readers to become soloists in the ensemble of his bewildering text, offering Sufi prayers as points of reference to guide their improvisations. Limited only by their individual capabilities, these ritual cues provoke Ḥamūya's readers to bring their Sufi sensibilities into dialogue with his words, sketching improvised melodies that bring dynamic new hermeneutical possibilities into being.

From a social perspective, Ḥamūya's prayers serve to mark his ontological and metaphysical claims as distinctly Sufi. Thinking back to the Qūnawī-Ṭūsī correspondence, we may read their quibbles over the role of prayer as a reflection of their broader disagreement vis-à-vis the intellect, experiential knowledge, and Reality. Put most simply, while the two agree on technical termi-

70 As both Porter and Medwin note, studies of Coltrane's later period generally forgo sustained and overarching musical-theoretical analyses of the saxophonist's challenging work. See Lewis R. Porter, "John Coltrane's 'A Love Supreme': Jazz Improvisation as Composition," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 38, no. 3 (1985), 594; and Marc Howard Medwin, "Listening in Double Time: Temporal Disunity and Structural Unity in the Music of John Coltrane 1965–1967," PhD dissertation (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2008), 11ff. The studies that *do* focus primarily on the music of Coltrane's later period employ a range of diverse musical-theoretical approaches that are often difficult to harmonize with one another. See esp. Ekkehard Jost, *Free Jazz* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1994 (originally 1974)); Porter, "John Coltrane's 'A Love Supreme'"; Medwin, "Listening in Double Time"; and Steven Block, "Pitch-Class Transformation in Free Jazz," *Music Theory Spectrum* 12, no. 2 (1990): 181–202. For a fascinating "autoethnographic" approach to performing Coltrane's *Ascension*, see Jeremy Strachan, "Reading *Ascension*: Intertextuality, Improvisation, and Meaning in Performance," *Critical Studies in Improvisation* 9, no. 2 (2013).

71 Medwin, "Listening in Double Time," 103.

nology and key metaphysical structures, they disagree over the capacity of the intellect to perceive the realities of things as they are in themselves.⁷² Because Qūnawī frames experiential knowledge as the only means of grasping these realities, he emphasizes the fundamental importance of the Sufi practices (and modes of expression) through which this knowledge is achieved and argues for their continued relevance even at most advanced levels. (We might also suggest the corollary—i.e., that Tūsī’s focus on the epistemological scope of the intellect leads him to champion intellectual strategies and embodied practices over which rationalist philosophers claimed sole authority.) Ḥamūya’s integration of petitions and supplications throughout his advanced theoretical expositions on the nature of being likewise underscores the inextricable relationship between embodied Sufi practice and ultimate knowledge. Such a strategy leaves his words radically open to a plurality of interpretive possibilities, but marks his knowledge as the exclusive intellectual property of the elite cadre of readers authorized to perform these transformative practices.

5 Conclusion

By reading Ḥamūya’s strategies as “avant-garde Sufism” or “Sufi free jazz,” I have sought to bring the performative and deconstructive dimensions of his writing to the foreground. I do not mean to suggest any historical or spiritual affinity between Ḥamūya’s Sufism and 1960s free jazz, but rather to explore the analytical possibilities of Ingrid Monson’s suggestion that “music has a great deal to offer thinking about discourse.”⁷³ As we have seen above, exploring Ḥamūya’s work in dialogue with Coltrane reveals a sophisticated approach to epistemology rooted in a self-conscious engagement with the diverse subjectivities of readers.

Sa’d al-Dīn recognizes the dialogic interplay between subjectivity and meaning, developing creative methods to exploit the endless interpretive potential that different readers could bring to a single text. The shaykh’s textual strategies operate through subtle reference and play, manipulating, reconfiguring, or even subverting the medieval Sufi conventions through which they become meaningful. The fifth appendix of *The Levels of Joy* plays with representations of the body to deconstruct ubiquitous Sufi forms. While contemporary and classic

72 See Chittick, “Mysticism versus Philosophy,” esp. 98 ff.; and Todd, *Sufi Doctrine*, esp. 35–39, 73–78.

73 Monson, *Saying Something*, 10.

manuals bind abstract metaphysical speculation to concrete bodily instructions, Ḥamūya's ironic erasure of flesh forces readers to continually remap constellations of practice, experience, and metaphysics. The effectiveness of the text's strategies relies on readers' advanced training and familiarity with the conventions of Sufi literature, manipulating these expectations to bring the infinite permutations of the Real to the forefront of their experiences. *The Book of the Beloved* peppers theoretical exposition with performative cues, evoking a broader context of Sufi praxis to explore the affective dimensions of experiential knowledge. On the one hand, Ḥamūya depends on shared conventions of supplication that bind embodied practice and affective experience to the language of Sufi liturgy. On the other, he excises prayer from manuals and spiritual diaries, setting this potent technology of the self in service of the avant-garde tour de force that is *The Book of the Beloved*. Within this new structure, prayer brings Ḥamūya's words into dialogue with the dynamic subjectivities of his readers, generating endless intersections of abstract and affective possibilities.

Ḥamūya's strategies of performance, deconstruction, and allusion establish his superior authority as a Sufi shaykh—both in his texts *and* in the world. Here again, Coltrane provides an illuminative comparison. According to Monson, Black jazz musicians in the 20th century used ironic allusions to musical repertoires typically coded as “white” to vaunt their own musical capabilities. Their virtuosic performances demonstrated a mastery over the hegemonic forms, techniques, and canons of Western classical music, thus deconstructing assumptions of racial inferiority. Coltrane's cut of “My Favorite Things,” for example, performs these ironic inversions to a tee. Not only do his performances stand out according to the hegemonic standards of (predominantly) white American and European music; they simultaneously subsume these standards within a framework of Black improvisational aesthetics. Ironically, then, musical sensibilities coded as Black become the standard against which other forms become meaningful.⁷⁴

Analogously, Ḥamūya's performative engagement with Sufi supplications and manuals breaks down hegemonic conventions and refashions them within his own deconstructive vision. Read against the universalizing pretensions of his colleagues, Sa'd al-Dīn's work projects an infinitely generative hermeneutical potential. And, at the same time, his resolute rejection of interpretive fixity articulates a new standard against which all others must be judged.

74 Monson, *Saying Something*, 120.

Calculating Infinity: Diagram and/as Devotion

To describe the dancing movements of these gods, their juxtapositions and the back-circlings and advances of their circular courses on themselves ... to tell all this without the use of visible models would be labor spent in vain.¹

PLATO, *Timaeus*

•••

The diagrammatic or abstract machine does not function to represent, but rather constructs a real that is yet to come, a new type of reality.²

GILLES DELEUZE and FELIX GUATTARI, *A Thousand Plateaus*

••

This chapter dives deeper into Ḥamūya's deconstructive engagement with Sufi practice. If Chapter 2 focused primarily on medieval Sufi discourse *about* prayer, this chapter offers a sustained reading of prayer collections and liturgical guides proper. In comparison with the devotional texts penned by colleagues like Ibn 'Arabī (d. 1240) and Sayf al-Dīn Bākhazī (d. 1261), Ḥamūya's *Mirror of Spirits and Signs on Tablets* (*Sajanjal al-arwāḥ wa-nuqūsh al-abwāḥ*) seems utterly alien. Most striking are the curious clusters of talismanic diagrams and occult operations borne into its folia. As is typically the case with Sa'd al-Dīn, however, this act of coloring outside the lines—both literally and figuratively—serves a distinct epistemological goal. By infusing Sufi devotion with the visual language of cosmological diagrams and occult practice, the shaykh appropriates the transformative potential of each while simultaneously disrupting the genre conventions that gave them meaning. This performative

1 Plato, *Timaeus*, 40c–d in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 1244.

2 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, 2nd edition (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 142.

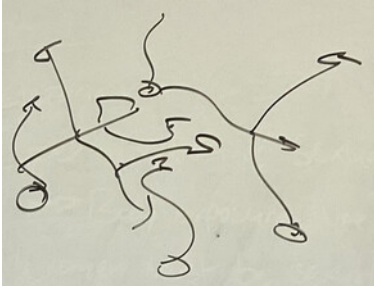


FIGURE 11
Untitled Diagram
 "GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN ISLAM," JAMES
 MADISON UNIVERSITY, APRIL 11, 2022

act of deconstruction provokes advanced Sufi readers to improvise novel connections across embodied, textual, and abstract-theoretical domains, thus forging new tools through which to experience (and produce) Reality. At the same time, Ḥamūya's creative refashioning of diverse spiritual technologies throws down the gauntlet to contemporaries whose cosmic vision would be curbed by the arbitrary bounds of genre and convention.

To illuminate the chapter's stakes and aims, I begin with an arcane diagram of my own. Figure 11 is a photograph of the whiteboard I used while teaching an undergraduate seminar called "Gender and Sexuality in Islam" in Spring 2022. This particular session took Joseph Massad's *Desiring Arabs* as its core reading, using the text as a springboard from which to explore questions of sexuality, agency, and experience in relation to Orientalism, (neo-)colonialism, and historiography.³ Figure 11 emerged out of an animated—and perhaps unhinged—back-and-forth between me and my students as we attempted to break free from essentializing and teleological approaches to history and human identity. While the seminar session overall was a success, I was bemused by this particular diagram and took a snapshot to admonish myself, lest I end up an unfortunate meme.

The admonition, of course, went unheeded. Weeks later, when I found myself swept up in another spell of frenetic diagramming, I paused: "Does anyone actually find these diagrams *helpful*?" To my relief, the majority of my students responded in the affirmative. At the same time, however, they admitted that it would be difficult to put into words what exactly the diagrams *meant* or *represented*.

Reflecting on this experience sparked many of the methodological insights that ground this chapter. As I came to realize, I had been asking my students (and myself) the wrong question. The issue at stake here is not how to decipher

3 See Joseph Andoni Massad, *Desiring Arabs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

the *meaning* of these diagrams after the fact, but rather to understand *how* they provoked my students to think about concepts and connections in new ways. It was only through the context of our seminars that these images *made any sense* at all. A line became manifest with a gesture and exposition, a sharp turn and swoop of the arm responded to a question, an excited squiggle coupled with an affective crescendo to extend an invitation. The embodied context of their production dovetailed with a visual language in which students were well-steeped. Lines and arrows produced a sense of movement and connection; position in diagrammatic space encouraged new relationships between ideas discussed and those yet to come. (Figure 11, for example, was juxtaposed with an x/y graph of teleological development, and both were framed by a bullet-pointed overview of Social Darwinism.) The place of these images on the whiteboard underscored a sense of meaningfulness and authority—“*This is something you should know; something you must write down.*” All in all, the diagram did not *represent* a non-essentialist approach to identity and history. Instead, it was by watching the diagrams unfold, mapping them to their own hermeneutical struggles, and copying them down during our seminars that students experimented with (and came to inhabit) a new way of seeing the world. This new way of seeing the world—or, to put it less dramatically, this new way of thinking—enabled them to grasp theoretical insights, evaluate arguments, and draw relationships between evidence in ways that they previously could not.

My conceit is that we should approach Ḥamūya’s diagrams in the same way. What exactly was *The Mirror of Spirits* supposed to *do* to advanced Sufi readers? What new ways of knowing and being did it provoke, and how? As we will see below, Ḥamūya’s images are not mere representations of Reality, nor are his supplications vehicles for propositional content. Instead, they are tools forged from the very core of Reality—technologies of the self, abstract machines, mirrors of spirits—that allow readers to relate to themselves and the world in new ways. Understanding these tools demands that we uncover (and historicize) the embodied and discursive context through which they operated. The chapter thus holds at the forefront the materiality of the sources in question. These are not abstract, disembodied ideas, but *things that people did things with*; objects to be touched, turned, copied, amended, and shared.⁴ It is to these objects and their materiality, then, that we now turn.

4 Alexandrin insists on the same point, explaining, “The *Kitāb al-Maḥbūb*, as a book, was meant to be read and studied, to be held and touched, to have its pages turned, and to be carefully copied—and it was.” See Elizabeth Ross Alexandrin, “Reading and Reciting the Qur’ān: Calligraphic Spaces in Sa’d al-Dīn Ḥamūyeh’s (d. 649/1252) *Kitāb al-Maḥbūb*,” in *Visualizing Sufism*, ed. Giovanni Maria Martini, *Islamicate Intellectual History* (Leiden: Brill, 2023), 160.

1 Repetition and Difference: *The Mirror of Spirits* as Sufi Devotional Text

Despite its popularity among Sufis and occultists across the early-modern and medieval Islamic world, relatively few manuscript copies of Ḥamūya's *Mirror of Spirits* survive, especially in comparison to his *Book of the Beloved*.⁵ Extant witnesses of the text include (a) Fatih 2645 and (b) Carullah 1541, both housed in the Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul; (c) Mashhad 3194, stored in Āstān-i Quds Library; and (d) Princeton's Garrett 3G, which is located in the university's Islamic Manuscripts collection, erroneously titled *al-Khatma al-maghribiyya al-sultāniyya*, and attributed to Ibn 'Arabī.⁶ A brief excerpt of the text can be found in a compilation of occult sciences and letter divination (*majmū'a az 'ulūm-i gharība wa jafr*) located in Tehran's Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī Library, though it is more than likely that other fragments and copies await identification and analysis as well.⁷

In addition to this paucity of manuscript witnesses, our extant copies of *The Mirror of Spirits* diverge significantly in terms of content and organization. None of my witnesses seem to preserve a complete copy of the text and all

5 For mention of the *Sajanjal*, see the bibliography affixed to the title page of Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Kitāb al-Mahbūb*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Yeni Camii MS 726 (YC); 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Biṣṭāmī's (d. 1454) "occult booklist" in his *Shams al-āfāq fī 'ilm al-ḥurūf wa-l-awfāq*, cited in Noah Gardiner, "The Occultist Encyclopedism of 'Abd Al-Rahmān al-Biṣṭāmī (d. 1454)," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 20 (2017), 30; 'Abd al-Rahmān Jāmī, (d. 1492), *Nafahāt al-uns min ḥaḍarāt al-quḍs*, ed. Mahdī Tawḥīdī-Pūr (Tehran: Kitābforūshī-yi Sa'dī, 1958), 431; Maḥmūd Dihdār Širāzī (fl. 1576), *Ḥall al-rumūz fī sirr al-kunūz*, Ankara, Milli Kütüphanesi, Milli MS 2706f-1; Nūr Allāh Shūshtarī (d. 1610), *Majālis al-mu'minīn*, 2 vols. (Tehran: Kitābforūshī-yi Islamiyya, 1986), II.76 (though he miswrites the book's title as *Sajil al-arwāh*); Amin Aḥmad Rāzī (17th c.), *Tadhkira-yi Haft iqlīm*, ed. Sayyid Muḥammad Riḍā Tāhiri (Tehran: Soroush Press, 1999), II.837. Al-Yāfi'ī's (d. 1367) *al-Durr al-naẓīm fī khawāṣṣ al-Qur'ān al-'aẓīm* mention of a certain *Sajnat al-arwāh*—which he attributes to Aḥmad al-Būnī (d. 1225 or 1232/1233)—may also be a reference to Ḥamūya's text. See 'Afif al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh ibn As'ad al-Yāfi'ī, *al-Durr al-naẓīm fī khawāṣṣ al-Qur'ān al-'aẓīm*, ed. Muḥsin 'Aqil (Beirut: Dār al-Maḥajja al-Bayḍā', 1999), 86.

6 See Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Sajanjal al-arwāh wa-nuqūsh al-abwāh*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Fatih MS 2645 (F); Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Carullah MS 1541 (C); Mashhad, Kitābkhāna-yi Āstān-i Quds, Mashhad MS 3194 (M); and Princeton, Princeton University Library, Garret Collection MS 3G (P). I offer a hearty thanks to Lisa Alexandrin for helping me access the Mashhad and Princeton manuscripts.

7 See *Majmū'a az 'ulūm-i gharība wa jafr*, Tehran, Kitābkhāna-yi Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī, MS 14374. I thank Matthew Melvin-Koushki for helping me track down a copy of this text.

For a full comparison of the manuscripts and their contents, see Appendix 4: *Mirror of Spirits* Structure, p. 259.

lack a clear structure. The proliferation of jarring breaks, blank spaces, alternate hands, replaced folia, and abrupt endings in each give the impression that (a) the copies were bound (or rebound) out of order, (b) their scribes struggled to follow their exemplars, or (c) *The Mirror of Spirits* itself resists a linear progression and self-consciously subverts the notion of an original, stable, or exhaustible text. In light of these considerations, I focus my attention primarily on Fatih 2645, which includes the most complete copy of the text and mid-text colophon dating the copy to May 1258 (Jumādā I, AH 656)—just six years after Sa'd al-Dīn's death.⁸ Whenever possible and analytically productive, I draw comparisons to Carullah 1541, Mashhad 3194, and Garrett 3G as well.

Before we begin in earnest, however, I should call attention to questions that may arise from this brief survey of manuscripts. Given the current state of our witnesses, one might ask: Can we really say anything concrete about *The Mirror of Spirits*, its performative strategies, or its relation to other 13th-century liturgies? How can we be so sure that the text's idiosyncrasies are not just the result of an unfortunate transmission history or, perhaps, an indication of a concomitant oral tradition of instruction?⁹ To put it bluntly, we can't.

8 The colophon states: "The correct (?) text was completed at the hand of its owner and scribe ... in the middle of Jumādā I, AH 656." (*Tamma al-qawl al-ṣaḥḥī* [?] 'alā yaday ṣāhibihī wa-kātibihī ... fī muntasīf Jumādā al-Ūlā sana sitt khamsīn sittamī'a.) Ḥamūya, *Sajanjal*, (F) fol. 86^b. As the hand is quite messy, Jamal Elias suggests that the date can be read as either AH 656 (1258 CE) or AH 659 (1261 CE). See Jamal J. Elias, "The Sufi Lords of Bahrabad: Sa'd al-Din and Sadr al-Din Hamuwayi," *Iranian Studies* 27, no. 1/4 (1994), 64.

Fatih 2645, Mashhad 3194, and Garrett 3G preserve a note indicating the date of the text's original composition: "Finished in the city of Homs on Tuesday, 7 Rajab—God's deaf month—AH 630 (April 26, 1233 CE)." (*Tamma fī madīnat Ḥumṣ fī shahr Allāh al-aṣamm Rajab yawm al-thulathā' al-sābi' min Rajab sana thalathīn wa-sittamī'a.*) Ḥamūya, *Sajanjal*, (F) fol. 123^a, (M) fol. 244^a, and (P) fol. 96^a. This date is consistent with the hagiography penned by Ḥamūya's great-grandson Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ḥamūya (fl. 14th c.), which places Sa'd al-Dīn in Damascus and Homs in Rajab AH 630. See Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Murād al-murīdīn*, ed. S.A.A. Mīr-Bāqīrī Fard and Z. Najafī (Tehran: Mu'assasat-i Muṭāla'āt-i Islāmī-yi Dānīshgāh-i Tīhrān – Dānīshgāh-i Makgīl, 2011), 164.

Carullah 1541 lacks internal dating, but includes a smudged acquisition record from Walī al-Dīn Jār Allāh's (d. 1738) library—i.e., the Carullah collection—in the upper right-hand corner of the title page: "[God's most benevolent] blessings upon Abū 'Abd Allāh Walī al-Dīn Jār Allāh, AH 1150 (1737–1738 CE)." ([*min alṭaf*] *nū'am Allāh 'alā Abī 'Abd Allāh Walī al-Dīn Jār Allāh sana 1150.*) For marginal notes and acquisition records of similar manuscripts in the Carullah collection, see Fatih Usluer, "Cârullah Efendi'nin Cifir ve Tıp İlimlerine Dair Kitapları," in *Osmanlı Kitap Kültürü: Cârullah Efendi Kütüphanesi ve Derkenar Notları*, ed. Berat Açıllı (Ankara: Nobel, İLEM Library, 2015), 297–312.

9 I thank Oludamini Ogunnaike for raising and elaborating this objection. By foregrounding and leaving these challenges open, I hope that my arguments will spark further investigation into Ḥamūya's work, uncovering evidence and modes of inquiry that could illuminate these alternate paths more productively than I can here.

These creeping concerns cannot be conjured away with a clever configuration of texts and letters. It is possible, even probable, that the extant witnesses of *The Mirror of Spirits* bear the effects of piecemeal composition, sloppy copying, and poor editorial choices. It is also more than likely that Ḥamūya and the shaykhs that followed in his wake would have expounded upon the text's rituals, diagrams, and allusions orally. In light of the evidence available to us, however, pursuing such possibilities opens little space for the theoretical and methodological concerns that animate this book. And, I suggest, they are not necessarily incommensurable with the claims I lay out below. Even if the state of our manuscripts stems from the foibles of scribes and auditors, the arguments I develop throughout this book encourage us to consider that there was *something* disruptive about Ḥamūya's writing that could have precipitated such a reception history.

With these points in mind, I argue that reading *The Mirror of Spirits* in its extant forms as reliable reflections of both Ḥamūya and his medieval Sufi readers yields fruitful opportunities with which to explore the deconstructive strategies and radical openness that characterize his work as a whole. To make sense of these disruptive effects, I suggest that we must root the text firmly within the world of medieval Sufi prayer and diagrammatic visual language out of which it emerged. In what follows, therefore, I analyze Ḥamūya's *Mirror* as a deconstructed liturgical text—an epitome of avant-garde Sufism that reworks established conventions to generate new kinds of experiential possibilities for readers. The first section of the chapter reads the *Mirror* in conversation with 13th-century prayer manuals, foregrounding the transformative techniques of Sufi supplication. Replete with detailed programs of petition and prayer, the *Mirror* offers readers tools to plumb the hidden depths of the Qur'an and the self. The next section turns to the strange diagrams that dominate the second half of Ḥamūya's text. Reading the *Mirror* in dialogue with Sufi cosmological charts and the talismans of Qur'anic theurgy, I explore how Ḥamūya transforms these visual languages and the practices that accompany them to charge his text with a powerful, but amorphous occult efficacy. The final section of the chapter brings these pieces together, using recent theories of diagram to imagine how readers may have engaged with Ḥamūya's disorienting images in the ritual space of Sufi prayer.

Even more so than *The Book of the Beloved* and *The Levels of Joy in the Fountains of Power*, the *Mirror* resists the analytical conventions of contemporary scholarship. As an avant-garde prayer book, the text is exceedingly difficult to wrangle into a coherent narrative or discursive framework. It is not meant to be read for its propositional content, but rather performed for its transformative effects. Readers—or, more precisely, practitioners—are delib-

erately denied straightforward exegesis in order that their own praying minds and bodies become sites in which subjective experience, Qur'ānic language, imaginative vision, and divine self-disclosure intersect. The passages and diagrams I present below have thus been chosen for pragmatic utility and analytical clarity. While each example could be swapped with a host of others, I have selected representative cases that illuminate the characteristic features of the *Mirror* as a whole and the range of material with which it is in dialogue.

The first half of Ḥamūya's *Mirror of Spirits* takes the form of a typical Sufi prayer manual, offering detailed instructions in Arabic and Persian for an extended program of prayers, glorifications, supplications, and Qur'ānic recitations.¹⁰ The text opens at nightfall (*chūn shab bar-khīzad*), outlining a set of supererogatory prayers to accompany ritual purification (*tahīyat-i wuḍū'*) before leading the reader through the steps of a preliminary night-long vigil (*tahajjud*).¹¹ This vigil consists primarily of prayer cycles (*raka'āt*), litanies (*awrād*), and supplications (*du'āt*), ending with a sequence of thirty-two supererogatory prayers (*ṣalawāt; taṭawwu'*) with such names as "The Prayer of Finding/Ecstasy" (*ṣalāt al-wijdān*), "The Prayer of Seeking Refuge," (*ṣalāt al-isti'ādha*), "The Prayer of Desire and Dread" (*ṣalāt al-raghba wa-l-rahba*), "The Prayer of Secrets" (*ṣalāt al-asrār*), and "The Prayer of Memorizing the Qur'ān" (*ṣalāt ḥifẓ al-qur'ān*).

As the preliminary vigil comes to a close, Ḥamūya initiates the program of *The Mirror of Spirits* proper, which begins with a series of supplications to accompany the *sunna* and obligatory morning prayers.¹² Upon completing the obligatory morning prayer and its attendant supplications, Ḥamūya instructs his readers to "commence the litany" (*yashra' fī al-wird*), which consists of an initial sequence of prayers and supplications, a recital of God's ninety-nine most beautiful names, a second sequence of prayers and supplications, and a recitation of Qur'ānic verses progressing sequentially from Sūrat al-Fātiḥa (Q. 1) to Sūrat al-Nās (Q. 114). This section of the text ends with a return to Q. 2:1–5

10 See Ḥamūya, *Sajanjal*, (F) fols. 1^b–72^a. Mashhad 3194 begins with the recitations that Fatih labels the *Sajanjal* proper, but also includes many of Fatih's preliminary supplications (beginning *in media res*) at the very end. See *Sajanjal*, (M) fols. 245^a ff. Carullah 1541 omits the instructions for prayers, supplications, and recitations that inaugurate Fatih 2645, apart for a series of named supplications that it tacks on (beginning *in media res*) at the very end. See *Sajanjal*, (C) fols. 90^a–97^a. Garrett 3G does not include any of these initial prayers and recitations. See also Appendix 4: *Mirror of Spirits* Structure.

11 Ḥamūya, *Sajanjal*, (F) fols. 1^b–24^a.

12 Ḥamūya, *Sajanjal*, (F) fols. 24^a–27^b.

(“*Alif. Lām. Mīm*. This is the book in which there is no doubt ...”), followed by a final prayer affirming the truth of the Qurʾān.¹³

To give a sense of the text’s style and contents, I translate two brief passages—one from the preliminary night vigil and one from the *Mirror’s* litany—here:

[تهجد]

بعد از آن دعاء آدم بگوید صلوات الله عليه

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم اللهم صلّ على محمد وعلى آل محمد
اللهم إنّك تعلم سرّي وعلايتي فأقبل معذرتي وتعلم حاجتي فأعطني سؤلّي
وتعلم ما في نفسي فاغفر لي ذنوبي فإنّه لا يغفر الذنوب إلّا أنت اللهم إنّني أسألك
إيماناً يباشر به قلبي و يقيناً صادقاً حتّى أعلم أنّه لا يصيبني إلى ما كتبت لي وأسألك
الرضا فيما قسمت لي

وصلّى الله على محمد وآله أجمعين ولا حول ولا قوّة إلّا بالله العليّ العظيم لبيك
اللهم لبيك لبيك وسعديك والخير كلّ بيديك ومنك وإليك وجّهت وجهي إليك
استغفرك و أتوب إليك وصلّى الله على محمد وآله أجمعين
بعد ازین دو رکعت دیگر گزارد بنیت تهجد و استغفار

...

[ورد]

و سه بار بگوید الله أكبر الله أكبر لا إله إلا الله والله أكبر الله أكبر ولله الحمد
وده بار بگوید بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم ولا حول ولا قوّة إلّا بالله العليّ العظيم

[Night Vigil]

After that, one should recite Adam’s prayer, God’s prayers be upon Him:

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. O God, pray for Muḥammad and his family.

“O God, You know what I have kept secret and made manifest (*sirrī wa-‘alāniyatī*), so take my penance! You know what I need, so grant my request! You know what is in my soul, so forgive my sins! Truly, none forgives sins but You. O God, I ask for faith to busy my heart; for the real

13 Ḥamūya, *Sajanjal*, (F) fols. 27^b–72^a.

certainty of knowing that only what You have written befalls me. I ask for contentment with what You have decreed for me.”

May God pray for Muḥammad and his entire family. There is no might and strength, save God’s, the Sublime, the Supreme. Here I am, O God! Here I am at Your service and pleasure! All goodness lies before You, stems from You, and returns to You. I turn my face towards You, ask for Your forgiveness, and repent before You. May God pray for Muḥammad and his entire family.

After this, one should pray two more prayer cycles with the intention of spending the night in vigil and seeking forgiveness (*bi-niyyat-i tahajjud wa astighfār*).¹⁴

...

[Litany]

One should say the following three times: God is most great, God is most great, God is most great. There is no god but God. God is most great, God is most great. Praise be to God. Then, the following ten times: In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. There is no might and strength, save God’s, the Sublime, the Supreme.¹⁵

These excerpts reflect key themes and strategies that pervade *The Mirror of Spirits* as a whole. Drawing from a robust arsenal of Sufi spiritual technologies, Ḥamūya’s text develops an arduous program of physical, mental, and affective *askēsis* designed to discipline the self and train one’s entire being on the Real. Execution of the *Mirror’s* instructions demands both a steadfast endurance and fastidious attention to detail, balancing the embodied demands of ritual prayer and recitation (speaking, standing, bowing, sitting, prostrating) with the cognitive rigor of continued reflection and awareness amidst a swirl of exhausting (yet meticulous) repetition. Even reading or copying the text could be exhausting. At points throughout Carullah 1541, for example, one scribe buckles under the weight of this staggering monotony as an almost compulsively neat hand rapidly unravels and red ink is smeared hastily across the page.¹⁶

In its extensive appropriation of shared devotional technologies, the first half of the *Mirror* is almost indistinguishable from the Sufi prayers that proliferated across the Islamic world during the 13th century. The litanies of Ḥamūya’s

14 Ḥamūya, *Sajanjal*, (F) fols. 4^a–4^b.

15 Ḥamūya, *Sajanjal*, (F) fol. 29^b.

16 Ḥamūya, *Sajanjal*, (C) fols. 13^a–16^a, esp. 18^a. This scribe is one of at least two—compare e.g., (C) fols. 12^b and 13^a.

close friend and colleague Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī (d. 1261), for example, reflect the *Mirror* in their precise and unrelenting repetition of ubiquitous pious formulae.¹⁷ Ḥamūya's program likewise opens intertexts with the manuals of authoritative Sufi forefathers. Adam's prayer, quoted above, appears in both Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī's (d. 996) *Nourishment for the Hearts* (*Qūt al-qulūb*) and Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī's (d. 1111) *Revival of the Religious Sciences* (*Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*) as an efficacious supererogatory devotion.¹⁸ These points of overlap and allusion implicitly demarcate, affirm, and stake a claim to a cache of authoritative spiritual technologies imagined to stretch back through past generations of famous Sufis to the very beginning of creation.

For Ḥamūya, these devotional technologies functioned as keys to experiential knowledge (*ma'rifa*) of Reality. In his *Rest of the Righteous* (*Sakīnat al-ṣāliḥīn*)—a propaedeutic guide for neophytes—he explains that it is through an all-encompassing attention (*tawajjuh-i kullī*) to prayer that one bears witness to the Real's beauty and majesty.¹⁹ Likewise, his *Realities of the Letters* (*Ḥaqā'iq al-ḥurūf*) asserts that prayer, at its very core, is union (*muwāṣila*) with the Real. Because one's inner and outer faculties are trained completely on the Real, Ḥamūya names prayer as the “form of the intellect”—i.e., the means through which one perceives things as they *really* are—and associates it with the knowledge by which one can achieve “true union” (*muwāṣila-yi ḥaqīqī*) with the Real.²⁰

As we saw in Chapter 2, Ḥamūya's 13th-century colleagues and the authoritative Sufi manuals upon which they drew wrote at length about the intimate relationship between prayer and knowledge. Here, we can briefly reprise our discussion to underscore how these Sufis vaunted their devotional practices

17 See Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī, *Awrad-i Sayf al-Dīn-i Bākharzī*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehid Ali Paşa Ms 1382, fols. 34–38 and *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i shaykh al-'ālam Sayf al-Dīn-i Bākharzī*, ed. Ghulām-Nabī Tawakkulī Pushta-ī, 'Āmir Tawakkulī Pushta-ī, and Muḥammad Nāṣir Mawdūdī (Tehran: Dībāya, 2018), 45–52. Unlike Ḥamūya, however, Bākharzī tends to follow Arabic prayers with Persian glosses.

18 For Adam's prayer in the *Nourishment*, see Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb fī mu'āmilat al-maḥbūb wa-waṣf ṭarīq al-murīd ilā maqām al-tawḥīd*, ed. Maḥmūd Ibrāhīm Muḥammad al-Riḍwānī, 3 vols. (Cairo: Maktabat Dār al-Turāth, 2001), 1.27. For Adam's prayer in the *Revival*, see Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, 10 vols. (Jedda: Dār al-Minhāj, 2011), II.417–418 and *Invocations and Supplications* (*Kitāb al-Adhkār wa'l-da'awāt*): *Book IX of the Revival of the Religious Sciences* (*Ihyā' 'ulūm al-Dīn*), trans. Kojiro Nakamura, 4th ed. (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2016), 77.

19 Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Sakīnat al-ṣāliḥīn*, ed. Sārā Kashfī (Qom: Majma'-'i Dhakhā'ir-i Islāmī, Mu'assasat-i Tārīkh-i 'Ilm wa Farhang, 2015), 35.

20 Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Ḥaqā'iq al-ḥurūf*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Ms Petrev Paşa 606 (P), fol. 17^a.

as an embodied and infinitely generative Qur'ānic hermeneutics. In “The Etiquette of Qur'ān Recitation” (*Kitāb Ādāb tilāwat al-Qur'ān*), the eighth book of *The Revival*, al-Ghazālī writes, “The heart is like a mirror and the passions like rust. The Qur'ān's meanings are like the forms that appear in the mirror; *askēsis* (*al-riyāḍa*) removes passions from the heart just as a polisher burnishes a mirror.”²¹ These meanings and the knowledge that accompanies them, he explains, are *potentially endless* (*lā nihāya lahā*).²² In “On the Mysteries of Prayer” (*Kitāb Asrār al-ṣalāt*), the fourth book of *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*, al-Ghazālī links this kind of *askēsis* specifically to prayer, framing the practice as “the key to hearts, within which the secrets of [the Qur'ān's words] are unveiled.”²³ In one's heightened state of awareness, one not only attends to the semantic implications of each verse, but engages with its *affective* qualities as well. Thus, al-Ghazālī explains, *real* knowledge is inseparable from affect, and the Qur'ān's endless possibilities emerge in relation to each individual's spiritual capacity and state.²⁴

While these types of devotional practice were (and are) ubiquitous across Muslims of all stripes, Ḥamūya and the medieval Sufis with whom he was in dialogue implied that their specific techniques of spiritual discipline transformed prayer—both obligatory and supererogatory—into an embodied technology with which to plumb the bottomless depths of the Qur'ān. The pearls to be harvested from these depths, moreover, were not purely discursive, nor were they concrete “units” of data. The charged space of Sufi prayer suspended mundane patterns of thinking, allowing practitioners to explore the intellectual, embodied, and affective resonances of Qur'ānic language in unforeseen ways. (We might draw parallels here to classical anthropological accounts of liminal, ritual, and rite-of-passage experiences. As James Smith explains, “Everything explodes with significance, and the boundaries that separate seemingly discrete things and people in everyday life disappear, revealing hidden webs of interconnectivity.”²⁵) Sufi prayer techniques, moreover, were tailored com-

21 al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, II.305.

22 al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, II.323. Emphasis mine.

23 al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, I.624 and *Kitāb Asrār al-ṣalāt* (*The Mysteries of the Prayer*): Book 4 of *the Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* (*The Revival of the Religious Science*), trans. Michael Abdurrahman Fitzgerald (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2018), 65.

24 al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, I.622–624 and *Asrār al-ṣalāt*, 62–65. In this passage, al-Ghazālī outlines a reading of *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa*, teaching readers how to actively engage with the affective qualities of each verse.

25 James H. Smith and Ngeti Mwandime, *Email from Ngeti: An Ethnography of Sorcery, Redemption, and Friendship in Global Africa* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2014), 83.

pletely to the spiritual capacity of their operators, generating constellations of possible meanings—“hidden webs of interconnectivity”—that shifted in relation to the dynamic flux of one’s ever-changing state. Read in this way, Ḥamūya’s *Mirror of Spirits* does exactly what it says on the tin, forging a Sufi “technology of the self” through which readers could orient themselves towards the Real and contemplate kaleidoscopic flashes of revelation that became refracted within them.

Just as medieval Sufis asserted themselves as the arbiters of the devotional practices they shared with their fellow Muslims, they also competed with one another over the efficacy of their prayers and the theoretical frameworks to which they were keyed. Framing written prayers as strategies of social and intellectual competition offers textured insights into a highly formulaic, repetitive, and seemingly immutable genre. Though she focuses primarily on 19th-century West African Sufi texts, Ariela Marcus-Sells has demonstrated how intertextual and cross-genre readings of supplicatory prayers can open windows into the social worlds in which they were produced and the relationships of power in which they were entangled.²⁶ Reading the litanies of Sidi al-Mukhtār al-Kuntī (d. 1811) and Sidi Muḥammad al-Kuntī (d. 1826) in conversation with their theoretical output and a vast corpus of contemporary prayers, Marcus-Sells reveals how these Kunta Sufi scholars encoded their devotional texts with allusive references to their own distinct metaphysical, cosmological, and ritual-practical claims. Likewise, by affixing their names to these (by then) ubiquitous devotional technologies, Sidi al-Mukhtār and Sidi Muḥammad attempted to subsume them within their authoritative reach. An attention to these strategies thus illuminates a dialogical process through which these Kunta Sufis attempted to appropriate and control the shared devotional practices that shaped their theoretical worlds.²⁷

Adapting Marcus-Sells’ methodological approach to 13th-century prayers highlights the ways in which Ḥamūya and his colleagues competed over a shared cache of devotional material. Read in this way, for example, the dizzying numerical, letrist, and prophetic associations that undergird the structure of Ibn ‘Arabī’s weekly litany become a strategy with which to subsume ubiquitous devotional technologies within the ever-shifting perspectives and Borgesian allusions that characterize his theoretical vision.²⁸ A close intertextual reading

26 Ariela Marcus-Sells, *Sorcery or Science?: Contesting Knowledge and Practice in West African Sufi Texts* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2022), 128–129.

27 Marcus-Sells, *Sorcery or Science?*, 127–160.

28 For the complex structure and allusive potential of Ibn ‘Arabī’s weekly litany—transmitted under such titles as “Daily Prayers” (*al-Awrād al-yawmiyya*), “Prayers for the Week”

of Ḥamūya's *Mirror of Spirits* likewise reveals instances in which the shaykh suffuses shared devotional practices with the playful lettrist imagery typical of his oeuvre. In a prayer that begins a few folia before the *Mirror's* first litany, Ḥamūya writes:

دست بردارد و این دعا بخواند
 اللَّهُمَّ عَظِّمَ مُحَمَّدًا عِنْدَكَ بِنَصَبِ لَوَائِهِ وَرَفَعِ كَلِمَتَهُ وَجَزِمَ حُكْمَهُ فِي مُلْكِهِ وَمَمْلَكَتِهِ
 وَكَسِرَ عَدُوَّهُ وَشَوَّكَتَهُ وَخَفَضَ مَنْ يِعَادِي أَهْلَ وَلايَتِهِ وَجَرَّ مَنْفَعَتَهُ إِلَى مَنْ أَصْلَحَتْ
 سِرِّيَّتَهُ بِسِرِّيَّتِهِ وَطَوَّبَتَهُ بِطَوَّبَتِهِ

One should raise one's hands and recite this supplication:

O God, glorify Muḥammad before You by erecting (*naṣb*) his banner; elevating (*rafʿ*) his word; imposing (*jazm*) his rule within his sovereign dominion; crushing (*kasr*) his enemies and those thorns in his side; subduing (*khafḍ*) whomever would contravene those worthy of his saintly authority; and drawing (*jarr*) his benefits towards all those whose secrets and intentions are in harmony with his.²⁹

While Ḥamūya's prayer initially appears to be a formulaic invocation of blessings upon the Prophet Muḥammad, a closer attention to his language reveals an extended series of double entendres rooted in the technical terminology of Arabic grammar. In addition to the meanings conveyed above, Ḥamūya's requests also imply specific grammatical operations: *naṣb*—putting a noun in the accusative case or a verb in the subjunctive mood; *rafʿ*—putting a noun in the nominative case or a verb in the indicative mood; *jazm*—removing the final vowel from a verb to form the imperative or jussive mood; *kasr*—inflecting a consonant with the vowel *kasra*; *khafḍ*—putting a noun in the genitive case; and *jarr*—another term for putting a noun in the genitive case. The supplication, in other words, beseeches God to engage with Muḥammad (and by extension, the world) through the endlessly productive operations of *language*. In so doing, Ḥamūya opens intertexts with similar prayers from *The Book of the Beloved* and evokes the linguistic metaphors through which texts like *The Lamp of Sufism* articulate his dynamic and radically deconstructive

(*Awṛād al-usbūʿ*), "Prayers for Days and Nights" (*Awṛād al-ayyām wa-l-layālī*), and "Litany" (*Wird*)—see Pablo Beneito and Stephen Hirtenstein's introduction to Ibn ʿArabī, *The Seven Days of the Heart: Prayers for the Nights and Days of the Week*, trans. Pablo Beneito and Stephen Hirtenstein (Oxford: Anqa Publishing, 2008), esp. 19.

29 Ḥamūya, *Sajanjal*, (F) fol. 25^a.

worldview.³⁰ These intertexts, in turn, reinforce Ḥamūya's claim to teach readers the "grammar" of revelation so that they may self-consciously participate in the divine operations through which cosmic language is continually broken apart, reorganized, inflected, and declined to produce infinite epistemological and ontological possibilities. We can thus read these allusive references as suffusing ubiquitous practices with the distinctive worldview through which Ḥamūya articulated his spiritual authority.

2 Dada Talismans? Deconstructing Visual Language

While the first half of the *Mirror* offers only a few instances of such allusive strategies, the second half of the work finds Ḥamūya firing on all cylinders. The shaykh's deconstructive tendencies are on full display as he warps the generic conventions of Sufi liturgical books almost beyond recognition. Fatih 2645 marks the transition with a blank folio and title page: "Keys to the Heavens and Earth, Openers of the Unseen and Obligatory" (*maqālid al-samawāt wa-l-arḍ wa-mafātīḥ al-ghayb wa-l-farḍ*).³¹ Apart from prayers and supplications, the material that follows envelops readers in a tempest of bewildering operations. Here, Ḥamūya writes Divine Names in stacked and mirrored pairs; transcribes long lists of Qur'ānic verses with specific catchwords; reproduces the name Allāh each time it appears in the Qur'ān (roughly eighteen folia in Fatih); and scribbles indecipherable strings of intersecting, stretched, or inverted letters. Perhaps most distinctive of all, however, are the arcane diagrams whose cryptic symbols, warped letters, and tangled forms engulf many of the *Mirror's* folia. At times, it seems as if these images link up to form rhizomatic networks or creep out beyond apparent boundaries, boring their roots into rows of surrounding text. Notably absent, however, are discursive exegeses and extended elaborations of principles.

My reading of the *Mirror's* images operates in dialogue with the work of Elizabeth Alexandrin, who has theorized the diagrams that populate Ḥamūya's *Book of the Beloved* as frames for reading the Qur'ān.³² The *Book of the Beloved's* diagrams, she argues, work in tandem with the surrounding text to open imaginal spaces within which readers could engage visually with the Qur'ān and

30 See, for example, Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Kitāb al-Maḥbūb*, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (SBB), MS Or. fol. 4084, fols. 51, 21^a, 22^a; and Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *al-Miṣbāḥ fi al-taṣawwuf*, ed. Najīb Māyil Hirawī (Tehran: Mawlā, 1983), 57–58, 135–136.

31 Ḥamūya, *Sajanjal*, (F) fols. 72^b–73^a. Carullah 1541 begins here, though without the aforementioned title page.

32 See Alexandrin, "Reading and Reciting."

its hidden meanings. As readers shift back and forth between text, image, and Qur'ānic quotation/allusion, specific dimensions of God's words become manifest in a play of presence and absence, emerging between "the spoken and the written, the unarticulated and the articulated, the seen and the unseen, as well as darkness, shadow, and light."³³ (Though Alexandrin does not make the point explicitly, we could add here that these multi-dimensional "calligraphic spaces" allow readers to experience the endless exchange of *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin*, hidden and manifest, that characterizes the self-disclosure of God at all registers of Reality.) This dynamic interplay discloses a glimpse of the beloved, the Seal of the Saints whose "rising to visibility" paradoxically entails a complete dissolution into the all-embracing unity of the Real.³⁴ Developed with a keen attention to questions of visibility, dimensionality, and color, Alexandrin's approach offers rich readings of *The Book of the Beloved* that speak to the imaginal techniques of 13th-century Sufism and set the stage for later messianic trends that drew on Ḥamūya's work.

Both Alexandrin and I are thus concerned with how Ḥamūya's diagrams open up new modes of engaging with Reality as revealed in the Qur'ān. Where we diverge reflects our differing goals and points of emphasis. While Alexandrin's broader project aims to underscore Ḥamūya's contributions to theories of sainthood and messianism, I am more interested in theorizing the disruptive, disorienting, and outright *weird* dimensions of his work that rise to visibility when he is juxtaposed with his 13th-century colleagues. Our goals are likewise reflected in our choice of texts. The *Book of the Beloved* reads like avant-garde Sufi theory: a swirl of abstract exposition that unfolds at multiple registers at once, weaving together letrist analysis, cosmic vision, and imaginal experience with ecstatic poetry and Sufi supplication. While Ḥamūya may speak and hear "face to face" with the Qur'ān in his *Book of the Beloved*, he breaks apart God's words and reconfigures them in the language of his own Sufi free jazz.³⁵ Such a text lends itself well to Alexandrin's approach, which traces Ḥamūya's hagiological readings—both visual and textual—of key Qur'ānic pericopes. In many ways, *The Mirror of Spirits* turns the *Book of the Beloved* inside out. The text is less Sufi free jazz than Qur'ānic Dada photomontage. Rather than writing Reality anew, *The Mirror of Spirits* presents readers with strings of Qur'ānic pericopes whose outer forms have been left intact, but whose context and structure have been reconfigured to reveal new meanings.³⁶ In such a text, we

33 Alexandrin, "Reading and Reciting," 172.

34 Alexandrin, "Reading and Reciting," 164.

35 On Ḥamūya's speaking and hearing face to face with the Qur'ān, see Alexandrin, "Reading and Reciting," 157.

36 See Appendix 4: *Mirror of Spirits* Structure, p. 259.

can still read diagrams as opening imaginal spaces within which to experience the Qurʾān. How we explore this space in the absence of Ḥamūya's own supplemental discourse, however, demands a different kind of approach.

What are these esoteric forms doing in a Sufi devotional text and how might we begin to make sense of them? We can begin by contextualizing Ḥamūya's visual language. On first glance, several of the more straightforward diagrams that populate Ḥamūya's *Mirror* bring to mind the visual strategies of his 13th-century Sufi colleagues, most notably those of Ibn ʿArabī. As Ali Karjoo-Ravary has shown, the holograph cosmological diagrams found in the second recension of Ibn ʿArabī's *Meccan Revelations* (*al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*, Istanbul, Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi MS 1870) work together with the surrounding text to articulate the interplay between the singular Divine Reality and Its multidimensional reflections in creation. Ibn ʿArabī's complex textual-visual program teaches readers to negotiate jarring jumps in cosmic perspective, scale, and time, leading them ultimately to the realization that it is through their own reality that they—as reflections of the cosmos—may most perfectly witness the Real.³⁷ Furthermore, Karjoo-Ravary demonstrates how Ibn ʿArabī appropriates visual language of Arabic philosophical and scientific discourse, thus subsuming these cosmic cartographies (and their attendant rational frameworks) within his own universalizing Sufi vision.³⁸

On folio 93^a of Ibn ʿArabī's holograph *Meccan Revelations* (Figure 12), for example, the shaykh presents a series of nine Divine Names placed within circles, arranged in rows, and set over other circles bearing the name of several terrestrial and soteriological principles.³⁹

As Karjoo-Ravary argues, the specific spatial orientation of these circles works together with their surrounding text to articulate hierarchical relationships between the Divine Names, interactions between these Attributes and the terrestrial realm, and the ways in which these interactions catalyze eschatological transformations.⁴⁰ Ibn ʿArabī's textual-visual program thus encourages

37 Ali Karjoo-Ravary, "Mapping the Unseen: Ibn al-ʿArabī's Maps in Chapter 371 of *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*," *Journal of Sufi Studies*, 2022, 1–64.

38 Karjoo-Ravary, "Mapping the Unseen," 3–5, 10, *inter alia*.

39 See also Karjoo-Ravary, "Mapping the Unseen," 47, 51 ff. These names include the Knowing (*al-ʿālim*), the Powerful (*al-qadīr*), the Living (*al-ḥayy*), the Desirer (*al-murīd*), the Speaker (*al-qā'il*), the Governing (*al-mudabbir*), the Differentiator (*al-mufaṣṣil*), the Bestower (*al-jawād*), and the Impartial (*al-muqsiṭ*). The terrestrial and eschatological principles include the Isthmus (*al-barzakh*), the Abode of this World (*al-dār al-dunyā*), the Earth of Mustering (*arḍ al-ḥaṣhr*), the Fire (*al-nār*), and the Garden (*al-janna*).

40 Karjoo-Ravary, "Mapping the Unseen," 51 ff.

ومن ذلك صورته حياء الاسماء الالهيه والدينا والاخوه والبرزخ

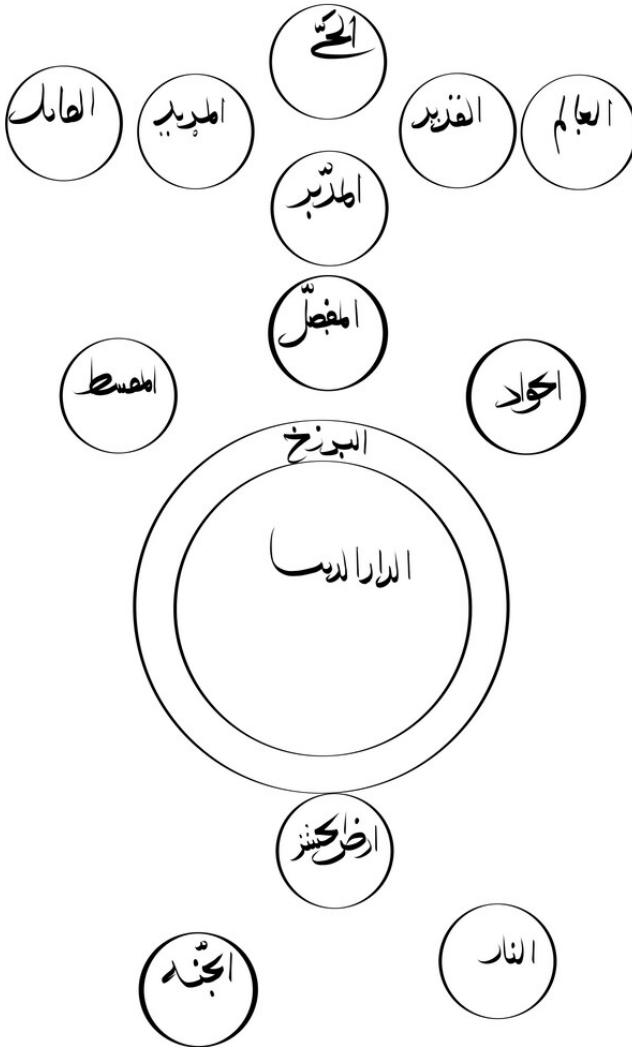


FIGURE 12 Diagram of the Divine Names from *The Meccan Revelations*.

Note: I was unable to secure publication rights for Figures 12, 13, and 16, as the Manuscript Institution of Türkiye no longer grants requests for images that “include amulets, charms etc. related to ilm al-hawās.”

AL-FUTŪHĀT AL-MAKKIYYA, ISTANBUL, TÜRK VE İSLAM ESERLERİ MÜZESİ MS 1870. AUTHOR’S REPRODUCTION

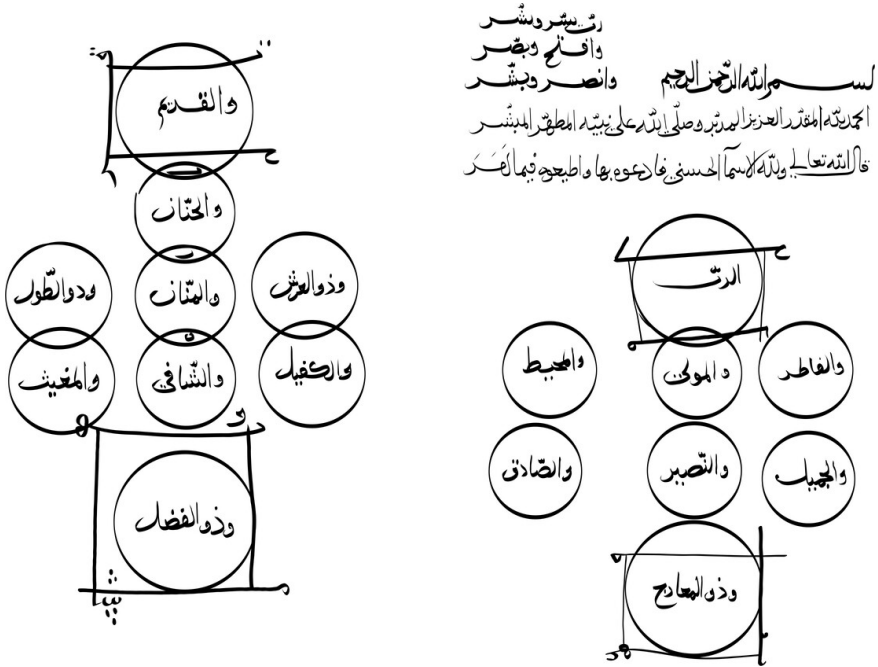


FIGURE 13 Diagram of the Divine Names from *The Mirror of Spirits and Signs on Tablets SAJANJAL AL-ARWĀḤ WA-NUQŪSH AL-ALWĀḤ*, ISTANBUL, SŪLEYMANIYE KŪTŪPHANESI, FATIḤ MS 2645, FOLS. 73^b–74^a. AUTHOR’S REPRODUCTION

readers to map abstract principles onto imaginal space in a way that allows them to visualize and manipulate the dynamic processes and relationships in which they are embedded.

In many respects, the *Mirror* and the *Futūḥāt* share a common visual language of concentric circles, intersecting lines, and primary geometric shapes that map various relationships between Divine, metaphysical, and human principles. Like Ibn ‘Arabī’s image discussed above, the twin diagrams that open a section titled “Keys to the Heavens and Earth, Openers of the Unseen and Obligatory” (Figure 13) consist primarily of Divine Attributes—seven on folio 73^b and nine on folio 74^a—set within circles and arranged according to distinct spatial relationships.⁴¹

41 The names on folio 73^b include the Lord (*al-rabb*), the Master (*al-mawlā*), the All-Encompassing (*al-muḥīt*), the Beautiful (*al-jamīl*), the Supporter (*al-naṣīr*), the Sincere (*al-ṣādiq*), and the Lord of Ascents (*dhū al-ma‘ārij*). Those on folio 74^a include the Pre-Eternal (*al-qadīm*), the Tender (*al-ḥannān*), the Lord of the Throne (*dhū al-‘arsh*), the Benefactor (*al-mannān*), the Lord of Might (*dhū al-ṭawīl*), the Guarantor (*al-kaḥfīl*), the Healer (*al-shāfi*), the Abundant (*al-mughīth*), and the Lord of Bounty (*dhū al-ḥaḍl*).

Unlike Ibn ‘Arabī, who contextualizes his diagrams with analogous discourse, Ḥamūya prefaces his images with the following supplications alone:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الْمَقْدِرِ الْعَزِيزِ الْمُدَبِّرِ وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى نَبِيِّهِ الْمُطَهَّرِ الْمُبَشِّرِ
 قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى ﴿وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا﴾ (الأعراف ١٨٠) وَأَطِيعُوهُ فِيمَا
 أَمَرَوْنَهِي
 رَبِّ يَسِّرْ وَيُسِّرْ
 افْتَحْ وَبَصِّرْ
 وَأَنْصُرْ وَيُسِّرْ

In the name of God, the Merciful the Compassionate.

Praise be to God, the Determiner (*al-muqaddir*), the Mighty (*al-‘azīz*),
 the Director (*al-mudabbir*).

Prayers be upon His pure Prophet, who brings good tidings.

God says: “The most excellent names belong to God: use them to call on
 Him,” (Q. 7:180)—obey Him in what He commands and forbids!

Lord, smooth the way and spread [it out before us].

Open and make [us] see.

Help [us] and bring [us] glad tidings.⁴²

Ḥamūya’s prayers function as ritual preparation for the diagrams that follow, but they offer little by way of conceptual clarity. It is difficult to trace more than fleeting thematic links between these prayers and the images they introduce. The prayers cite a verse from the Qur’ān that encourages the use of Divine Names in supplication, for example, but the specific Names that they employ—the Determiner, the Mighty, the Director—are absent from the diagrams that follow. Contextualized by ritual practice alone, I argue that these images resonate with the visual language of contemporary Sufi texts to provoke the practices of visualization sketched above, yet leave the conceptual framework of these practices radically open. In other words, each group of circles and Names, their spatial organization, and their points of overlap, disjuncture, and

42 Ḥamūya, *Sajanjal*, (F) fol. 73^b. In Fatih MS 2645 and Mashhad MS 3194, the diagrams and supplications are preceded by Qur’ānic recitations. They are preceded by a brief prayer that inaugurates the manuscript in Carullah 1541, and are absent from Princeton MS 3G.

tangent intersection continue to operate as visual cues for imaginal manipulation. Rather than binding these forms to a specific discursive center, however, the hyper-connective space of Sufi prayer works to expand the associative and affective potential of these cues, projecting them out into whatever ontological or conceptual frames specific practitioners find most immediately resonant.

It is not necessarily that these images are *de*-contextualized per se. Rather, Ḥamūya *re*-contextualizes conventional visual language by situating it within a space of Sufi ritual practice. Such a remixing of genres encourages readers to view his images through a new lens that entails its own a distinct horizon of expectations and reading practices. Read in this way, Ḥamūya redeploys the deconstructive structural allusions analyzed in Chapter 2. Through a playful adaptation of shared conventions, the shaykh untethers his images from a singular authorial perspective and opens them up to the interpretive capabilities of advanced Sufi readers. As was the case in *The Levels of Joy* and *The Book of the Beloved*, furthermore, this act of deconstruction functions as a strategy for inter-Sufi competition. *The Meccan Revelations* appropriates the visual language of philosophers to subsume their rational methods within the multitudinous vistas of Ibn ‘Arabī’s universalizing vision. Ḥamūya opens up this same language to the generative space of Sufi prayer, implicitly parochializing Ibn ‘Arabī’s discursive glosses as yet another limit set on the infinite dynamism of the divine self-disclosure.

Ḥamūya’s evocative visual style and refusal to ground images within a stable discursive framework draws together a constellation of genres and practices that extend beyond the typical orbit of Sufi theoretical texts. If we return to folia 73^b–74^a of Fatih 2645 (Figure 13), we may begin to notice key details that serve to further distinguish Ḥamūya’s diagrams from those found in the *Meccan Revelations*. Each of these images, for example, presents a pair of Divine Names—one at the very top and one at the bottom—whose circles are enclosed by quadrilaterals made up of extended Arabic letterforms. While these lettrist squares may seem strange when considered in relation to Ibn ‘Arabī’s cosmological diagrams, their visual language finds homophones in the seals and talismanic diagrams of medieval occult praxis.

The closest visual analogues to Ḥamūya’s lettrist squares are to be found in a body of texts and objects that Travis Zadeh calls “Qur’ānic theurgy”. As Zadeh explains, this corpus employs Divine Names, pious formulae, and Qur’ānic language to construct a variety of talismans, charms, and magic squares.⁴³ ‘Abd Allāh al-Yāfi‘ī’s (d. 1367) *String of Pearls on the Special Properties of the Glorious*

43 Travis Zadeh, “Magic, Marvel, and Miracle in Early Islamic Thought,” in *The Cambridge History of Magic and Witchcraft in the West*, ed. David Collins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 258.

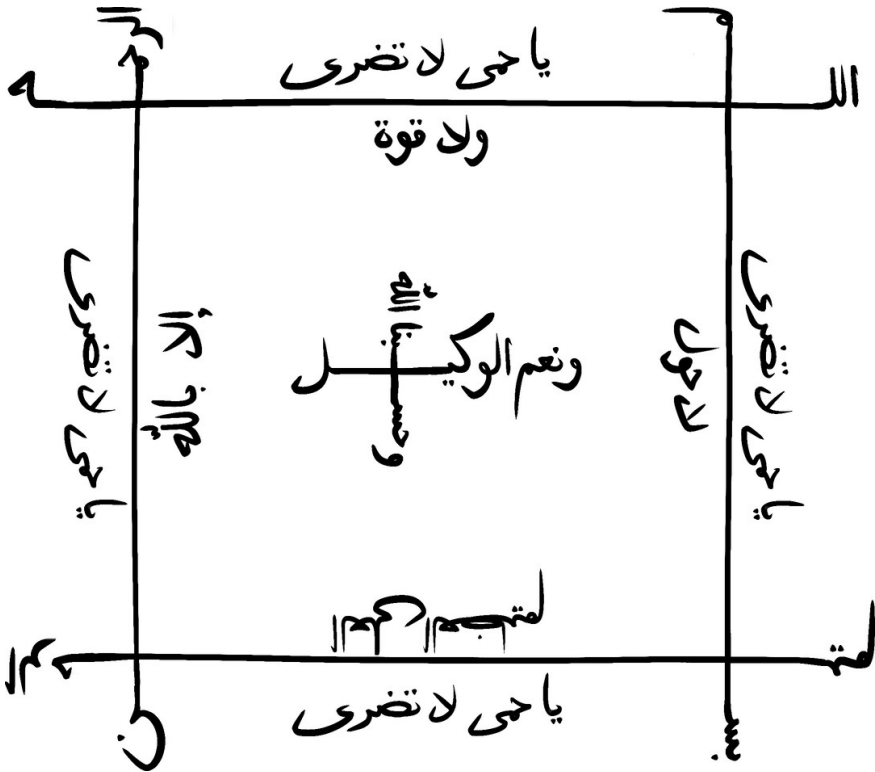


FIGURE 14 Fever talisman from *String of Pearls on the Special Properties of the Glorious Qur'an*
 AL-DURR AL-NAẒĪM FĪ KHAWĀṢṢ AL-QUR'ĀN AL-'AẒĪM. AUTHOR'S REPRODUCTION

Qur'an (*al-Durr al-naẓīm fī khawāṣṣ al-Qur'ān al-'aẓīm*) (Figure 14), for example, includes a quadrilateral talisman (*ṭilasm*) constructed from the elongated words and letters of the *basmala*.

Around the border of the talisman, we find the phrase “O fever, do no harm!” (*yā ḥummā lā taḍurrī*) and “There is no might and strength, save God’s, the Sublime, the Supreme” (*lā ḥawl wa-lā quwwa illā bi-llāh*) broken up along its inner walls. Finally, the talisman bears the phrase “God is sufficient for us; He is the best Guarantor” (*wa-ḥasabnā Allāh wa-ni‘m al-wakīl*) in its center, with the two clauses intersecting one another in the shape of a cross. To corroborate the talisman’s efficacy, al-Yāfi‘ī quotes the *ḥadīth* scholar Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 890), who reports that Abū al-Yamān al-Ḥakam ibn Nāfi‘ (d. 837) cured his fever by drawing the talisman on a piece of paper and slipping it under his head.⁴⁴

44 al-Yāfi‘ī, *al-Durr al-naẓīm*, 22.

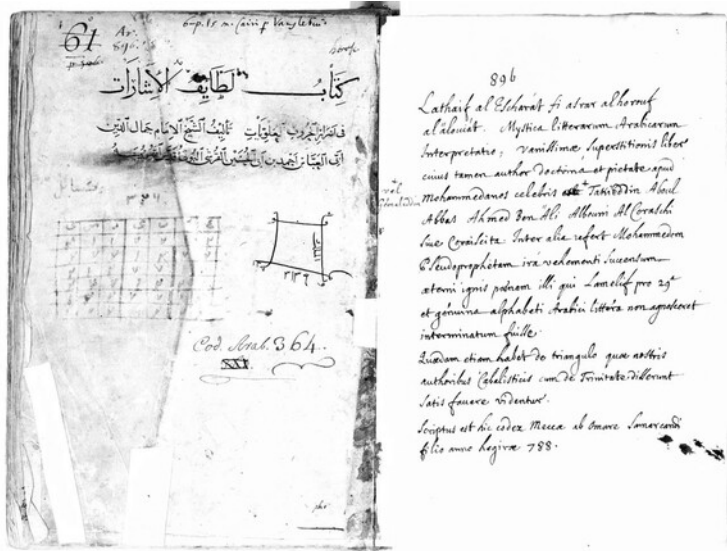


FIGURE 15 Talisman from *Subtleties of Allusions Regarding the Sublime Letters* LAṬĀʾIF AL-ISHĀRĀT FĪ AL-ḤURŪF AL-ʿULWIYĀT, PARIS, BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, ARABE MS 2657, FOL. 1^A

Ḥamūya's lettrist squares also bear a resemblance to a talisman found in Aḥmad al-Būnī's (d. 1225 or 1232/1233) *Subtleties of Allusions Regarding the Sublime Letters* (*Laṭāʾif al-ishārāt fī al-ḥurūf al-ʿulwiyāt*). As Noah Gardiner explains, al-Būnī's text is replete with complex lettrist diagrams, many of which he claims offer operators advanced knowledge or occult power when contemplated or ritually prepared as amulets.⁴⁵ While several of al-Būnī's lettrist diagrams share a visual language with those found in Ḥamūya's *Mirror*, it is the talisman inscribed—possibly by the copyist or a later owner—on the title page of MS Arabe 2657 from the Bibliothèque nationale de France (copied in 1382–1383) that is most relevant for our present concerns (Figure 15).⁴⁶

This anonymous talisman consists of a quadrilateral form constructed from the Qurʾānic phrase “His word is the truth; all control belongs to Him” (*qawluhu*

45 Noah Daedalus Gardiner, “Diagrams and Visionary Experience in al-Būnī's *Laṭāʾif al-ishārāt fī ḥurūf al-ʿulwiyāt*,” in *Visualizing Sufism: Studies on Graphic Representations in Sufi Literature (13th to 16th Century)*, ed. Giovanni Maria-Martini (Leiden: Brill, 2023), 16–50.

46 For other similarities, see, for example, Ḥamūya, *Sajanjal*, (F) fol. 201^A; and al-Būnī, *Laṭāʾif al-ishārāt fī ḥurūf al-ʿulwiyāt*, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Arabe 2657, fol. 8^b.

al-ḥaqq wa-lahu al-mulk) (Q. 6:73) with the number 3139 written in Eastern Arabic numerals beneath. As Jean-Charles Coulon notes, the talisman is not present anywhere else in al-Būnī's *Subtleties*, nor do any of the text's diagrams elongate Qur'ānic verses in a similar way.⁴⁷ Although we might challenge Coulon's claim that the talisman represents the manuscript's *only* practical and effective image—compare, for example, Gardiner's recent work on the text—his suggestion that the figure functions as a protective seal for the manuscript seems highly plausible.⁴⁸

I argue that Ḥamūya's incorporation of lettrist squares into his diagrams charges his text with the occult efficacy of Qur'ānic theurgy. That is to say, the shaykh's appropriation of these forms sets his images within the genre of talismans, amulets, and charms that were expected to operate upon the bodies and spirits of those who produced, contemplated, or otherwise engaged with them. As was the case with his "cosmological" diagrams, however, Ḥamūya's use of these familiar forms simultaneously strips them of the visual and textual conventions through which they typically become meaningful. Unlike al-Yāfi'ī's fever talisman, the *Mirror's* squares deny readers a stable narrative frame through which to clarify their intended use or to certify their efficacy. Ḥamūya's squares thus seem to imbue his text with an occult potency while at the same time leaving the nature (and theoretical underpinning) of that potency undetermined.

Although this lack of narrative framing mirrors the talisman inscribed on the cover page of al-Būnī's *Subtleties*, Ḥamūya's image stands out on account of another key distinction: the words and letters out of which they are constructed are ambiguous to the point of being illegible. Both al-Yāfi'ī and al-Būnī's talismans bear Qur'ānic verses that are elongated and overlapped to form quadrilateral shapes, but *not* warped beyond recognition. A reader examining the *Subtleties'* seal might thus ascertain its efficacy by identifying its Qur'ānic source and recalling the occult properties and talismanic operations associated with that verse. (Or, perhaps by consulting a text like al-Yāfi'ī's *String of Pearls*.)⁴⁹ Readers faced with Ḥamūya's squares, however, are not so lucky. While the sides of his talisman evoke Arabic letterforms, the words and phrases that they

47 Jean-Charles Coulon, "La magie islamique et le « corpus bunianum » au Moyen Âge, Vols. I–V" (PhD dissertation, Université Paris IV—Sorbonne, 2013), 1.678.

48 Coulon, "La magie," 1.678. *Contra* Coulon, Gardiner argues that *Subtleties'* diagrams operate as part of a praxis for visionary experience as well as tools for protection, provision, and spiritual advancement when prepared as amulets. See Gardiner, "Diagrams," 17.

49 While al-Yāfi'ī does not offer instructions for a lettrist square constructed from Q. 6:73, his *String of Pearls* sketches a series of efficacious prayer practices linked to the verse and others from Sūrat al-An'ām. See al-Yāfi'ī, *al-Durr al-naẓīm*, 104 ff.

produce are fleeting and ambiguous. The images invite viewers to experiment with different permutations, but these interpretive possibilities continually slip away as soon as one attempts a definitive interpretation.

Like his appropriation of cosmological visual language, Ḥamūya's deconstructive manipulation of talismanic forms implicitly parochializes the authoritative claims of his rivals. Within the shaykh's milieu, the practical efficacy of talismans seems to have been accepted as a social fact. How these efficacious technologies were theorized and operated, however, functioned as a ground upon which different individuals and socio-intellectual communities could contest the authoritative reach of their epistemologies. As Gardiner has argued, for example, al-Būnī's use of talismanic diagrams limits the proper activation of these potent forms within the cosmological frames, ritual practices, and visual literacy of his own initiatic Sufi communities.⁵⁰ Likewise, Ibn 'Arabī's expositions on the science of letters subsume the production of talismans within his universalizing Sufi metaphysics *without* offering concrete instructions regarding the practicalities of their production. (He assures his readers, of course, that he is more than capable of such practical feats; he merely refuses to transmit this dangerous knowledge publicly.)⁵¹

In addition to Sufis, scholars dedicated to *falsafa* and occult science put forward their own claims to talismanic knowledge and authority. In his monumental Qur'ānic *tafsīr*, *The Keys to the Unseen (Maḥāṭib al-ghayb)*, the Peripatetic-leaning Ash'ārī theologian Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1210) domesticates talismans within a Neoplatonized metaphysics, ascribing their efficacy ultimately to the power of God, albeit mediated through heavenly bodies and spiritual beings via the cosmic processes of emanation.⁵² Al-Rāzī likewise offers a theoretical justification for the unknown formulae and unintelligible incantations often found on talismans and amulets (like Ḥamūya's), arguing that these words enact their effects on weaker souls by inspiring fear and awe.⁵³ The occultist

50 Gardiner, "Diagrams."

51 Denis Gril, "Introduction and Chapter Analysis for 'The Science of Letters,'" in *The Meccan Revelations, Volume 11*, by Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī (d. 1240), ed. Michel Chodkiewicz (New York: Pir Press, 2004), 123–127; and Matthew S. Melvin-Koushki, "The Quest for a Universal Science: The Occult Philosophy of Ṣā'īn al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī (1369–1432) and Intellectual Millenarianism in Early Timurid Iran" (PhD dissertation, Yale University, 2012), 197–200.

52 Travis Zadeh, "Magic, Marvel, and Miracle," 247–248. For more on the occult dimensions of al-Rāzī's thought, see Michael-Sebastian Noble, *Philosophising the Occult: Avicennan Psychology and "The Hidden Secret" of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Philosophising the Occult* (De Gruyter, 2021).

53 Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Fakhr al-Rāzī: al-Mushahhar bi-al-Tafsīr al-kabīr wa-Maḥāṭib al-ghayb* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981–1983), 1.161.

Jamāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm al-Jawbarī (13th c.) takes a different tack in his *Book of Charlatans* (*Kitāb al-Mukhtār fī kashf al-asrār*). After dazzling readers with his comprehensive occult-philosophical studies (including engagement with al-Rāzī’s work), al-Jawbarī purports to expose the deceptive tricks of false prophets, fake shaykhs, and faux occultists, revealing the sleights of hand and natural-scientific mechanisms through which they dupe their audiences. For him, talismans and amulets operate within a world of divinely inspired miracles, occult resonances, and—in accordance with the primary concerns of the *Book of Charlatans*—social and natural interactions.⁵⁴ It is only through al-Jawbarī’s sage guidance, therefore, that they will be able to distinguish between *genuine* occult praxis and the natural illusions of charlatans. For both al-Rāzī and al-Jawbarī, the value and efficacy of talismans are taken for granted; what matters is demonstrating one’s capacity to explain *how* they work (in both genuine and counterfeit cases).

By inscribing talismanic forms into the *Mirror*, Ḥamūya stakes a claim within this theoretical-practical arena. The text’s structure simultaneously appropriates the taken-for-granted efficacy of these forms while circumscribing their operation within the embodied and affective technologies of Sufi prayer. By leaving the discursive and theoretical grounds of their efficacy undetermined, moreover, Ḥamūya does not limit the spiritual-practical potential of his text to a single metaphysical or explanatory framework. Rather, the shaykh implicitly acknowledges the plurality of these approaches and puts them to use as vehicles for his own deconstructive project. The strength of Ḥamūya’s method lies precisely in staging Sufi devotional practice as a dynamic frame within which readers could *improvise* with the generative ambiguities of his talismans. If Sufi prayer already functions as a site of amplified resonance, the presence of these deconstructed talismanic forms work together with their cosmological counterparts to hot-rod the *Mirror*, supercharging it with imaginative tools and efficacious properties capable of illuminating (and thus activating) the “hidden webs of interconnectivity” that bubbled beneath the self and/as the Real. This, Ḥamūya implies, is what it *really* means to master these visual forms.

But what exactly might this illumination have looked like? What types of connections would these strategies open up and how might readers have experienced them? To understand the kinds of knowledge the shaykh’s deconstructive methods may have opened up for his medieval and early-modern Sufi

54 Jamāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm al-Jawbarī, *The Book of Charlatans*, trans. Humphrey Davies, Bilingual edition (New York: New York University Press, 2020).

readers, let us bring our preceding analysis into dialogue with contemporary theories of diagram.

3 Diagramming Devotion: *The Mirror of Spirits* as Abstract Machine

Recent work in the study of diagrams has emphasized the performative dimensions and generative possibilities of these sparse visual forms. Drawing inspiration from unlikely allies—the American pragmatist C.S. Peirce (d. 1914) and the French postmodernists Gilles Deleuze (d. 1995) and Félix Guattari (d. 1992)—these studies merge theoretical sophistication with careful historical analysis to illuminate how diagrammatic forms draw viewers into an active process of meaning making. By provoking audiences to spatialize and manipulate abstract concepts, these studies highlight how diagrams enable novel connections across discursive, affective, and embodied frames of reference.⁵⁵

Jeffrey Hamburger has argued that the diagrams of the Dominican friar Berthold of Nuremberg (fl. late 13th c.) do not attempt to represent existing worlds but rather deconstruct and rearrange their pieces to produce an imaginal space within which viewers could literally *draw* new conclusions.⁵⁶ Berthold's diagrams draw together diverse modes of expression, encouraging imaginative manipulation on the part of viewers while simultaneously structuring their patterns of thinking and feeling.⁵⁷ For Berthold's medieval read-

55 For the studies most relevant to my work here, see Jeffrey F. Hamburger, *Diagramming Devotion: Berthold of Nuremberg's Transformation of Hrabanus Maurus's Poems in Praise of the Cross* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020); Jeffrey F. Hamburger, David J. Roxburgh, and Linda Safran, eds., *The Diagram as Paradigm: Cross-Cultural Approaches* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2022); John Bender and Michael Marrinan, *The Culture of Diagram* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010). For C.S. Peirce on diagrams, see Hamburger, *Diagramming Devotion*, 21–28; and Frederik Stjernfelt, “Moving Pictures of Thought: Diagrams as Centerpiece of a Peircean Epistemology,” in *Diagrammatology: An Investigation on the Borderlines of Phenomenology, Ontology, and Semiotics* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007), 89–116. For Deleuze on diagrams, see Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, esp. 11–148; Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Séan Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), esp. 23–44, 70–93; and Jakub Zdebik, *Deleuze and the Diagram: Aesthetic Threads in Visual Organization*, Continuum Studies in Continental Philosophy (New York: Continuum, 2012).

56 Hamburger, *Diagramming Devotion*, 28–32.

57 See Hamburger, *Diagramming Devotion*, 32. Hamburger also expands these insights to explore their implications vis-à-vis medieval diagrams in a cross-cultural context. See Jeffrey F. Hamburger, “General Introduction: Medieval Diagrams,” in *Diagram as Paradigm: Cross-Cultural Approaches*, ed. Jeffrey F. Hamburger, David J. Roxburgh, and Linda Safran (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2022), 6–8; and

ers, these images embodied a process for generating experiences of hidden realities—i.e., they were a mechanism for transporting the soul to God.⁵⁸ For our purposes here, Hamburger’s work illuminates how dynamic and performative visual languages can forge links across diverse dimensions of thought and experience.

John Bender and Michael Marrinan’s study of Diderot’s (d. 1784) *Encyclopédie* explores diagrammatic forms as tools for correlating dissimilar data. Framing visual correlation as a strategy of knowledge production, Bender and Marrinan argue that the *Encyclopédie*’s diagrams spatialize information so as to be apprehended or manipulated from multiple vantage points.⁵⁹ The knowledge generated by the text’s diagrams, therefore, depends on the active engagement of viewers who use their own “interests, passions, and quirks” to draw together disparate pockets of data.⁶⁰ While the visual, textual, and discursive dimensions of these diagrams structure virtual spaces and the imaginative movements possible within them, they ultimately leave themselves open to the exploratory correlations improvised by active readers.⁶¹ Bender and Marrinan’s insights thus offer us a way of theorizing the relationship between the fixed structures and radical openness of Ḥamūya’s arcane images.

In broad strokes, then, Hamburger, Bender, and Marrinan combine C.S. Peirce’s approach to diagrams as tools for structuring thought and producing truth with Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of the diagram as “abstract machine”—i.e., a mechanism for producing a new type of reality or “a real yet to come.”⁶² Each of the studies cited above demonstrates how the visual languages through which diagrams engage readers and produce novel ways of imagining (and being in) the world are contingent upon the genre conventions and historical contexts in which they were produced and circulated. As we will see below, their approaches and theoretical insights open up generative ways of thinking through Ḥamūya’s deconstructive diagrams as part and parcel of a performative strategy aimed to structure the thinking (and feeling) of advanced Sufi readers and generate new kinds of abstract-experiential connections.

idem, “Western Medieval Diagrams,” in *Diagram as Paradigm: Cross-Cultural Approaches*, ed. Jeffrey F. Hamburger, David J. Roxburgh, and Linda Safran (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2022), 59.

58 Hamburger, *Diagramming Devotion*, 24–27.

59 Bender and Marrinan, *Culture of Diagram*, 7–8.

60 Bender and Marrinan, *Culture of Diagram*, 210.

61 Bender and Marrinan, *Culture of Diagram*, esp. 17, 21, 23, 29, 34–35.

62 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 142.

with this form survive from the 19th century, they were more familiar during Ḥamūya's time as the wooden slates upon which children across the Islamic world learned to read and write.⁶³ At the very bottom of the image, a quotation in red and black ink—"Truly this is a glorious Qur'ān [written] on a preserved tablet" (Q. 85:21–22)—seems to associate it with the heavenly tablet upon which the archetypal Qur'ān is inscribed. The text that follows does not offer an explicit guide for interpretation. Instead, Ḥamūya fills several folia with Qur'ānic pericopes centered around key catchphrases—"Say: O God ..." (*qul Allāhumma*), "Say: God" (*qul Allāh*), and "Say: He ..." (*qul huwa*, fol. 76^a).

Although Ḥamūya offers no discursive material with which to contextualize this diagram, the *Mirror's* ritual practices, structural organization, and playful deconstruction of visual languages operate in tandem to transform the text and its images into a Deleuzian "abstract machine". As we have seen above, medieval Sufis imagined the practices of prayer and recitation as embodied technologies that used Qur'ānic language as a means of generating new connections across spiritual, affective, and intellectual life. The aurally organized verses that follow the *Mirror's* tablet diagram, for example, mirror the letrist strategies outlined in Chapter 1. Here, we find a chaotic swirl of ambiguous meanings and allusive possibilities centered around a single set of symbols, sounds, and sensations—here, key Qur'ānic catchwords—that undergo subtle shifts across folia. Rather than letters and metaphysical concepts of Ḥamūya's own invention, the *Mirror* manipulates the words of the Qur'ān, reorganizing *sūras* and *āyas* through operations that are simultaneously (in the context of embodied recitation) visual, conceptual, sonic, and tactile. If Sufi prayer practice sought to open the affective and epistemological possibilities of the Qur'ān, then we might imagine the *Mirror* as stringing together specific nodes of possibilities that readers could explore in accordance with their own capacities.

63 For 19th-century brass/bronze talismanic plaques, see for example, OA+.2609 and OA+.2606 in the collection of the British Museum (<https://www.britishmuseum.org/>). See also Porter, Saif, and Savage-Smith's brief discussion in Venetia Porter, Liana Saif, and Emilee Savage-Smith, "Medieval Islamic Amulets, Talismans, and Magic," in *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture*, ed. Finbarr B. Flood and Gürlü Necipoğlu (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017), 537–540. For these tablets as ubiquitous pedagogical tools across the medieval Islamic World, see Konrad Hirschler, *The Written Word in the Medieval Arabic Lands: A Social and Cultural History of Reading Practices* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 82–133 (see Plates 2–15 for images). Such tablets are still in use for Qur'ānic instruction today, especially in West Africa. See, for example, Rudolph T. Ware III, *The Walking Qur'ān: Islamic Education, Embodied Knowledge, and History in West Africa* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 39–76.

I suggest, therefore, that the *Mirror's* performative strategies run parallel to those of *The Lamp of Sufism*, *The Levels of Joy*, and *The Book of the Beloved*, but operate primarily through the technologies of prayer and the revealed language of the Qurʾān.

Turning back to Ḥamūya's tablet diagram, let us begin by focusing our attention on a curious and recurring lettrist symbol that resembles a letter *kāf* written in the Persian style with an elongated *mīm* nestled within its central opening. Erected at the top of this *kāf* are three *alifs* connected at the base, resembling a trident. The symbol occurs twice in its fullest expression, once above the tablet's central circle in red and black ink, and once below in black ink alone. The tridental *alifs* are also reproduced on their own in red ink: once at the very top of the trapezoidal handle facing outward, once near the top the tablet's right-hand vertical border facing inward, and once again towards the outer boundary of the tablet's left-hand horizontal border facing inward.

These visual components open a web of allusive possibilities that enrich the *Mirror's* program of prayer and recitation. The diagram's *kāf* symbol encourages viewers to put the *Mirror* into dialogue with abstract-experiential claims scattered throughout Ḥamūya's oeuvre. As we have seen in Chapter 1, *The Lamp of Sufism* sets the letter *kāf* within strategies of sound, sensation, and allusion to explore the simultaneous manifestation and concealment of the Real in creation. The tridental *alifs* evoke a discussion from the very same passage in which Ḥamūya likens the unfurling of God's light—i.e., the act of creation—to the manifestation of the word Allāh, itself a revelation of the phrase “Verily, I am” (Q. 28:30).⁶⁴ In the *Lamp of Sufism* and such works as *Exegesis of the Noble Basmala (Sharḥ-i basmala-yi sharīf)*, the shaykh visualizes the Arabic phrase “Verily I am” (*innī anā*) as three *alifs* and two *nūns*, each letter of which corresponds to a range of divine and human principles.⁶⁵ The tablet diagram's tridental *alifs*, therefore, can be read as three *alifs* joined at the base and two dotless *nūns* joined at the middle—i.e., iconic representations of *innī ana* and the dynamic mechanisms the phrase embodies. Finally, the elongated *mīm* within the *kāf's* central opening evokes another lettrist passage from the *Lamp of Sufism*. Here, Ḥamūya likens the visual and conceptual relationship between *alif* and *mīm* to that of a penis and vagina, framing the interaction between these organs as microcosmic expressions of creative processes that reverberate across divine, cosmic, and human realms. Together, the shaykh explains, *alif*

64 Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 81.

65 Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 81 and *Sharḥ-i basmala-yi sharīf*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Çorlulu Ali Paşa MS 445, fol. 2^a.

and *mīm* form the water of life (*āb-i zindaqī*) from which emerges the letter *kāf* and, implicitly, the play of manifestation and concealment outlined above.⁶⁶

Read in context, we may understand the visual program that unfolds across folia 73^b to 74^b as diagramming a mode of self-disclosure—i.e., the process by which Divine Attributes become manifest through creation. The tablet diagram thus becomes a means through which to explore the universe itself: the place where the Real Point is drawn out into a legible cosmic script. By placing the Divine Names and heavenly tablet before the *Mirror's* extensive Qur'ānic quotations, Ḥamūya implicitly frames the language of his text as a microcosmic manipulation of this macrocosmic script and a point of access to the Realities that it makes legible. Marking the tablet diagram with iconic allusions to discussions scattered across his oeuvre, the shaykh opens a web of intertextual associations through which readers can make the *Mirror's* words (i.e., *God's words*) meaningful.

At the same time, however, the discussions to which these intertexts point are not neatly bounded expositions of doctrine, but themselves highly allusive textual performances left open to the active engagement of advanced readers's minds and bodies. Far from a static representation of metaphysical principles, the tablet diagram mediates between the *Mirror's* prayer practices and the relational approaches to Reality that we have explored throughout this book, supercharging the associative links cultivated by Sufi prayer with Ḥamūya's own performative and deconstructive method. If these devotional practices open readers up to the truth of the Qur'ān, then the *Mirror* implicitly collapses that truth with the radical openness of the shaykh's knowledge. What this image makes meaningful—what it *diagrams*—is the generative grammar of “Real language” that one must learn to inhabit through a steadfast engagement with advanced Sufi practice and, of course, Ḥamūya's work.

Ḥamūya augments the diagram's performative qualities with Divine Names (in black) and rows of detached letters (in red) inscribed on the tablet's body and beyond its borders. Within the diagram's trapezoidal handle we find “The Creator” (*al-bārī*, or perhaps, *al-bādī*). The center of the rectangular body likewise contains four Names oriented along cardinal points around a black circle. Beginning at the top and moving clockwise, these Names include “The Unique” (*al-fard*), “The Close” (*al-qarīb*), “The Eternal” (*al-dā'im*), and “The Most Noble” (*al-akram*). To the bottom right of “The Eternal”, we find “The First” (*al-aḥad*).⁶⁷ The final Divine Name, “The Director” (*al-mudīr*), sits outside the boundary of

66 Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 69–70.

67 In Carullah 1541 (fol. 2^b), “The First” sits directly below “The Eternal”.

the tablet in the bottom left-hand corner. The tablet's primarily detached letters swarm together around these Names in sequences whose repetitions and permutations seem to occur at random. The diagram presents letters both within and outside of its tablet, with some stretching across its black borders. Around the top border of the tablet's rectangular body, letters are rotated along their axes, with some turned ninety degrees and others flipped completely upside down. At the upper right-hand corner of the tablet's trapezoidal handle, a lone *ʿayn* sits just beyond the image's black border.

As I have argued in Chapter 1, the shaykh uses the dynamic and associative potential of letters to articulate a fundamentally relational approach to Reality. Just as letters of the alphabet become meaningful only through the bundles in which they are embedded—words, talismanic operations, sentences, stanzas, paragraphs, etc.—so too Divine Attributes and created entities can only be understood through their (dynamic) relationships with one another and the (shifting) points of view according to which these relationships are considered. Moving across Ḥamūya's oeuvre, or even working through a single text, the qualities and associations ascribed to a single letter are continually expanded, substituted, or reconfigured.

By refusing to stabilize the *Mirror's* tablet diagram with discursive instructions or theoretical framing, Ḥamūya forces practitioners to improvise with the associative possibilities of each individual letter. Should the repeated *qāfs* beyond the tablet's right-hand border be read in dialogue with the disconnected letter that inaugurates *Sūrat Qāf* (Q. 50)? Should they be taken as representations of the number 100 and subjected to alphanumeric calculations? Could they have something to do with the ensuing Qur'anic verses (fols. 75^a–77^a), which revolve around the phrases “Say: God!” (*qul Allāh*), “Say: O God!” (*qul Allāhumma*), and “Say: He!” (*qul huwa*)? What about the aural and embodied sensations that arise from this repetitive recitation? Might the *qāfs* stand in for God's potency and power (*qudrat wa-quwwat*) as suggested in the *Lamp of Sufism*?⁶⁸ Or, perhaps they should be interpreted in light of the cosmic “Circle of Qāf,” whose elaboration in *The Book of the Beloved* spans polyglot poetry, prophetology, Qur'anic exegesis, lettrist transformations, Sunnī-Shī'a relations, and more.⁶⁹ Without a stabilizing discursive framework, the ritual-practical context of the *Mirror's* liturgy encourages readers to negotiate all of these interpretations simultaneously.

68 Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 82.

69 Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fols. 24^b–34^b.

The distinct visual dimensions of Ḥamūya's tablet diagram amplify these associations and their resonances. As readers move through diagrammatic space, they must not only grapple with the proliferating interpretive possibilities of each letter, but also the visual relationships that emerge between them. The spatial organization of the tablet's detached letters evoke the talismanic visual language analyzed in the previous section. One might ask—Are these sequences of magic squares or alphanumeric calculations of the sort found in al-Būnī's work?⁷⁰ Detached letters to be linked into longer phrases? A cryptic code to be deciphered? Schematic representations of relationships between Divine Attributes, entities, the Qur'ān, and language? What effect are they to have on the body and soul of the operator? By appropriating and deconstructing these forms, Ḥamūya provokes readers to experiment with these efficacious operations in conjunction with the dynamic bundles of meaning outlined above.

The organization of the tablet's letters likewise encourages readers to explore the relational possibilities that arise when considering the image from different points along the diagrammatic space. Forms rotated along an axis, for example, might provoke readers to turn the diagram, emphasizing the legibility of some elements while obscuring that of others. The circle at the center of the diagram's rectangular body, for example, is circumscribed with repetitions of the phrase "O God, He" (*Allāhumma huwa*), written in red ink. As the phrase wraps around the circle's circumference, the final *mīm* of each *Allāhumma* is extended, with most linking up to the *hā'* of the *huwa* that follows. On the right-hand side of the circle, the pattern is broken with the phrase "O God, You" (*Allāhumma anta*), with the final *tā'* of the word *anta* reaching into the central circle. Within the circle, we find "of God" (*li-llāh*), "the Singular, the Singular" (*al-witr al-witr*), and "the Light" (*al-nūr*) written in red ink. Turning the diagram (or oneself around the diagram) to follow the phrases that circumscribe the image's center circle focuses one's attention on invocations to God (*Allāhumma huwa*), rendering the remainder of the tablet's letters, symbols, and Divine Names a peripheral blur.⁷¹ Such a play of manifestation and concealment would not only mirror the dynamics of creation outlined above, but also the subsequent Qur'ānic recitations that orient a multitude of verses around stable catchphrases. We might imagine such an operation as enabling

70 As Coulon notes, the "magic squares" contained in copies of al-Būnī's texts often lacked clear geometric borders, thus resembling the scattered letters of Ḥamūya's tablet diagram. See Coulon, "La magie," 1,543, 546–547.

71 On rotated script as an impetus for readers to turn Sufi diagrams, see Karjoo-Ravary, "Mapping the Unseen," 33.

readers to visualize the relationship between the singular unity of Reality, the meticulous repetition of Sufi prayer, and endless webs of abstract-experiential meaning that emerge from and recede into them.

Ḥamūya's performative approach dovetails with an aesthetics of wonder (*'ajab*) that was ubiquitous not only for Sufis, but for educated elites across the medieval Islamic world.⁷² As an illustrative example, let us turn to his contemporary Zakariyyā' ibn Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd al-Qazwīnī (d. 1283)—chief judge in Wasit, head of the Sharābī madrasa, and member of the Īlkhānid historian and administrator Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭā-Malik Juwaynī's (d. 1283) entourage. As Zadeh explains, Qazwīnī puts wonder at the core of his encyclopedic natural history, the immensely popular *Wonders and Rarities* (*'Ajā'ib al-makhlūqāt*). Echoing Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 1023), Abū 'Alī Miskawayh (d. 1030), Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037), and al-Ghazālī, Qazwīnī frames wonder as an ethical disposition: *a sense of perplexity in the face of the unknown*. This sense of perplexity provokes an active investigation of the world, unlocking new levels of perception, moral refinement, and—to bring things full circle—wonder. In *Wonders and Rarities*, therefore, Qazwīnī uses systematic taxonomy, a natural-philosophical attention to detail, and an array of dazzling images to illuminate the world in all of its weird and wonderful glory, propelling readers towards a boundless appreciation for the Creator.⁷³

Stripped of familiar conventions and suffused with ambiguous allusions, Ḥamūya's diagrams become *gharīb* in all senses of the word—rare, strange, weird, extraordinary.⁷⁴ In lieu of natural philosophy, however, the *Mirror* uses the embodied practices of Sufi *askēsis* to transform petrifying perplexity into productive wonder. Once again, Sa'd al-Dīn vaunts the dynamic adaptability of Sufi devotional technology over the monolithic analytical systems of his Peripatetic contemporaries. If Qazwīnī's meticulous taxonomies take readers through a tour of the macrocosm in all of its minute details, Ḥamūya's abstract machine bores down into the wondrous depths of Reality churning within their own subjectivities.

72 See Travis E. Zadeh, *Wonders and Rarities: The Marvelous Book That Traveled the World and Mapped the Cosmos* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2023), esp. 97–127. For more on Ḥamūya and wonder, see Chapter 5, Section 4: "Inimitability, Incomprehensibility, and Wonder" (p. 212).

73 Zadeh, *Wonders*, 109 ff.

74 For the semantic range of *gharīb*, see Zadeh, *Wonders*, 121.

4 Conclusion

Through a deconstructive appropriation of ubiquitous visual languages, Ḥamūya hijacks their performative potential while leaving their particularities open to viewers. I offer the questions and suggestions above not as mere exercises in creative speculation, but rather to demonstrate how the diagram's spatial qualities themselves may have worked to enhance the performative qualities and interpretive openness of the *Mirror*. In Ibn 'Arabī's *Meccan Revelations*, the layout of metaphysical principles in diagrammatic space and the transformation of this space across folia enabled readers to imagine and manipulate abstract processes across multiple levels of Reality. Guided by Ibn 'Arabī's theoretical framing, readers could follow the shaykh's jarring shifts in ontological and temporal perspective as a practice of spiritual *askēsis*, ultimately allowing them to experience their own selves and the world(s) around them as manifestations of the Real.⁷⁵ Ḥamūya's playful deconstruction of generic conventions within the ritual framework of Sufi prayer directs audiences to bring Qur'ānic language into dialogue with their own affective states while also mapping these correlations across a range of intertexts, cosmologies, and theoretical frameworks. While the shaykh uses visual language to structure readers' thinking and feeling, his deconstructive strategies emphasize qualities of dynamism, openness, and process in and of themselves. As readers improvise with allusive meanings and deconstructed visual forms, they do not reach some stable "secret" about themselves, the world, and God, but rather come to self-consciously *embody* the fundamental qualities of Reality. The goal here is not to wed oneself to stable structures or specific connections, but rather to cultivate a *sensibility* through which one can manipulate disparate data at macro-, meso-, and microcosmic scales. The *Mirror* and its diagrams thus give readers the tools through which they can read and reproduce the dynamic relational grammars through which the Real Itself speaks.

With these claims in mind, the shape of Ḥamūya's tablet diagram becomes particularly illuminative. For literate viewers, the image's rectangular body and trapezoidal handle would have evoked the wooden slates upon which they learned to read and recite the Qur'ān as children. Hirschler notes that medieval children's schools across the Islamic world employed such slates as part of a pedagogical program to teach basic reading, writing, and recitation skills.⁷⁶ Following a method similar to modern synthetic phonetics, students

75 Karjoo-Ravary, "Mapping the Unseen," 62–63.

76 Hirschler, *Written Word*, 84–86. Plates 2–15 include images of such slates from the 13th to 15th centuries, spanning from the Eastern Mediterranean to Central Asia.

would first learn the detached letters by copying them out onto their slates. Once students could recognize, reproduce, and recite all of the letters and their possible vocalizations, they would learn to join their forms together in arbitrary combinations. Finally, students would learn to put together these sounds and symbols into the longer words, verses, and chapters that make up the Qurʾān.⁷⁷ The wooden slates upon which the *Mirror's* tablet diagram is modeled thus sit at the center of an embodied pedagogy that taught students to negotiate connections across experiential and intellectual domains. These connections enabled students to engage with the world in a new way, opening up a new approach not only to the Word of God, but to knowledge in general. Drawing upon these affective memories and experiences, the form of Ḥamūya's tablet diagram encourages readers to engage with it—and indeed, the recitations, operations, and images that follow—as students of a cosmic script and grammar. Read thus, the *Mirror* as both text and image becomes an “abstract machine” capable of generating new visions of Reality.

77 Hirschler, *Written Word*, 94–98.

Genealogies of Knowledge: Shaykhs, Sufis, and Spiritual Inheritance

... The individual of sound origins belongs to a good and pure stock, which has individuals, offspring, and numbers of the utmost power and furthest refinement.¹

SA'D AL-DĪN ḤAMŪYA, *Letter to 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭā-Malik Juwaynī* (d. 1283)

•••

What's your name? Who's your daddy? Is he rich like me?²

ZOMBIES, "Time of the Season"

••

Before they could be disciplined into the embodied practices and relational epistemologies of medieval Sufism, would-be Sufis had to cultivate interpersonal relationships that would bind them to a network of masters, colleagues, and disciples in the past, present, and future. Ḥamūya focuses in particular on the immediate link between shaykhs and their students, framing this bond as the *sine qua non* of the Sufi path. In such texts as *The Lamp of Sufism* and *The Levels of Joy*, he prescribes a rigid dyad with distinct roles, urging students to submit unconditionally to their shaykhs, whose charismatic authority and boundless knowledge would mold them into vessels worthy of the Real's self-disclosure. Here, master and disciple are mirror images—one entirely reliant, the other absolutely free. As Ḥamūya elaborates the qualities and duties of each pole, he implicitly places himself in the position of the ideal shaykh; his own textual output evidence of an infinitely generative approach to Reality.

Though Sa'd al-Dīn grounds the acquisition of knowledge in the relationship between these fairly generic types, a comparative analysis of his narrative

1 Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, "Makātīb-i Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥammū'i," in *Jashn-Nāma-yi Ustād Sayyid Aḥmad Ḥusaynī Ashkūrī*, ed. Aḥmad Khāma-Yār and Rasūl Ja'faryān (Tehran: Nashr-i 'Ilm, 2013), 468.

2 Zombies, "Time of the Season," *Odessey [sic] and Oracle* (CBS, 1968).

strategies suggests a more complicated interplay between knowledge, power, and the social world. By comparing Sa'd al-Dīn's claims with those put forth by his master Najm al-Dīn Kubrā (d. 1221) and close friend Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 1274), I explore how even the most accomplished shaykhs must legitimate their knowledge by forging links of *dependence* across social worlds past and present. Both Kubrā and Qūnawī articulate their authority through recourse to their own spiritual masters, recounting complete submission in the past as evidence and justification for an elevated rank in the present. Such texts as *The Effusions of Beauty and Revelations of Majesty* (*Fawā'ih al-jamāl wa-fawātiḥ al-jalāl*) and *The Divine Breaths* (*al-Nafaḥāt al-ilāhīyya*) thus present their authors simultaneously as masters and disciples, with each role dialogically informing the other. The specific relationships these thinkers deploy and how they choose to narrate them work in tandem with the distinct social goals and idiosyncratic modes of knowledge production put forth in their work. For Kubrā, accounts of the unbreakable bond between him and his training shaykh (*shaykh al-khalwa*) work to legitimate his pedagogical practices and distinctive exegeses of visionary experiences. Likewise, Qūnawī's reports of his meetings with a deceased Ibn 'Arabī (d. 1240) in the unseen world emphasize the relative importance of spiritual over biological ties in an attempt to secure his place as principal inheritor of his master's legacy.

Unlike Kubrā and Qūnawī, Sa'd al-Dīn is almost completely silent on the issue of his own spiritual masters. When read against his colleagues' narratives, however, the faint specters that Ḥamūya conjures suggest a keen awareness of the social and material constraints through which his knowledge and authority as a shaykh could be legitimated and received. Although his propositional claims focus explicitly on the link between master and disciple as the primary means for cultivating authoritative knowledge, Sa'd al-Dīn's conspicuous citations of his illustrious forefather Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya (d. 1136) highlight the fundamental importance of another kind of social dependence—family and genealogy. The “Sufi lord of Baḥrābād” implies that it is not only training and initiation, but also blood, land, and birth that mold one's body into a vessel for the Real's self-disclosure.

Coupling the shaykh's citations with evidence from his personal correspondences, this chapter illuminates the stakes of his rhetorical strategies and tracks their discursive possibilities across a range of contexts: social, intellectual, political, Sufi, Ayyūbid, and Mongol. While we have focused so far on how Ḥamūya's performative writing could produce endless meanings for Sufi readers, I explore here how he manipulated established genealogical conventions to generate a range of social possibilities for himself. Here, familial ties are just as plastic as initiatic lineages. Just as Kubrā and Qūnawī shape past spiritual

relationships to suit their contemporary goals, Ḥamūya manipulates a range of initiatic, interpersonal, and biological ties to navigate diverse networks of actors across the medieval Islamic world.

Rather than binding himself to the legacy of his immediate masters, Sa'd al-Dīn's laconic references to Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya could mean different things to different audiences. In Ayyūbid territories, Sa'd al-Dīn's assertion of a direct spiritual bond between himself and his forefather stakes an implicit claim in the Ḥamūya family hierarchy, co-opting and subverting the authority of his politically ascendant cousins, the famous Chief Sufis (sing., *shaykh al-shuyūkh*) of Egypt and Syria. In Khurāsān, on the other hand, the shaykh's arguments in favor of familial prestige and tacit nods to his own illustrious lineage reflect a nuanced engagement with new models of genealogical authority catalyzed by Mongol rule. Understanding how Ḥamūya negotiates these diverse contexts, relationships, and discourses demands that we read Sufi knowledge as fundamentally entangled with the world(s) that produced it: a dynamic response to the messy realities of human life.

In short, we are dealing with the question of politics. How might we conceptualize the politics of a Sufi who leaves his work so radically open to readers? A Sufi whose epistemology is rooted less in stable systems and more in improvised performances? Rather than attempting to reconstruct a systematic political philosophy, I turn instead to the politics of Ḥamūya's life, reading his nuanced negotiation of the socio-political world in dialogue with his deconstructive approach to Reality.³ As we will see below, Ḥamūya's Sufi free jazz resonated as effective political performance.

1 Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya and the All-Powerful Sufi Shaykh

For Sa'd al-Dīn, no matter how strong his innate ability or conviction, a wayfarer cannot achieve ultimate knowledge without the guidance of an accomplished shaykh. While traversing the Sufi path, Ḥamūya explains, seekers inevitably succumb to a state of hopeless confusion, overwhelmed by the chaotic interplay of entities and principles. In *The Lamp of Sufism*, he writes:

3 My approach compliments that of Lisa Alexandrin, who explores abstract questions of politics and authority through an attention to Ḥamūya's theories of prophecy and sainthood. See Elizabeth Ross Alexandrin, "Seals and Sealing of *Walāyah* in Šūfī and Shī'ī Texts: The Cases of al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī and Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūyah," in *Philosophy and Intellectual Life in Shī'ah Islam: Symposium 2015*, ed. Sajjad H. Rizvi and Saiyad Nizamuddin Ahmad (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 61–93.

سالک چون به منزلی می رسد که فهم و ادراکش نمی رسد و حیرت حجابت خیالش می گردد و شب جهل به روز علمش می افزاید و سحاب جنون آسمان عقلش را همی پوشند و باد هوی در نفس به حرکت می آید و آتش در آتش می زند و بر خاکش می اندازد تلاطم امواج اشکال مختلفه در شب ظلمت حیرت برهم می زند درویش در اضطراب می آید و متقلب و متحیر می شود

When the wayfarer reaches the station where his understanding and perception do not reach; where confusion veils his imagination; where ignorance's night falls over the day of his knowledge; where the clouds of madness cover his intellect's sky; where the winds of passion whip up in his soul; where fires are struck up in his water and cast upon his earth; where the roaring waves of disparate likenesses clash together in the dark night of confusion; this dervish enters a world of agitation, becoming disoriented and confused.⁴

Here, the wayfarer begins to experience the fundamental interrelation, utter instability, and infinite ontological potential of being. Plunged into the unfathomable depths of the divine self-disclosure, the dervish panics, thrashing about recklessly, grasping for a stable point of reference. Only the steady hand of a skilled Sufi master can pull the disoriented student from the "dark night of confusion," teaching him to recognize and navigate the unity underlying the tempest of opposing forms. Because the wayfarer's frantic efforts merely serve to exacerbate his bewilderment, his salvation depends on entrusting himself unconditionally to the will of the shaykh. Directly addressing the reader, Ḥamūya continues:

این معنی وقتی بدانی که روی به صادقان آوری و پشت بر کاذبان کنی و از منافقان معرض شوی و خدمت مشایخ از سر ادب کنی و تواضع پیش گیری در حضرت ایشان تشبّیح نمایی و وعظ نگویی که محروم شوی از سر معانی و در روی ایشان گستاخی نکنی و گستاخ ننگری و قول و فعل ایشان را منکر نشوی از منکرات و معروفات و سؤالات مشکل نپرسی که بوقت خود آن مشکل حلّ شود ببرکت صحبت پیر

4 Sa'd al-Din Ḥamūya, *al-Miṣbāḥ fi al-taṣawwuf*, ed. Najib Māyil Hirawī (Tehran: Mawlā, 1983), 105.

و مدد کن در معاش پیر را از هر چه در بایست باشد از مطعم و ملبس و مشرب
و منام و منکح و در حضرت پیر با ادب نشینی [و] متوجه به حضرت شیخ [باشی]
و به قلب و قالب و به یمین و شمال ننگری و با کس سخن نگویی
و همچون صدف دهان قابلیت باز کنی و قطره باران که از سحاب کلمات و
حروف بواسطه ریاح نفس شیخ که از آسمان حضرت ولایت نازل می شود آن را
قابل شوی و در صدف صدر نگهداری و از وسواس نفس اماره نگهداری و به آب
ذکر و آتش محبت آن را می پروری تا بمرور ایام دُرّ معنی شود و جواهر حکمت
گردد

You will know this meaning when you turn towards the sincere (*ṣādiqān*), turn your back to the liars, and steer clear of the hypocrites; when you serve the shaykhs with the highest etiquette (*adab*); when you humble yourself before them; when you do not feign learnedness in their presence; when you do not preach if you are cut off from the secret of meanings; when you are not rude (nor stare rudely) in their presence; when you do not disavow their speech or actions vis-à-vis what is forbidden or lawful; and when you do not ask difficult questions that will be solved in their own time through the grace (*barakat*) of the master's companionship (*ṣuḥbat-i pīr*).

Assist the master in his livelihood—i.e., food, clothing, drink, sleep, or marital concerns—in whatever way is necessary. Sit in the presence of the master with proper etiquette and face his presence without turning your body to the left or right and without speaking with anyone.

Be receptive like an open oyster and accept the drop of rain from the clouds of [his] words and letters, which descend from the sky of sainthood's presence through the winds of the shaykh's breath. Keep this in the oyster of your heart; keep it safe from the whispers of the soul that commands [evildoing]. Nourish it with the water of *dhikr* and the fire of love until, with the passing of days, it becomes a pearl of meaning and gems of wisdom.⁵

Ḥamūya focuses on the social relationships that pertain between master and disciple, emphasizing the embodied practices and rules of etiquette to which

5 Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāh*, 105–106.

students must adhere.⁶ What allows the dervish to transcend the suffocating angst brought about by the chaotic interplay of forms is not necessarily a cache of intellectual arguments, but a particular type of social interaction. Here, Ḥamūya implies that the abstract knowledge to which he devotes hundreds of folia is a product of embodied social practices and must be engaged as such. Difficult questions that perplex the disciple are resolved in due time through the charismatic grace (*barakat*) of his companionship (*ṣuḥbat*), so long as one adheres to proper modes of conduct. Likewise, when the shaykh *does* lecture on points of theoretical or practical import, students are to internalize them through *dhikr* and intense emotional attachment.

Immediately after highlighting the practices and attitudes proper to students, Sa'd al-Dīn offers a brief outline of a worthy master's qualities, implicitly casting himself as a paradigmatic model. The Sufi shaykh sees beyond opposing qualities—up is like down, knowledge is like ignorance, light is like darkness, nearness is like distance, known is like unknown, and so on and so forth. Rather than experiencing a world of discrete binaries, Ḥamūya explains:

شیخ بر مرکب رفر ف راکب است از رفر ف به رفر ف حیث یشاء یمیناً و شمالاً و
تحتاً و فوقاً

...

یونس در قعر بحر در ظلمت بطن ماهی همان می یافت که سید المرسلین در
سدره منتهی می یافت و ماه را می شکافت در عرصه اجتلائی قدرت نه بر باشد و
نه بحر و نه حیات و نه موت و نه جهات و [نه] پنج حواس و نه چهار ارکان و نه
هفت دوزخ و نه هشت بهشت و نه نه فلک و نه کواکب کلیات و نه قمر ولایت
و نه شمس رسالت و نه نجوم نبوت و نه مقامات و نه طامات و نه طاعات و نه
مناجات و لا انا و انت و لا قُرب و لا بُعد و احد فرد صمد نیز منزّه عن العدد و مقدّس
عن الولد الوهیّۃ فی لاهوتیّه دائم

The shaykh rides a mount of cushions (*rafrāf*, see Q. 55:76), fluttering from cushion to cushion, wheresoever he pleases—right, left, down, or up.

...

6 See also Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Kitāb Marātib al-qurra fī 'uyūn al-qudra* (P), Princeton, Princeton University Library, Garrett Collection MS 3793Y, fols. 13^a–14^b for a testament (*waṣīya*) outlining the duties of students to their masters.

Jonah experienced the same in the darkness of the whale's belly at the bottom of the sea as the chief of the apostles did at the furthest lote tree [in the seventh heaven]—likewise when he split the moon.⁷ In the court of power's revelation, there is neither forest nor sea, neither life nor death. There are neither directions, nor five senses, nor four elements. There are neither seven hells, nor eight heavens, neither nine spheres, nor the planets in their entirety. There is neither the moon of sainthood, nor the sun of apostleship, nor the stars of prophethood. There are neither stations nor calamities, neither acts of devotion nor intimate prayers. There is neither I nor you, neither closeness nor farness. [Only] one, unique and eternal, stripped of all number, sanctified beyond parturition, divinity in divineness, eternal.⁸

The shaykh dances across all levels of Reality, recognizing that no principle exists in and of itself, for at the most fundamental level, the Real undergirds them all. For our purposes, what is important is that the point of view that is ascribed to Sufi masters is part and parcel of the cosmic vision central to *The Lamp of Sufism*, *The Book of the Beloved*, and other treatises analyzed in Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 5. As the rhythm of the passage builds in intensity, Sa'd al-Dīn's language underscores his self-aggrandizing claims. Drifting in and out of Arabic and Persian—even within a single clause—he implies that linguistic boundaries, like all other modes of division, are of no real consequence to him. Thus, while disciples may depend on shaykhs to cultivate their minds and bodies, the ultimate expression of shaykhliness occurs through a performance of the dynamic modes of knowledge that Ḥamūya develops in his own work.

By blurring the distinction between Jonas, Muḥammad, and Sufi masters, Sa'd al-Dīn not only vaunts himself as the perfect shaykh, he lays claim to prophetic knowledge as well. In the opening lines of *The Lamp of Sufism*, Ḥamūya foreshadows these strategies, foregrounding the association between his text and prophetic wisdom. After praising God and His qualities, Sa'd al-Dīn introduces a *ḥadīth* about Jesus, an ignorant schoolteacher, and knowledge of the Arabic letters. He writes:

7 The comparison alludes to the *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet denies that he is better than Jonah—i.e., “None of you should say that I am better than Jonas!” (*lā yaqūlanna aḥadukum innī khayr min Yūnus*). I thank Oludamini Ogunnaike for catching this reference.

8 Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 106–107.

قال رسول الله صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
 إِنَّ عَيْسَى بْنَ مَرْيَمَ أَسْلَمَتْهُ أُمُّهُ إِلَى الْكُتَّابِ لِتَعَلِّمَهُ فَقَالَ لَهُ الْمُعَلِّمُ اكْتُبْ فَقَالَ مَا
 أَكْتُبُ قَالَ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ فَقَالَ لَهُ عَيْسَى مَا بِسْمِ اللَّهِ فَقَالَ الْمُعَلِّمُ لَا أُدْرِي
 فَقَالَ لَهُ عَيْسَى صَلَوَاتُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ الْبَاءُ الْبَاءُ اللَّهُ وَالسَّيْنُ سَنَاؤُهُ وَالْمِيمُ مَلِكُهُ وَاللَّهُ إِلَهُ
 إِلَهَةِ الرَّحْمَنِ رَحْمَنِ الدُّنْيَا وَالرَّحِيمِ رَحِيمِ الْآخِرَةِ

The Messenger of God, peace be upon him, said:

Jesus son of Mary was handed over by his mother to the schoolteacher in order that he be educated. The instructor told him, “Write.” He asked, “What shall I write?” The instructor said, “In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.” Jesus asked, “What is [the meaning of] ‘In the name of God?’” The instructor replied, “I don’t know.” So, Jesus, peace be upon him, told him—“The *bāʾ* is God’s splendor; the *sīn* is His brilliance; and the *mīm* is His supreme authority. Allāh means that He is the god of gods; the Merciful means He is merciful with respect to the world; and the Compassionate means He is compassionate with respect to the afterlife.”⁹

Although Jesus has been endowed with perfect knowledge *ab initio*, he enrolls in a local grammar-school and submits to the instruction of his new schoolteacher. During the course of the lesson, however, it becomes clear that his schoolteacher knows nothing at all.¹⁰ Despite having mastered reading, reciting, and writing the outer form of the *basmala*, the instructor is completely unaware of the phrase’s real significance. Here, the role of master and disciple are inverted. Jesus now assumes the role of authoritative shaykh, breaking the *basmala* into its constituent parts and relating them to attributes of the Real. Not only does the young prophet deploy Saʿd al-Dīn’s lettrist strategies; many of the same associations he uncovers are reproduced verbatim throughout the body of the treatise that follows.¹¹ By placing this anecdote at the beginning of the *Lamp of Sufism*, Ḥamūya implicitly correlates the lettrist methodologies he

9 Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 57.

10 As Hirschler notes, grammar school instructors were generally paid low salaries, as their posts were considered to be beneath the station of leading scholars or elite families. The stereotype of the foolish *maktab* instructor becomes a trope repeated across a wide range of written material, from Ibn Ḥawqal’s (fl. 10th c.) travelogues to the *1001 Nights*. See Konrad Hirschler, *The Written Word in the Medieval Arabic Lands: A Social and Cultural History of Reading Practices* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 111.

11 E.g., for *mīm* as *mulk*, see Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 101; for *sīn* as *sanāʾ*, see idem, *Miṣbāḥ*, 60.

outlines in his text with the highest degrees of prophetic understanding. While Jesus may speak the word of God, he does so through the language of *Miṣbāḥ*.

2 Najm al-Dīn Kubrā and ‘Ammār al-Bidlīsī

In theorizing an inviolable link between Sufi shaykh, student, and knowledge, Sa‘d al-Dīn sets his work in conversation with a broader network of teachers, colleagues, and disciples. His own shaykh, Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, enjoins novices to attach themselves in mind and body to a capable master, outlining guidelines, methods, and justifications for these relationships in such pedagogical treatises as *Epistle to the Bewildered, Fearful of the Censurer’s Censure* (*Risāla ilā al-hā’im al-khā’if min lawmat al-lā’im*), *The Epistle on Spiritual Retreat* (*Risāla fī al-khabwa*), and *The Ten Principles* (*al-Uṣūl al-ashara*).¹² This latter text, for example, emphasizes complete and utter submission—students must become “like a corpse in its washer’s hands” in order that the shaykh may “wash them with the waters of sainthood, cleansing them of the impurity [brought about] by estrangement and the filth [that accumulates on account of] everyday life.”¹³

As a counterpoint to Ḥamūya’s abstract ontological frameworks and lettrist metaphors, Kubrā makes repeated use of personal anecdotes to advance distinct social and epistemological claims.¹⁴ Throughout *The Effusions of Beauty and Revelations of Majesty*—a longer work considered to be his magnum opus—Najm al-Dīn underscores the close spiritual bond he shared with his

12 For *Epistle to the Bewildered*, see Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, *Risāla ilā al-hā’im al-khā’if min lawmat al-lā’im*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Ayasofya MS 2058, fol. 70^a and idem, “Traités mineurs de Nağm al-Dīn Kubrā,” ed. Marijan Molé, *Annales Islamologiques* IV (1963), 23–37. For *The Epistle on Spiritual Retreat*, see Gerhard Böwering, “Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā on Ṣūfī Seclusion, *Risāla fī l-khabwa*,” *Ishraq: Islamic Philosophy Yearbook*, no. 5 (2014), English 280 ff. and Arabic 287 ff. For *The Ten Principles*, see Kubrā, “Traités mineurs,” 17–18 and Cyrus Ali Zargar, “The Ten Principles: Theoretical Implications of Volitional Death in Najm al-Dīn Kubrā’s *al-Uṣūl al-Ashara* (A Study and Translation),” *The Muslim World* 103 (2013): 107–130.

13 Kubrā, “Traités mineurs,” 17–18. For a translation of *The Ten Principles* and a study of “volitional death” therein, see Zargar, “Ten Principles.”

14 Kubrā does include a fair amount of lettrist and metaphysical speculation in works like *The Effusions of Beauty and Revelations of Majesty*. Even in these cases, however, he tends to rely heavily upon personal anecdotes to advance his points. See, for example, Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, *Die Fawā’ih al-ğamāl wa-fawā’iḥ al-ğalāl des Nağm ad-Dīn al-Kubrā: eine Darstellung mystischer Erfahrungen im Islam aus der Zeit um 1200 n. Chr.* (M), ed. Fritz Meier (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1957), 65 ff; and idem, *Fawā’iḥ al-ğamāl wa-fawā’iḥ al-ğalāl* (Z), ed. Yūsuf Zaydān (Kuwait: Dār Sa‘ād al-Ṣabāḥ, 1993), 223 ff.

master ‘Ammār al-Bidlīsī (d. between 1194 and 1207/1208), whether that be through al-Bidlīsī’s perfect knowledge of his spiritual state, their shared visionary experiences, or his own heightened awareness of al-Bidlīsī’s presence.¹⁵ While we may read the *Effusions* as a testament to Kubrā’s status as an accomplished Sufi guide in his own right, the narratives he deploys emphasize his obedience and dependence vis-à-vis al-Bidlīsī. Unlike Ḥamūya, who presents himself primarily in the role of the all-powerful shaykh, Najm al-Dīn makes frequent recourse to his past as a reliant student. In one such narrative, he recounts:

كنت منقطعاً إلى الله في الخلوة بذكره فجاء اللعين وأكثر عليّ الحيل ليشوّش
الخلوة والذكر فظهر في يدي سيف الهمة مكتوب عليه من ذنابته إلى قبضته الله
الله فكنت أنفي به الخواطر المشغلة عن الله فخطر على قلبي أن أصنّف كتاباً في
الخلوة أسميه حيل المرید على المرید

فقلت لا يصحّ إلا بإذن الشيخ فشاورت الشيخ في الغيب فسمعت كلامه
لصحّة رابطة كانت بيني وبينه أن انته عن هذا الخاطر إن الله برئ من هذا الخاطر
فإنه خاطر الشيطان لا طفك في الحيلة وسمى نفسه مریداً أفحسبت أنه لا يشتم
نفسه واستبعدت عنه ذلك وغرضه من ذلك أن يشغلك عن ذكر الحقّ فيتخبط
عليك الأمر فانتهبت وانتهيت

فإذا خطر خاطر بقلبك أو فضاء صدرك فشاوّر فيه الشيخ فإن قال هذا خاطر
الحقّ فاعلم أنه كذلك وإن قال هذا خاطر النفس أو كيت وكيت فاعلم أنه كذلك
وهذا ضابط لك ما لم تصل إلى الذوق فإذا وصلت إلى الذوق ذقت الخاطر فعرفته
وميّزته عن غيره

I was completely occupied with God, engaged in His *dhikr* during a spiritual retreat. The Cursed One arrived, stirring up tricks in order to disorient my retreat and *dhikr*. [Suddenly,] the sword of spiritual energy (*himma*) appeared in my hand, with “Allāh Allāh” written on it from tip to hilt. After using it to annihilate the thoughts that distracted me from God, I had the

15 For al-Bidlīsī’s knowledge of Kubrā’s spiritual state, see Kubrā, *Fawā’ih*, (M) 21–22 and (Z) 155–156; for their shared visionary experiences, see idem, *Fawā’ih*, (M) 27 and (Z) 164; and for Kubrā’s heightened awareness of al-Bidlīsī’s spiritual presence, see idem, *Fawā’ih*, (M) 75 and (Z) 237.

idea to compose a book on spiritual retreat and to name it *The Tricks of the Insolent Against the Aspirant*.

Then I said, “[Wait—]this is not proper without my shaykh’s permission!” I consulted my shaykh in the unseen world—such was the soundness of the bond between us—and listened to what he told me, i.e., “Abandon these thoughts! God has nothing to do with this; it is a thought that stems from the devil, who flatters you and calls himself insolent. Did you think he wouldn’t curse himself? Do you think him above that? By doing this, he aims to distract you from the Real’s *dhikr* in order to harm you.” So, I took heed and let [the thought] go.

When a thought comes to your heart or the expanse of your chest, seek advice about it from your shaykh. If he says that the thought comes from God, then know that this is the case. If he says it comes from the soul or such and such else, then know that this is the case. This will keep you in check so long as you have yet to reach [a state of] tasting. When you do, then you will taste a thought and [immediately] know and distinguish it from others.¹⁶

Kubrā’s anecdote takes part within the context of ritual retreat, recitation, and contemplation, presumably in accordance with a regimented program outlined by al-Bidlīsī.¹⁷ After summoning the resolve to resist the devil’s distractions, Najm al-Dīn feels inspired to compose a treatise outlining what he has discovered as an aid to his fellow wayfarers. Before he sets out on the endeavor, however, he submits these intuitions to his master in order to gauge their veracity. Although the entire exchange occurs in the unseen realm, the passage nevertheless underscores an ideal of complete submission according to which the disciple must lay bare all movements, thoughts, and feelings for the shaykh’s careful scrutiny. As the narrative implies, the legitimacy of Najm al-Dīn’s experiential knowledge (and his authority to share it with others) is utterly dependent upon his master’s interpretation and endorsement. What Kubrā experiences as a productive epiphany is analyzed and ultimately rejected by his master; this is *not* real knowledge, but another one of the devil’s ruses.

16 Kubrā, *Fawā’ih*, (M) 15–16 and (Z) 143–145. Kubrā offers a slightly different account of the events in *The Epistle to the Bewildered*. See Kubrā, *Risālat ilā al-hā’im*, fol. 68^b and “Traité mineurs,” 33.

17 While al-Bidlīsī is not mentioned by name here, the context of the passage with respect to the rest of the *Effusions* suggests that he is the shaykh Kubrā has in mind. Despite having also trained with Rūzbihān al-Wazzān al-Miṣrī (d. 1188) and Ismā’īl al-Qaṣrī (d. 1193), al-Bidlīsī is the only one of Kubrā’s masters that he mentions by name in the *Fawā’ih*. See note 45 on p. 164 and Hamid Algar, “KOBRAWIYA I. THE EPONYM” in *EtI*:

It is important to recognize that the experiences presented in the *Effusions* are not straightforward accounts recorded by Kubrā the disciple; they are highly stylized narratives projected into the past by Kubrā the fully realized shaykh. The shape and emphases of the text's anecdotes, therefore, reinforce Najm al-Dīn's authority as an accomplished Sufi master and promote the social and epistemological ideals that undergird this legitimacy. While individual Sufis cultivate experiences of Reality, the *knowledge* that stems from these experiences—even in its normative or theoretical ideal—is inextricable from the social world. Rather than an admission of inadequacy, Kubrā thus deploys his narratives of dependence as rhetorical tools with which to certify the validity of knowledge he produces. Najm al-Dīn's continued emphasis on the close relationship he shared with al-Bidlīsī—stronger than that of any other disciple, he avers—foregrounds his Sufi credentials, marking him not only as a graduate of the path, but as a star pupil and rightful heir of his master's legacy.¹⁸ Along these lines, we can read the *Effusions* as a textual performance of the ideal shaykhliness that Kubrā illustrates via biographical anecdotes. Read in the context of the aforementioned narrative, the very fact of the text's existence stands as an implicit testament to Kubrā's success on the Sufi path. As Meier notes, "The *Fawā'ih* seems, in a sense, like a belated fulfillment of this desire. What was forbidden for him as a novice he later allowed himself [looking out] from a higher vantage point as an independent shaykh."¹⁹ Just as al-Bidlīsī enables, interprets, and authorizes Najm al-Dīn's visions throughout the *Fawā'ih*, the text itself offers practical guidelines; onto-psychological interpretive frameworks; narrative accounts of the visual, auditory, and emotional experiences to be encountered by wayfarers on the Sufi path; and detailed analyses of these experiences.

We may pause here to note that Kubrā *does* allow for the possibility that particular individuals may achieve full sainthood and knowledge of the Real without having traveled the Sufi path. In *The Epistle to the Bewildered*, for example, he includes the following caveat—"Among the saints, there are those whom the exalted Real leads [directly] to the levels of certainty through attraction to Him (*bi-l-jadhb ilayh*); this is also possible."²⁰ Nevertheless, despite presenting these saints as a theoretical possibility, Kubrā bars them from becoming shaykhs or

18 For Kubrā's bond being stronger than that of al-Bidlīsī's other disciples, see *Fawā'ih*, (M) 75 and (Z) 237.

19 "Das Buch *Fawā'ih* mutet in gewisser Weise wie eine nachträgliche Erfüllung dieses Wunsches an. Was ihm als Novizen verboten war, hat er sich später als selbständiger Scheich, von einen höheren Warte aus, elaubt." Kubrā, *Fawā'ih* (M), 243.

20 Kubrā, *Risāla ilā al-hā'im*, fol. 70^b and "Traités mineurs," 35.

instructing disciples, effectively excluding them from the social economy of Sufi knowledge.²¹ Because the *majdhūb*'s knowledge has been achieved outside the social networks, embodied practices, and language games of legitimate Sufi masters, it is neither communicable nor socially replicable in any form. Ironically, though these saints may rank among the upper echelons of humanity, they only become legible through the work of Najm al-Dīn and other socially authorized shaykhs.

3 Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī and Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī

Perhaps the difference between Ḥamūya's and his master's narrative strategies emerges from a divergence in their primary methodological concerns. As Najm al-Dīn focuses on the minutiae of Sufi practices and their epiphenomena, we might conjecture that personalized accounts of training and submission under qualified teachers would simply make more sense in his work than they would in Sa'd al-Dīn's highly abstract accounts of absolute knowing and being. If we turn our attention toward Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, a close friend of Sa'd al-Dīn and star pupil of Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī, this hypothesis becomes less convincing.²² Like Ḥamūya and Kubrā, Qūnawī emphasizes the fundamental role of the Sufi shaykh, rooting experiential knowledge in the spiritual bond between master and disciple. Though Qūnawī's penchant for abstract metaphysical speculation favors Sa'd al-Dīn's approach, his rhetorical deployment of Ibn 'Arabī's legacy mirrors Najm al-Dīn's narratives in the *Effusions*. Despite their esoteric qualities, Ṣadr al-Dīn's accounts also make implicit references to specific contemporary concerns. A close attention to the shaykh's rhetoric sharpens our understanding of how Sufis could deploy accounts of social relationships in the past and in the unseen world to intervene in negotiations of power actively

21 Kubrā, *Risāla ilā al-hā'im*, fol. 70^b and "Traités mineurs," 35. See also idem, *Fawā'idh*, (M) 91 and (Z) 257–258.

22 For the most recent study of Qūnawī's life and work, see Richard Todd, *The Sufi Doctrine of Man: Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī's Metaphysical Anthropology* (Boston: Brill, 2014). William Chittick has worked extensively on the topic as well. See, for example, William C. Chittick, "The Last Will and Testament of Ibn 'Arabī's Foremost Disciple, Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī," *Sophia Perennis* 4, no. 1 (1978): 43–58; idem, "The Circle of Spiritual Ascent According to al-Qūnawī," in *Neoplatonism and Islamic Thought*, ed. Parviz Morewedge (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992); idem, "Mysticism versus Philosophy in Earlier Islamic History: The al-Ṭūsī, al-Qūnawī Correspondence," *Religious Studies* 17, no. 1 (1981): 87–104; and idem, "The Central Point: Qūnawī's Role in the School of Ibn 'Arabī," *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society* 35 (2004), 25–45.

unfolding in the material realm. Coupled with our reading of Kubrā's *Effusions*, an analysis of Qūnawī's visions and the stakes of his claims opens up comparative perspectives from which we might productively approach Ḥamūya's solipsistic language.

Though a creative and theoretically complex thinker in his own right, Ṣadr al-Dīn has been read primarily as an exegete and systematizer of his master's work. Despite (or perhaps, because of) his master's renown, Qūnawī's work demonstrates an eagerness to assert his own spiritual prowess and the inspired nature of his knowledge; he takes pride in his ability to unveil fundamental spiritual truths without recourse to the words of Ibn 'Arabī or other shaykhs, past or present.²³ Even a quick perusal of Ṣadr al-Dīn's oeuvre reveals a marked departure from Muḥyī al-Dīn's style, perhaps most noticeable in his systematic modes of exposition and strong grasp of Aristotelian philosophy.²⁴ Even so, Ṣadr al-Dīn's authority as an independent shaykh *depends* on the intimate bond he shares with Muḥyī al-Dīn, even after the latter's death. While Qūnawī may not often quote Ibn 'Arabī directly in his own original compositions, he nevertheless recounts their relationship as a means of underscoring his own spiritual legitimacy.

Qūnawī frames *The Divine Breaths* as a diary of visions and experiences in the unseen world, recorded over a period of thirty years and punctuated with abstract theoretical expositions. At the end of the text's introduction, he explains, "Know that in this book I mention the merciful fragrances and fruit of specially appointed and divine self-disclosures, some of which the Real bestowed upon me in this [station of] closeness, and whose mention the Real facilitated."²⁵ As Richard Todd notes, later Sufis would read the work as direct evidence of Qūnawī's advanced spiritual accomplishments, prompting Jāmī to profess, "Anyone who wishes to be acquainted with his perfection on this [Sufi] path need only study a little bit of that [book]."²⁶ Throughout *The Divine Breaths*, Qūnawī articulates his ontological claims through a precise, philosophically informed, and perhaps deliberately onerous jargon, creating the impression of an impossibly complex, yet meticulously ordered metaphysical

23 Todd, *Sufi Doctrine*, 29.

24 For a detailed discussion of the points of overlap and departure between Qūnawī and Ibn 'Arabī, see Todd, *Sufi Doctrine*, 45–51. For a brief take, see Chittick, "Last Will."

25 Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, *al-Nafahāt al-ilāhīyya*, ed. Muḥammad Khwājāwī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Mawlā, 1996), 5. For Khwājāwī's modern Persian translation of *The Divine Breaths*, see Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, *Tarjuma-yi Nafahāt-i ilāhīyya yā Mukāshafāt-i ilāhī*, trans. Muḥammad Khwājāwī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Mawlā, 1996), 6.

26 'Abd al-Rahmān Jāmī, *Nafahāt al-uns min ḥaḍarāt al-quds*, ed. Maḥmūd 'Ābidī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Iṭṭilā'āt, 1996), 555; and Todd *Sufi Doctrine*, 42.

system. At the same time, he frames his technical expositions not as products of his own mind but rather as faithful exegeses of the spiritual experiences revealed to him directly by God.²⁷

As we dive deeper into the *Divine Breaths*, however, it becomes clear that Qūnawī draws upon more than just divine inspiration to legitimize his theoretical claims. At what is perhaps a narrative climax of the text, Ṣadr al-Dīn recounts a vision in which he experiences the self-disclosure of the Essence, the most advanced spiritual state after which there are neither veils nor stations. He narrates his acquisition of ultimate knowledge not as an unmediated gift from God, but as an encounter with his shaykh Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ‘Arabī in the unseen world. He writes:

رأيت الشيخ رضي الله عنه ليلة السبت سابع عشر شوال سنة ثلاثة وخمسين وست مائة في واقعة طويلة وجري بيني وبينه كلام كثير وكنت أقول له في أثناء ذلك الكلام آثار الأسماء من الأحكام والأحوال من الأحوال تتعین من الذات بحسب الاستعداد والاستعداد أمر لا يعلل بشيء سواه

فأعجب رضي الله عنه بهذا البيان إعجاباً عظيماً وجعل وجهه يتهلل ويهز رأسه يعيد بعض الكلام ويقول مليح مليح فقلت له يا سيدي أنت المليح حيث تقدر أن تبلغ الإنسان إلى حيث تدرك مثل هذا ولعمري إن كنت إنساناً فمن سواك من هؤلاء كلاً شيء

ثم جئت ودنوت منه وقبلت يده وقلت له بقيت لي حاجة واحدة اطلبها فقال سل فقلت إنني أريد التحقق بكيفية شهودك التجلي الذاتي الدائم الأبدي وكنت أعني بذلك حصول ما كان حاصلًا له من شهود التجلي الذاتي الذي لا حجاب بعده ولا مستقر للكامل دونه

فقال نعم وأجاب إلى ذلك ثم قال لي هذا مبذول لك مع أنك تعلم أنه قد كان لي أولاد وأصحاب وخصوصاً ولدي سعد الدين ومع هذا ما تيسر هذا الذي تطلبه لأحد منهم وكم قد قتلت وأحييت من الأولاد والأصحاب ومات من مات وقتل من قتل ولم يحصل له هذا

27 See, for example, Qūnawī, *Nafahāt*, 11–12. For Khwājawī’s Persian translation, see Qūnawī, *Tarjuma-yi Nafahāt*, 12–13.

فقلت يا سيدي الحمد لله أعني على اختصاص بهذه الفضيلة أعلم أنك تحيي وتميت وكلام آخر بعد هذا لا يمكن إفشاؤه واستيقظت والمِنَّة لله

I saw the Shaykh [i.e., Ibn ‘Arabī]—may God be pleased with him—on the night of Saturday, 17 Shawwāl, AH 653 (November 19, 1255) during a long vision. We had a long back and forth in the middle of which I told him, “The effect of the Names stems from judgements and judgements [stem] from states. The states in turn become entified (*tata‘ayyinu*) out of the Essence in accordance with predisposition, and predisposition is something that is not caused by anything other than itself.”

The shaykh—may God be pleased with him—was extremely delighted with this explanation. He beamed with joy and nodded his head, repeating some of my words and saying, “Wonderful, wonderful!” I responded, “O master, it is you who are wonderful, since you were able to make someone reach such a place that they could perceive something like this. I swear, if you are but a human being, then the rest of us are like nothing at all!”

Then, I drew close to him and took his hand, saying, “I still need to ask you one more thing.” He answered, “Ask.” I said, “I’d like to realize how you witness the self-disclosure of the Essence eternally and perpetually.” By that I meant his attainment of the self-disclosure of the Essence, after which there is no veil and before which there is no stable resting place for the perfect.

He said, “Of course,” and answered me. Then he told me, “I give this freely to you. You know full well that I had children and companions, especially my son Sa‘d al-Dīn. Despite all of this, what you have reached has not been possible for any of them. How many of my children and companions have I killed and brought to life?²⁸ Whoever has died has died and whoever has been killed has been killed—yet none of them have achieved [what you have].”

I said, “O master, praise be to God that I have been singled out for this virtue! I know that you give life and that you take it.” There was more that was said after this, but it cannot be divulged. Then I came to. All grace belongs to God.²⁹

28 I take this to be a reference to the training programs Ibn ‘Arabī imposed upon these individuals, analogous to Kubrā’s notion of the Sufi disciple’s volitional death at the hands of a shaykh.

29 Qūnawī, *Nafahāt*, 125–126. For Khwājāwī’s Persian translation, see Qūnawī, *Tarjuma-yi*

As Ṣadr al-Dīn states, this particular encounter with Ibn ‘Arabī occurred in November 1255, fifteen years *after* the latter’s death in November 1240. Qūnawī’s vision of his master mirrors Kubrā’s conversations with ‘Ammār al-Bidlīsī in the unseen world—both reinforce the unbreakable bond between shaykh and student. Just as Najm al-Dīn’s attachment to al-Bidlīsī knows no geographic bounds, the link between Ṣadr al-Dīn and Ibn ‘Arabī reaches past the limits of life itself. According to Qūnawī’s account, it is precisely this intimate connection that affords him access to the highest degrees of spiritual and epistemological stations. Although their meeting unfolds primarily through abstract theoretical discourse, Qūnawī’s narrative reflects social ideals analogous to those expressed by Kubrā. Ṣadr al-Dīn’s recognition of Ibn ‘Arabī’s ability to give life and take it, for example, parallels Kubrā’s injunction that disciples submit to their shaykhs like corpses in the hands of washers. Likewise, when Qūnawī the disciple beseeches his master for a taste of ultimate knowledge, Qūnawī the narrator establishes a point of corporeal contact (the image of shaykh and student holding hands), underscoring the interpersonal transmission of the ultimate knowledge he is about to receive.³⁰

Ṣadr al-Dīn’s rhetorical emphasis on his passivity as a disciple must be read in conjunction with his active role as a narrator. While Qūnawī’s spiritual and epistemological legitimacy are bound to the figure of his master, his narrative accounts of Ibn ‘Arabī shape the shaykh’s legacy in a way that is congenial to his own particular goals and claims. Just as Ḥamūya puts the text of the *Miṣbāḥī* into the mouth of a young Jesus, the *Nafahāt* finds Muḥyī al-Dīn expressing his endorsement of Qūnawī’s idiosyncratic formulations through explicit verbal approval and a literal repetition of his words. Ibn ‘Arabī confesses that none of his other companions or relatives—not even his son Sa’d al-Dīn—are worthy of the spiritual gifts that he is prepared to bestow upon his disciple Ṣadr al-Dīn.³¹ As the narrative makes clear, Muḥyī al-Dīn grants Qūnawī the priv-

Nafahāt, 131–132. For Todd’s English translation of the passage see Todd, *Sufi Doctrine*, 21n43.

30 For a brief account of the analytical possibilities afforded by an attention to quotidian acts like handshakes and handholding in Sufi hagiographical narratives, see Shahzad Bashir, *Sufi Bodies: Religion and Society in Medieval Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), esp. 4–8.

31 Biographical details are scarce with respect to Ibn ‘Arabī’s second son Sa’d al-Dīn. Addas mentions that his name is present in several *samā’* records and that he is reported (by Qūnawī) to have been a disciple of certain Kamāl al-Dīn Tilfisi, a Sufi master who became grand *qāḍī* of Damascus in 1260. See Claude Addas, *Quest for the Red Sulphur: The Life of Ibn ‘Arabī*, trans. Peter Kingsley (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1993), 266–267. As Addas notes, one of the letters included in Qūnawī’s *Divine Breaths* addresses Sa’d al-Dīn

ilege of experiencing the Divine Essence *in the exact same way* that he does. At stake here is not merely a question of abstract spiritual abilities, but the inheritance of a powerful figure's rank and authority in a highly contested social realm. By recounting this vision, Qūnawī outlines an explicit epistemological claim and preempts a genealogical challenge to his own authoritative position as inheritor of his master's legacy. To rebut this hypothetical objection, Ṣadr al-Dīn articulates an implicit relationship between initiatic and familial relationships, placing spiritual inheritance squarely in the realm of the former. While biological and initiatic lines may converge in a single individual—here, Ibn 'Arabī's second son Sa'd al-Dīn Muḥammad—Qūnawī argues (through his shaykh) that a strong bond between master and disciple is enough to override any other type of genealogical claim.³²

4 Spiritual Inheritance and the Politics of Citation

In Section 1 of this chapter, we suggested that Ḥamūya sketches master-disciple bonds in order to present himself as an ideal shaykh and his texts as vehicles for authoritative knowledge. Nevertheless, our discussion of the social relationships outlined in his work remained fairly abstract and impressionistic. Read by himself, Ḥamūya simply does not offer us a clear point of entry from which to uncover the immediate stakes of his claims. Like Qūnawī, Sa'd al-Dīn generally avoids quoting other Sufi shaykhs, preferring instead to offer his own formulations bolstered with direct evidence from the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*.³³

directly, complaining that the latter has not kept up contact, adding, rather ominously, "I see you wherever you are; I know how you go about your business." See Addas, *Quest*, 233; and Qūnawī, *Nafahāt*, 230.

- 32 The exact nature of Qūnawī's social relationship with Ibn 'Arabī remains unclear. As Addas explains, evidence from *samā'* records suggest that Ibn 'Arabī met Qūnawī's father Majd al-Dīn in 1204—about half a decade before Qūnawī's birth in 1208/1209. The two became close friends, traveling together from the Ḥijāz to Anatolia. Though there is no mention of the event in either Ibn 'Arabī or Qūnawī's writings, a range of contemporary sources and later biographies suggest that when Majd al-Dīn died (most likely between 1214 and 1218), Muḥyī al-Dīn married his widow, incorporating the young Ṣadr al-Dīn into his household as a stepson. See Addas, *Quest*, 227–233; and Todd, *Sufi Doctrine*, 13–15. Whatever the case, contemporary sources favorable to Qūnawī emphasize the close bond between him and Ibn 'Arabī while also attempting to subvert rival genealogical claims to the latter's legacy.
- 33 Although a certain *Epistle on Sufism (Risāla dar taṣawwuf)* preserved in Serez MS 3931 mentions Kubrā alongside Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī and Shihāb al-Dīn ('Umar) al-Suhrawardī as the "pillars of the shaykhs" (*asāṭīn-i mashāyikh*), the text's frequent yet uncredited citation of the later Sufi poet Awḥad al-Dīn ibn Awḥadī Marāgha'ī (ca. 1274/

Unlike his Anatolian colleague and confidant, however, Sa'd al-Dīn's references to his own masters and training are exceedingly rare. Carefully crafted master-disciple narratives of the type analyzed above are entirely absent in his work. Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, the famous "saint maker" of Khwārazm—whom later sources almost unanimously name as Ḥamūya's master and whose *ijāza* to Sa'd al-Dīn is preserved in multiple copies—is rarely (or perhaps never) mentioned.³⁴

What should we make of this apparent omission? Given the fundamental role that he ascribes to Sufi shaykhs, how could Sa'd al-Dīn neglect to mention his own master? Should we read him as a notable exception—a Sufi master who articulates his authority without recourse to his immediate social world? As the reader may have already suspected, I posit that the answer is no. Despite Kubrā's conspicuous absence from Sa'd al-Dīn's oeuvre, there is another figure whom he does claim as his master: a shaykh whom he had never met in person, but to whom he nevertheless remained socially bound. After outlining a testament (*waṣīya*) emphasizing the etiquette of serving Sufi shaykhs in the *Levels of Joy*, Sa'd al-Dīn explains, "Know that some of this testament comes from the words of the shaykh of Islam, Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya (d. 1136), who was my forefather (*jaddī*) and my shaykh (*shaykhī*)."³⁵ A text entitled *The Epistle on Compulsion and Kindness (Risālat al-Qahr wa-l-lutf)* likewise mingles quotations from the Qur'an and *ḥadīth* with those gleaned from this Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya, introducing him as "my forefather, the shaykh of Islam" and "the shaykh, my forefather."³⁶ Though these references may be few and far

1275–1338) suggests a spurious attribution. See Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Risāla dar taṣawwuf*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Serez MS 3931, e.g. fols. 34^b and 36^a. For more on Awḥad al-Dīn Marāghaī, see Khaleghi-Motlagh, "AWḤADĪ MARĀĠĀ'Ī" in *Elr*.

Ḥamūya does quote other Sufis occasionally. The *Book of the Beloved*, for example, offers a few lengthy quotations from al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī (d. ca. 910). See Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Kitāb al-Maḥbūb*, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (SBB), MS Or. fol. 4084, fol. 21^a (where he cites al-Tirmidhī explicitly) and fol. 22^b (where he paraphrases him). Likewise, the *Sea of Meanings (Baḥr al-ma'ānī)* recounts the words of Junayd (d. 910), Abū Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmī (d. 848 or 875), al-Tirmidhī, and a host of Sufi shaykhs. See Ḥamūya, *Baḥr al-ma'ānī*, Istanbul Süleymaniye Library, Fazıl Ahmed Paşa MS 706, fols. 1^a–92^a. In comparison with such other contemporaries as Kubrā, 'Umar al-Suhrawardī, or even Ibn 'Arabī, however, Sa'd al-Dīn's references to the words of other Sufis are generally few and far between.

34 See, for example, Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, *Ijāza li-Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Murad Buhari MS 318, fols. 57^b–58^a; and Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Murād al-murīdīn*, ed. S.A.A. Mīr-Bāqirī Fard and Z. Najafī (Tehran: Mu'assasat-i Muṭāla'āt-i Islāmī-yi Dānishgāh-i Tihirān – Dānishgāh-i Makgīl, 2011), 17–19.

35 Ḥamūya, *Marātib*, (P) fol. 14^b.

36 Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Risālat al-Qahr wa-l-lutf*, Bursa, İnebey Kütüphanesi, Hüseyin Çelebi

between, I argue that their inclusion in Sa'd al-Dīn's theoretical work presents generative opportunities for situating his life and thought within its immediate socio-political context. Tracing the possible resonances of these citations leads us down a trail of Ḥamūya's family history, personal correspondences, and his links with a range of non-Sufi teachers, dignitaries, governors, and *amīrs*. Such an approach allows us to pry open a window into Sa'd al-Dīn's world, illuminating myriad possibilities and implications for knowledge, genealogy, and inheritance in the diverse circles through which he traveled.

5 The Ḥamūya Clan

In order to understand Sa'd al-Dīn's strategic citation of his ancestor, we must first take a detour through the illustrious Ḥamūya family tree. Our sources report that Sa'd al-Dīn's great-great-grandfather, the aforementioned Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya Juwaynī, was a renowned shaykh in his own right, celebrated for his mastery of *ḥadīth* and performance of saintly miracles.³⁷ In *The Breaths of Intimacy*, Jāmī praises the 12th-century Sufi for his facility with the exoteric and esoteric sciences, singling him out alongside Aḥmad al-Ghazālī (d. 1123 or 1126) as one of 'Ayn al-Quḍāt al-Hamadānī's (d. 1131) primary associates.³⁸ By the 13th century, the Ḥamūya clan had become a household name, so to speak, having spawned powerful and well-connected Sufi shaykhs across Iran, Syria, and Egypt. 'Imād al-Dīn Abū Fatḥ 'Umar ibn 'Alī (d. 1181)—Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya's grandson—was appointed by the Zangid ruler Nūr al-Dīn (d. 1174) as the first Chief Sufi to preside over Greater Syria.³⁹ After 'Imād al-Dīn ibn 'Alī's death, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb (Saladin, d. 1193) appointed the shaykh's son Ṣadr al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad (d. 1220) as Chief Sufi in Damascus before transferring him to Cairo, instat-

MS 442, fols. 48^b and 94^b. The epistle also includes a host of anonymous citations, introduced merely as *qila* or *yuqāl* (i.e., "it was said" or "it is said").

37 See Sa'īd Nafīsī, "Khāndān-i Sa'd al-Dīn-i Ḥamawī," *Kunjkāwihā-yi 'Ilmī wa Adabī* 83 (1950): 6–39, which quotes biographical information on Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya from Sam'ānī (d. 1166), 'Ayn al-Quḍāt (d. 1131), Ibn Athīr (d. 1233), al-Yāfī'ī (d. 1367) and Jāmī (d. 1492).

38 Jāmī, *Nafahāt*, 415–416.

39 Nathan Hofer, "The Origins and Development of the Office of the 'Chief Sufi' in Egypt, 1173–1325," *Journal of Sufi Studies* 3, no. 1 (2014), 12; Nafīsī, "Khāndān," 11–12; and 'Afīf al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh ibn As'ad al-Yāfī'ī, *Mir'āt al-jinān wa-'ibrat al-yaqẓān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1997), 111.408. For "Chief Sufi" as an official role, see Hofer, "Origins and Development." While Hofer's piece focuses on Egypt, he touches briefly on Baghdad and Syria as well.

ing him as the head of the Sa'īd al-Su'adā' *khānaqāh* and the first Chief Sufi to preside over all of Egypt.⁴⁰ Ṣadr al-Dīn's immediate family maintained a close relationship with the Ayyūbid dynasts over several generations, such that his post was passed down to all four of his sons, the famed "Sons of the Shaykh" (*awlād al-shaykh*)—'Imād al-Dīn 'Umar ibn Muḥammad (d. 1239), Kamāl al-Dīn Aḥmad (d. 1242), Mu'īn al-Dīn Ḥasan (d. 1246), and Fakhr al-Dīn Yūsuf (d. 1249)—and then to a few of his grandsons.⁴¹ 'Imād al-Dīn 'Umar ibn 'Alī's other son, Tāj al-Dīn 'Abd Allāh (d. 1244), assumed the rank of Chief Sufi in Syria after his brother relocated to Egypt, then passed the post along to his own children.⁴²

According to Ghiyāth al-Dīn and Faṣīḥ Khwāfi (d. 1445), it was Ṣadr al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad—a cousin of Sa'd al-Dīn's father (*ibn 'amm wālid*) and the *shaykh al-shuyūkh* of Egypt—who initially bestowed the *khirqā* upon Sa'd al-Dīn, initiating him into the study of Sufism and the illustrious line of Ḥamūya family shaykhs.⁴³ As Ghiyāth al-Dīn explains, Ṣadr al-Dīn was the shaykh from whom Ḥamūya took his Sufi genealogy, Najm al-Dīn Kubrā was the shaykh with whom he engaged in spiritual retreat and intimate companionship, and Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī was the shaykh who taught him *dhikr*. Sa'd al-Dīn simply declined Kubrā's certificate of investiture (*nisbat al-khirqā*) because he *already had* a Sufi lineage through Ṣadr al-Dīn.⁴⁴ At this point, then, it seems we have made much ado about nothing.

There are two key points that challenge such a straightforward reading. First, relationships between 13th-century Sufis and their masters were not always as typologically determined as Ghiyāth al-Dīn's account would suggest. Even in *The Goal of the Seekers*, Kubrā teaches Ḥamūya *dhikr* before the latter meets 'Umar al-Suhrawardī, complicating Ghiyāth al-Dīn's neat tripartite scheme. Moreover, as we have seen above, Kubrā legitimates his authority as a shaykh

40 Nathan Hofer, *The Popularisation of Sufism in Ayyubid and Mamluk Egypt, 1173–1325* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 64; idem, "Origins and Development," 15–19; and Nafīsī, "Khāndān," 12–13. For Ṣadr al-Dīn's *nisbat al-khirqā*, see note 14 on p. 235. For more on the relationship between the Sa'īd al-Su'adā' (founded in 1173), the office of Chief Sufi in Egypt, and Ayyūbid and Mamlūk states, see Hofer, *Popularization*, esp. 35–60. In brief, as Hofer explains, "... During those 150 years of Ayyubid and early Mamluk rule, Saladin's *khānaqāh* was the center of state-sponsored Sufism in Egypt ..." idem, *Popularization*, 36.

41 Hofer, "Origins and Development," 15 ff.

42 Hofer, "Origins and Development," 14.

43 Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 9–11; and Faṣīḥ Aḥmad ibn Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Khwāfi, *Mujmal-i Faṣīḥī*, ed. Muḥsin Naṣrābādī (Tehran: Asāṭir, 1966), 11.290. Faṣīḥ Khwāfi erroneously refers to Ṣadr al-Dīn as Sa'd al-Dīn's first cousin (*pisar-i 'amm-i khūd*), rather than his father's cousin, i.e., his first cousin once removed.

44 Ghiyāth al-Dīn *Murād*, 11.

through accounts of his time with ‘Ammār al-Bidlīsī, the only one of his masters he mentions by name throughout the entirety of the *Effusions*. Although our sources present conflicting information with regard to Najm al-Dīn’s exact program of study, it is fairly certain that al-Bidlīsī was not the shaykh from whom he received his *khirqā* of initiation, but rather the shaykh with whom he sat *khalwa*.⁴⁵ Kubrā may have bestowed his *khirqā* on Sa’d al-Dīn and other disciples on the authority of Ismā’īl al-Qaṣrī, but he drew upon the legacy of ‘Ammār al-Bidlīsī to authorize his own ability to lead disciples and navigate visual experiences encountered in the unseen world.⁴⁶ The second point, perhaps even more fundamental, is that Sa’d al-Dīn does *not* name Ṣadr al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan as his shaykh, but reserves this honorific for the patriarch of the Ḥamūya Sufis, Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad.

6 The Ayyūbid Context: Ḥamūya and the Chief Sufis of Egypt and Syria

I argue that the internal dynamics of the Ḥamūya clan and the political ascendancy of its Syrian and Egyptian branches represent a crucial context through which to situate Sa’d al-Dīn’s claim to his forefather’s legacy. Reading the

45 As recorded by his disciple Iqbāl-i Sistānī (fl. 14th c.), ‘Alā’ al-Dawla Simnānī (d. 1336) explains that Kubrā was a difficult and haughty student who required the aid of multiple shaykhs to tame his unruly ego. Thus, while Najm al-Dīn began his training with Ismā’īl al-Qaṣrī (d. 1193) in Dezful (western Iran), he was sent first to ‘Ammār al-Bidlīsī (whose location is not specified), then to Rūzbihān al-Wazzān al-Miṣrī (d. 1188) in Cairo—who quite literally slapped the arrogance out of him—before returning to al-Bidlīsī to continue his training in earnest. See ‘Alā’ al-Dawla Simnānī, *Chihil majlis-i Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dawla Simnānī*, ed. Najib Māyil Hirawī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Adīb, 1987), 227–230. Jāmī relates the same tale, citing the *Chihil majlis* as his source. See Jāmī, *Nafahāt*, 424–426.

Ḥusayn Khwārazmī (d. 1551) reverses Kubrā’s program of study, having him begin his training with Rūzbihān before later stints with al-Bidlīsī and Ismā’īl al-Qaṣrī. See Böwering, “Seclusion,” 269–270 and Algar, “Eponym.”

Modern scholars have offered their own arguments with respect to the plausibility of these narratives—Trimingham, for example, sides blithely with Ḥusayn Khwārazmī, while Meier tentatively deems Iqbāl-i Sistānī’s account more probable. Böwering takes a more agnostic approach; he notes the merit of Meier’s claims, but ultimately presents Sistānī and Khwārazmī’s narratives side by side without attempting to resolve them. See J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 55; Kubrā, *Fawā’ih*, (M) 14–40, esp. 34–37; and Böwering, “Seclusion,” 269–270.

Given that Najm al-Dīn’s *ijāza* to Ḥamūya lists Ismā’īl al-Qaṣrī as the shaykh from whom he received his *khirqā*, I am more inclined to follow Meier and Böwering.

46 See Kubrā, *Ijāza*, fol. 58^a; and Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 18–19.

shaykh's citations in light of his relationship with his powerful cousins, we are able to uncover how competition among Sufis was fundamentally intertwined with a range of political, pedagogical, and institutional networks that stretched across the medieval Islamic world. Although Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī (d. 1257) suggests that Sa'd al-Dīn refused to associate with his well-connected cousins during his sojourn in Greater Syria and Egypt, Ḥamūya's own epistle to 'Imād al-Dīn 'Umar ibn Muḥammad tells a different story.⁴⁷ Writing to the *shaykh al-shuyūkh* soon after his arrival in Egypt in 1235/1236, Sa'd al-Dīn laments:

وليعلم الشيخ دامت سعادته ولزمت عبادته أنّ تفقّد الإخوان وزيارة الخلان عادة
الصالحين بل سنّة المرسلين قال الله تعالى حكاية عن سليمان ﴿وتفقد الطير فقال
ما لي لا أرى الهدى﴾ (النمل ٢٠) وذلك ما كان يخلّ بجلالة قدره ونباهة أمره وعلوّ
شأنه ورفعته ملكه ومكانه

...

والشيخ مدّ الله في عُمره وزاد جلالة قدره نبذ هذه السنّة وراء ظهره واشتغل بتمشية
أمره وخالف سيرة المتقدمين من السلف وعادة المتأخّين من الخلف في رعاية
حقوق القرابة والأخوة وإعلاء راية المروّة حيث حرّمني من إكرامه وما شرّفتني بسلامه
منذ وصل هذا الضعيف من خمسة أيّام وما طلبني لا برسوله ولا بغلامه

Let the shaykh know—may his felicity continue and his devotion persevere—that seeking after brethren and visiting sincere friends is the custom of the righteous. Nay, it is the *sunna* of the messengers! Speaking of Solomon, God says, “He sought after all of the birds and said, ‘Why do I not see the hoopoe?’” (Q. 27:20) That did not make a dent in the majesty of his power, the eminence of his rank, the sublimity of his state, or the elevation of his authority or rank.

...

The shaykh—may God extend his life and increase the majesty of his power—has cast this *sunna* behind his back and has busied himself instead with the advancement of his own affairs. [He has acted] contrary to the comportment of the *salafs* that came before and the customs of those who came after them—i.e., attention to the demands of kinship

47 Shams al-Dīn Abū al-Muẓaffar Yūsuf ibn Qizūghlī Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān fī ta'rikh al-ayān*, ed. Muḥammad Barakāt, Kāmil al-Kharrāt, and 'Ammār Rihāwī, 23 vols. (Damascus: Dār al-Risāla al-'Alamiyya, 2013), XXII.424.

and brotherhood and raising the flag of manliness—to the point that he has cut me off from his hospitality. He has not honored me with his salutations—even though it has been five days since this humble one has arrived—nor has he sent any messengers or servants in search of me.⁴⁸

Ḥamūya's epistle suggests a tense relationship with 'Imād al-Dīn, whom he accuses of poor hospitality and a breach of the rules of *adab* prescribed for Sufis, relatives, and pious Muslims. As head of the Sa'd al-Su'adā' and Chief Sufi of Egypt, 'Imād al-Dīn presided over a prestigious state-sponsored *khānaqāh*, whose generous endowment (*waqf*) provided daily rations, small stipends, and even travel grants for the Sufis housed within.⁴⁹ The *khānaqāh*'s residents, moreover, were made up primarily of itinerant dervishes from Syria, Iraq, and Khurāsān—a near perfect fit, it would seem, for the Bahrābādī shaykh.⁵⁰ Given 'Imād al-Dīn's distinguished post and familial ties to Sa'd al-Dīn, his refusal to send so much as a message of welcome points to a deliberately antagonistic—or at the very least, disrespectfully aloof—attitude.

It seems that advertising the former *shaykh al-shuyūkh* as his primary master would have linked Sa'd al-Dīn to a powerful Sufi lineage and afforded him with the distinct social status these bonds entailed in Ayyūbid and neighboring 'Abbāsīd territories. At the same time, however, such ties would have forced him to negotiate a relationship of dependence with his cousin, who enjoyed the institutional and material support of the ruling elites. Whether or not the two ever reached a reconciliation, it is clear that Ḥamūya had less of a right to Ṣadr al-Dīn's legacy than 'Imād al-Dīn, who was his biological son, spiritual inheritor, and institutional successor.⁵¹ By citing Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya as both his

48 Ḥamūya, "Makātīb," 463. The epistle is also preserved in Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 169–172. For the passage quoted above, see idem, *Murād*, 169–170.

49 Hofer, *Popularisation*, 35.

50 Hofer, *Popularisation*, 68–80.

51 At the end of his letter, Ḥamūya leaves open the possibility for rapprochement. Khāma-Yār's collection of Sa'd al-Dīn's epistles also includes a second letter to 'Imād al-Dīn (apparently unknown to Ghiyāth al-Dīn), but it is difficult to judge the tone of the exchange. Although Ḥamūya lauds the Chief Sufi in accordance with the demands of the genre, he also treats 'Imād al-Dīn to what amounts to a lecture on the merits of turning away from wealth, status, and the trappings of power. See Ḥamūya, "Makātīb," 465–466.

Whatever the case, Sa'd al-Dīn did not neglect the bonds that tied him to 'Imād al-Dīn. Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī notes that after his murder in 1239, 'Imād al-Dīn's body was taken to Qāsiyūn and buried in the *zāwiya* of his cousin, the shaykh Sa'd al-Dīn, who prayed over him. See Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt*, xx11.362; and Hofer, "Origins and Development," 20. (The passage is a bit tricky, as Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī draws his material from the lost chronicle of Sa'd al-Dīn ibn Ḥamūya (d. 1274), the son of Tāj al-Dīn Ḥamūya. In the edition of Barakāt,

forefather and his shaykh, Sa'd al-Dīn could broadcast his ties with a renowned Sufi master and illustrious genealogy while simultaneously subverting—or at least bypassing—rival claims to this same social capital.

Contextualizing the shaykh's rhetorical strategies vis-à-vis the internal politics of the Ḥamūya clan helps us understand the stakes of his citational politics in their immediate context. Such an approach intervenes against a myopic focus on Sufism *qua* mysticism, revealing that the genealogical claims—both familial and spiritual—through which medieval Sufis contested authority were fundamentally interwoven with the broader mechanisms of knowledge and power in which they were embedded. Sa'd al-Dīn, Ṣadr al-Dīn, and 'Imād al-Dīn were not only Sufi shaykhs who concerned themselves Sufi things; they were also scions of a prestigious trans-regional clan who took part in the social strategies of cultural elites, negotiating family ties and networks of association as they navigated questions of influence, reputation, and legitimacy. Moreover, as multidimensional actors, the Ḥamūyas and their interlocutors drew upon these shared social strategies *even* when they concerned themselves with things explicitly marked “Sufi”.

Other examples from within Ḥamūya's network of colleagues point to the importance of overlapping familial, political, and initiatic lineages for the negotiation of Sufi knowledge and authority. Abū Ḥaṣṣ 'Umar al-Suhrawardī—purported to be Sa'd al-Dīn's *shaykh al-dhikr*—hailed from the Banū 'Ammūya, a prominent family of Sufi shaykhs and Shāfi'ī scholars who traced their lineage back to the first caliph Abū Bakr (d. 634).⁵² 'Umar al-Suhrawardī's uncle Abū al-Najīb (d. 1168)—initiated into the study of Sufism by his own uncle Wajīh al-Dīn (d. 1137)—was a renowned *ḥadīth* transmitter, preacher, Shāfi'ī jurist, and Sufi shaykh. Abū al-Najīb was remembered as a gifted and well-connected Sufi, having associated with the circle of Aḥmad al-Ghazālī in Isfahan and trained a host of successful shaykhs, including all three of Najm al-Dīn Kubrā's masters.⁵³ He maintained close ties with both the 'Abbāsīd court and Saljūq sultanate, preaching a sermon at the inauguration of the caliph al-Muqtafi (d. 1160) in 1136 and accepting a prestigious teaching post at the Niẓāmiyya in 1150.⁵⁴ Like

al-Kharrāṭ, and Rīḥāwī, manuscript *shīn* of the *Mir'āt* makes a distinction between our Ḥamūya—i.e., shaykh Sa'd al-Dīn, 'Imād al-Dīn's cousin—and his chronicler counterpart. See Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt*, XXII.362. For more on him see the Biographical Essay, p. 233 note 4.)

52 Ohlander, *Sufism*, 66 ff.

53 Erik Ohlander, *Sufism in an Age of Transition: 'Umar al-Suhrawardī and the Rise of the Islamic Mystical Brotherhoods* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 76–78.

54 Ohlander, *Sufism*, 77–79. As Ohlander explains, Abū al-Najīb's appointments were tied up in the power struggles that played out between the Saljūq sultans and 'Abbāsīd caliphs.

Abū al-Najīb, Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī spent his youth training in *ḥadīth*, Shāfi‘ī jurisprudence, and other exoteric sciences before being initiated into the study of Sufism by his uncle.⁵⁵ Despite their close bond, however, ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī did *not* inherit Abū al-Najīb’s post as head of the family *ribāṭ*, the Sa‘ādat al-Khādim. In a familiar turn of events, the position was passed on to at least one of Abū al-Najīb’s three sons, who appeared to have a greater claim to their father’s institutional legacy than their cousin.⁵⁶ ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī nevertheless became an influential and politically connected shaykh in his own right, securing a place at the center of the caliph al-Naṣir li-Dīn Allāh’s (d. 1225) retinue and posts at the head of five Baghdadī *ribāṭs*.⁵⁷

As the Ḥamūyas and ‘Ammūyas negotiated trans-regional networks of politics and cultural capital, they did so as privileged members of a select social class. These individuals began their careers traveling in search of exoteric knowledge, bolstering their ties with other scholarly elites as they rubbed shoulders with imāms, shaykhs, and students across the Islamic world. The strategies through which they contested knowledge and authority—including when they wrote as Sufi shaykhs—reflected the dominant tendencies of this interconnected world. With respect to the legitimating strategies of cultural elites in late 12th- to early 14th-century Damascus, Chamberlain explains:

... In addition to learning law and other fields, [these elites] wanted their young to master ritual practices and an often innovative style of deportment and manners. The bonds created by interactions with their shaykhs and others in the ritualized environment of the production of knowledge forged this elite’s useful intimacies. Their social and cultural capital—as they themselves expressed it—became the dominant currency in *fitna* [here, social competition]—both in their struggles for *manṣabs* and their rivalries for eminence more generally.⁵⁸

After the Sultan Mas‘ūd died in 1152, al-Muqtafi and his vizier Ibn Hubayra (d. 1165) regained control of Baghdad and cleaned house, ousting Abū al-Najīb from his post at the Niẓāmiyya. See Ohlander, *Sufism*, 79.

55 Ohlander, *Sufism*, 81.

56 Ohlander, *Sufism*, 85.

57 See Ohlander, *Sufism*, 89–112. Even a quick perusal of ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī’s *Kind Gifts of Knowledge* uncovers copious citations, particularly in the form of *ḥadīth* narrations, from his uncle Abū al-Najīb, to whom he refers as “our shaykh.” See *inter alia* Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ al-Suhrawardī, *Awārif al-ma‘ārif*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Khālidi (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2016), 168, 169, 187, and 189.

58 Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190–1350* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 178.

The social and embodied pedagogical ideals championed by Ḥamūya, Kubrā, and Qūnawī were thus not unique to mystics, but ubiquitous epistemological and social values. Even for those scholars who would not become Sufis, learning consisted just as much in acquiring useful sets of data as in cultivating interpersonal bonds through *ṣuḥba* and developing modes of comportment that conformed to an idealized shaykhliness. Although Ḥamūya and his colleagues advertised esoteric learning as a *sui generis* phenomenon set apart by complex metaphysical frameworks and a distinguished cadre of Sufi shaykhs, the socio-epistemological strategies and ideals they reproduced bound together exoteric- and esoteric-minded thinkers alike.

For his part, Ḥamūya appears to be acutely aware of these shared social mechanisms, deploying them adroitly to navigate the Ayyūbid institutional context. While he may be reticent to claim contemporaries as his primary shaykhs, his exchange with ‘Imād al-Dīn nevertheless demonstrates a nuanced understanding of key social ties and their contextual significance. After upbraiding ‘Imād al-Dīn for his cold welcome, Sa’d al-Dīn asserts his rights as a member of the Ḥamūya clan, as a Sufi, and as a distinguished member of the Shāfi‘ī ‘*ulamā*’ through the citation (and suppression) of specific interpersonal relationships he has cultivated over the course of his career. He explains:

قد علم الشيخ أدام الله علوه بشفقة الشيخ الكبير السعيد الشهيد شيخ الشيوخ
صدر الملة والدين تغمده الله بغفرانه والتفات خاطره الخطير وميل ضميره المنير
إلى رعاية حق هذا الضعيف وكذلك سائر الأئمة والمشائخ خصوصاً الإمام العالم
المحقق شهاب الدين الخيوقى رحمة الله عليه كان يذكر الدرس في خوارزم ويعقد
في درسه مائة وخمسون فقيهاً من أهل التصنيف والتدريس والمناظرة والنحو واللغة
والتفسير وكان أكثر التفاتة وكلامه وبحثه مع هذا الضعيف وكان يراعى جانب [هذا]
الضعيف أكثر ما يراعى الأب الشفيق جانب الولد الرشيد الرشيق
وهذا الضعيف ما جاء إلى هذا المدينة من خراسان بضيق⁵⁹ له في مطمع أو
ملبس أو مسكن بل جاء بإشارة من الله ورسوله وترك المدارس والمسكن والرباط
لله تعالى

...

59 لما جاء ... لضيق Khāma-Yār's from Ghayāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 171 for Khāma-Yār's لضيق ... بضيق Reading.

وقد عوّضني الله تعالى خيراً ما تركتُ أعطاني الله تعالى معرفة و علم بصفاته وذاته وأخلاقه وأسمائه ومُلُكِهِ ومَلِكُوتِهِ وعالم جبروته حتّى لو شرعتُ في تفسير حرف من حروف كتابه لأدرجتُ فيه علم الأولين والآخريين ولو كتبت أسماء العلوم التي علّمني ربّي والبحار التي غوّصت فيها لطلال الكلام ولا يفني بشرحه الكلام فكيف يجوز للشّيخ أن لا يلتفت إلى هذا الضعيف وينظر إليه بعين الإذلال

The shaykh—may God extend his sublimity—must surely know about the compassion of the great and blessed shaykh and martyr (*al-shahīd*), the Chief Sufi Ṣadr al-Milla wa-l-Dīn—may God envelop him with His forgiveness—and how he turned his mighty thoughts and inclined his luminous heart toward what this humble one deserved. This was the case as well with the rest of the imāms and shaykhs, especially the learned and verifying imām Shihāb al-Dīn [Abū Saʿd ibn ʿImrān] al-Khīwaqī—God’s mercy upon him! He used to teach in Khwārazm; 150 jurists—including writers, teachers, and masters of debate, grammar, lexicography, and exegesis—would attend his lessons. In spite of all this, he would direct most of his attention, speech, and inquiry to this humble one, watching over him more than a compassionate father would watch over a just and comely child.

Nevertheless, this humble one didn’t turn toward any of that. He did not come to this city from Khurāsān out of a need for finery, clothing, or even a place to stay. Instead, he came following a sign from God and His messenger, leaving [the issue of] schools, housing, and *ribāṭs* to God almighty.

...

God almighty has compensated me with something better than what I left behind. He has given me gnosis and knowledge of His Attributes, His Essence, His Nature, His Names, His *mulk* and *malakūt*, and the world of His *jabarūt*—if I were to begin to explain [even] a single letter from His book, I would fill up [that exegesis with all] the knowledge of the ancients and the moderns. If I were to write down the names of the sciences that my Lord has taught me and the seas in which He has immersed me, the words would go on and on and pens could not contain their explanation.

So, how is it possible that the shaykh has paid no attention to this humble one, [going so far as to] gaze upon him with the eye of contempt?⁶⁰

60 Ḥamūya, “Makātīb,” 464.

If Ḥamūya's reference to Ṣadr al-Dīn establishes familial bonds and Sufi credentials, his account of his relationship with Shihāb al-Dīn al-Khīwaqī (d. after 1218) reflects the demands of the Sa'd al-Su'adā' and its institutional character. According to Hofer, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's state-sponsored *khānaqāh* was not indiscriminate in its recruitment of itinerant dervishes, but rather courted a particular *kind* of eastern Sufi. To buttress their ideological claim as guardians of Sunnī Islam, the Ayyūbids patronized a distinct brand of Sufism oriented towards legal scholarship, particularly that of a Shāfi'ī-Ash'arī bent.⁶¹ While the exact mechanisms of selection remain unclear, the Chief Sufi and dervishes who resided in the *khānaqāh* were almost always educated members of the 'ulamā' and primarily Shāfi'ī "juridical Sufis" whose engagement with the exoteric sciences and generation of *baraka* through ritual practices dovetailed with the interests of the state.⁶² Shihāb al-Dīn al-Khīwaqī—a Khwārazmī Shāfi'ī *faqīh* famous for his mastery of the legal and linguistic sciences—epitomizes the specific type of scholarly knowledge that Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn and his viziers sought to import and cultivate within Ayyūbid territories.⁶³ By recounting his privileged position among al-Khīwaqī's students and colleagues, Sa'd al-Dīn thus asserts his credentials not only as a Sufi, but as a member of this elite cadre of trans-regional Shāfi'ī scholars.⁶⁴

At the end of this passage, Ḥamūya lays claim to an infinite esoteric knowledge, bolstering his allegations with references to Sufi technical terms (e.g., *mulk*, *malakūt*, and *jabarūt*) and the endless possibilities of the letters. Mirroring Qūnawī's strategies in the *Divine Breaths*, he makes rhetorical use of divine inspiration, then recounts social relationships with past teachers to legitimate these claims. What is interesting here is that Sa'd al-Dīn draws upon his association with al-Khīwaqī—whom he explicitly identifies as a master of the *exoteric* sciences—to contextualize his *esoteric* modes of knowing.⁶⁵ On the sur-

61 Hofer, *Popularisation*, 37.

62 Hofer, *Popularisation*, 38–49; 77–80.

63 On Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Sa'd ibn 'Imrān al-Khīwaqī, see Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Nasawī (d. 1249/1250), *Sīrat al-sultān Jalāl al-Dīn Mankubīrtī*, ed. Ḥafīz Aḥmad Ḥamdī (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1953), 109–113; and Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-tarīkh*, ed. Muḥammad Yūsuf al-Daqqāq, 4th ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2003), x.402 ff. (under AH 617). Al-Khīwaqī was the dedicatee of an epitome to Euclid's *Elements* and an introduction to Ptolemaic astronomy—both composed by a certain Maḥmūd al-Jaghminī—suggesting a familiarity with the mathematical and astrological sciences as well. See Sally P. Ragep, *Jaghminī's Mulakhkhaṣ: An Islamic Introduction to Ptolemaic Astronomy* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2016), 21–25.

64 For the Shāfi'ī orientation of the Ḥamūya clan, see Nafīsī, "Khāndān," 19 ff. and Ḥamūya, "Makātīb," 452.

65 As Hofer notes, it is also likely that Ṣadr al-Dīn, as Chief Sufi under the Ayyūbid author-

face, Sa'd al-Dīn plays down his relationship with al-Khīwaqī, claiming to have turned away from the comfort and renown of institutional prestige in favor of an infinite and unmediated knowledge bestowed upon him by God. Nevertheless, it is precisely these interpersonal bonds that introduce and frame his unique knowledge; *they* are the legitimating qualifications that distinguish the shaykh as a certified scholar worthy of association and attention in this milieu. Sa'd al-Dīn's rhetoric thus belies a careful attention to the relationships of dependence in which he was embedded and a willingness to articulate his knowledge accordingly. While the basic content of Ḥamūya's lettrist claims may be consistent across genres, the textual strategies and social networks into which his letters are woven modulate in accordance with the expectations of his presumed audience.⁶⁶

Najm al-Dīn's absence here and in Ḥamūya's theoretical treatises may strike contemporary readers as puzzling, but it is important to keep in mind that in the first few decades of the 13th century, the shaykh had not yet assumed his hagiographical reputation as the all-powerful "saint-maker" (*walī-turāsh*) whose charismatic presence could turn even dogs into blessed guides.⁶⁷ In fact, many such hagiographies are *promised* upon the distinguished careers of his disciples, especially the famous "saints of the age" that included Sa'd al-Dīn

ities, would have directed his scholarly output primarily towards Ash'arī theological and Shāfi'ī legal pursuits, rather than abstract modes of metaphysical speculation. Hofer, "Origins and Development," 15–19.

- 66 Decades after his death, Ḥamūya may have finally found a place at the prestigious *khāna-qāh*, albeit obliquely. Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 1449) relates that a Chief Sufi at the Sa'īd al-Su'adā' by the name of 'Abd al-Karīm (Karīm al-Dīn) ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Āmulī al-Ṭabarī (d. 1311) "linked himself to Sa'd al-Dīn ibn Ḥamūya" (*yantamī ilā Sa'd al-Dīn ibn Ḥamūya*). Karīm al-Dīn was an erstwhile enemy of Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) who was ousted from his position at the Sa'īd al-Su'adā' when local Sufis accused him of sixteen different kinds of depravity (*fisq*). He was later reinstated, however, remaining there until his death. Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 1449), *al-Durar al-kāmina*, 4 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Jayl, 1993), II.397. See also Hofer, "Origins and Development," 29–31. While the form of the name cited here—i.e., Sa'd al-Dīn *ibn* Ḥamūya—may suggest the chronicler and son of Ṭāj al-Dīn mentioned above, Ibn Ḥajar foregrounds the connection to emphasize Karīm al-Dīn's penchant for abstract, even unintelligible, Sufi discourse, suggesting our Ḥamūya was the figure in mind. Al-Shaybī interprets the account along these lines, citing Ibn Ḥajar to posit the lasting influence of an esoteric lettrist *ṭarīqa* that continued in Ḥamūya's wake. Kāmil Muṣṭafā al-Shaybī, *al-Ṣīla bayna al-taṣawwuf wa-l-tashayyū'*, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, 1982), II.184nn9–11.
- 67 For the story of Kubrā and the dog saint, see Jāmī, *Nafahāt*, 423; and Devin A. DeWeese, "Dog Saints and Dog Shrines in Kubravi Tradition: Notes on a Hagiographical Motif from Khwārazm," in *Miracle et Karāma: Hagiographies médiévales comparées*, ed. Denise Aigle (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2000), 459–497.

Ḥamūya, Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī (d. 1219), Raḍī al-Dīn ‘Alī Lālā (d. 1244), Najm al-Dīn Dāyā Rāzī (d. 1256), Sayf al-Dīn Bākhārzī (d. 1261), Bābā Kamāl Jandī (d. 1273), and several others. Only in hindsight did the students of these figures mold them and their teacher Kubrā into legendary saints that could in turn be put to use as independent sources of legitimacy.⁶⁸ Although disciples like Ḥamūya and Majd al-Dīn Baghdādī hailed from powerful families, Kubrā himself does not seem to have boasted a noble genealogy; he likely depended upon his initiatic lineage, scholarly abilities, and students for social esteem.⁶⁹ Perhaps reflecting the limited scope of the shaykh’s notoriety, the 13th-century preacher and historian Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī—himself an elite with close ties to both ‘Abbāsīd and Ayyūbīd courts—makes no mention of Kubrā when discussing Sa’d al-Dīn in his *Mirror of the Age in the History of the Notables* (*Mir’at al-zamān fī ta’rīkh al-a’yān*).⁷⁰ In the context of Ḥamūya’s correspondence with ‘Imād al-Dīn, it may be that the theoretical and methodological frameworks associated with Kubrā and his circle were at odds with the institutional focus of the Sa’īd al-Su’adā’ and thus irrelevant (or perhaps even detrimental) as a personal reference. On the other hand, it could simply be the case that in Ḥamūya’s correspondences and treatises, his name and elite family connections outweighed the possible benefits of explicitly incorporating himself into Kubrā’s spiritual genealogy.

With all of this in mind, let us circle back to expand our original question. If Sa’d al-Dīn cites his forefather directly as a way of co-opting the renown of his noble lineage, how might this claim have been received, given the contextual importance of *interpersonal* relationships for the transmission of knowledge and legitimacy? In *The Epistle on Compulsion and Kindness* and *The Levels of Joy*, Sa’d al-Dīn cites Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya not only as his forefather, but as his shaykh as well, deploying the genealogical link between him and his ancestor as direct evidence for his Sufi credentials. As we have seen with Kubrā and Qūnawī, 13th-century Sufis often deployed dream narratives or waking visions

68 For accounts of Kubrā and his disciples, see, for example, Jāmī, *Nafahāt*, 422 ff.

69 See Algar, “Eponym”; idem, “KOBRAWIYA II. THE ORDER,” in *Elr*; and Böwering, “Seclusion,” 268–275. For more on Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī, his relationship with Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, and the antagonism between him and the Ḥamūya clan, see Eyad Abuali; “The Genesis of Kubrawī Sufism: A Study of Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī” (PhD dissertation, SOAS, University of London, 2017), 38–53. As Abuali explains, al-Baghdādī seems to have found himself in a struggle between the Khwārazmshāh (with whom the Ḥamūyas were aligned) and his mother (with whom al-Baghdādī was aligned), eventually leading to his execution.

70 Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir’at*, xxii.424. For more on Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, see Alex Mallett, “Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī,” in *Medieval Muslim Historians and the Franks in the Levant* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 84–108.

to underscore intimate bonds with their spiritual masters. While these narratives took place in the unseen world, they highlighted interpersonal relationships of association and training; these social bonds were so powerful, they could transcend time and space. Even in cases where individuals claimed initiation through prophets or long-dead shaykhs, accounts of meetings in the unseen world—usually emphasizing points of corporeal contact—worked as legitimating strategies that reproduced an ideal of Sufi knowledge as embodied and social.⁷¹ In light of this broader context, it is curious that Sa’d al-Dīn does not deem it necessary to justify his spiritual links with the Ḥamūya patriarch through any narrative or argument whatsoever. Ḥamūya’s unadorned citations of his forefather suggests that in his immediate context, genealogical links *did* matter and *could* be deployed to advantageous effect, even beyond direct personal connections. To put it another way, Sa’d al-Dīn’s laconic references to Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya presume that the connection between forefather and spiritual master, even across multiple generations, would make sense (and be convincing) to his readers even without further argument or explanation.

As noted above, 13th-century scholars and Sufis competed for state-sponsored posts primarily through the cultivation of interpersonal relationships with distinguished teachers and authorities. At the same time, however, select families were able to circumvent the “continuous play of seizing, resigning, increasing, trading or passing on, and defending” through the strength of a patriarch’s renown, unmarked expectations vis-à-vis patrilineal inheritance, and of course, strong political connections.⁷² In each of these cases, family posts were not legally inherited per se, but rather appointed at the discretion of particular rulers, who upheld *de facto* lines of succession. The interpersonal cultivation of social knowledge may have reflected rhetorical or theoretical ideals, but questions of genealogy and family connections continued to play important roles in the reproduction and contestation of elite knowledge and power.⁷³

71 Ibn ‘Arabī, for example, narrates a complex relationship between the living saints with which he trained and the prophets whom he claims initiated him and endowed him with authoritative knowledge. See Addas, *Quest*, 33–73. For corporeal contact in dreams, see the example of Qūnawī and Ibn ‘Arabī in Chapter 4, Section 3. In the *Effusions of Beauty*, Kubrā likewise presents a vision in which he shakes hands with ‘Alī, guaranteeing himself a place in paradise and, as the following discussion suggests, affording him access to authoritative knowledge. See Kubrā, *Fawā’ih*, (M) 12 and (Z) 138–139.

72 Chamberlain, *Knowledge*, 94–95.

73 Here, we could draw an analogy with the practice of legacy admissions at modern American colleges and universities. In theory—and perhaps in the majority of cases—competition and individual merit are upheld as fundamental ideals. In a few specific cases,

Likewise, though father-son bonds seem to have been the dominant mode of genealogical legitimacy, there appears to have been a recognition of other types of ancestral claims in practice. In his *Mirror of the Age*, for example, Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī's entry on Sa'd al-Dīn underscores his unique ties to Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya and, in particular, his shrine in Baḥrābād. At the end of his brief biographical notice, the historian writes:

فقال في بعض الأيام أريد أن أزور جدِّي محمد بن حموية ببَحْرَابَاد [كذا] فمضى
إليه وزاره وأقام عنده أسبوعًا فمات ودفن إلى جانبه

One day he said, "I wish to make a pilgrimage to my forefather Muḥammad ibn Ḥammūya in Buḥayrābādh [*sic*]." He set off to make a pilgrimage to him and stayed there with him for a week. Then, he died and was buried next to him.⁷⁴

Reading *The Mirror of the Age* as narrative rather than as positivist history, we see that Ibn al-Jawzī fundamentally intertwines the lives of the shaykh and his forefather, binding them together through blood, name, and death. Though he offers no theoretical explanation or justification as to why, the historian suggests that there is *something* about the shaykh's ancestral ties that is particularly relevant or meaningful to his audience. Even in this contemporary Ayyūbid-affiliated source, therefore, Ḥamūya's relationship with his illustrious ancestor is considered an essential part to his character and thus worthy of special attention.

We must remember, however, that Sa'd al-Dīn did not spend his entire career in Ayyūbid and 'Abbāsīd territories. Though his time in Arabo-Islamic lands put him in touch with such luminaries as Ibn 'Arabī, Qūnawī, and Suhrawardī, he was unable to secure a steady source of income and was forced to return to Persianate territories, which by then had come under the rule of the Mongols.

families are afforded a distinct advantage on account of their reputation, connections, and material capital, all compounded, in turn, by a continued history of admission and success. Though there are important differences between the modern university and the medieval madrasa, I maintain that such an analogy helps to illuminate how questions of individual merit and genealogical reputation are negotiated in practice.

74 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt*, XXII.424.

7 The Mongol Context: Ḥamūya and the “Golden Kin”

In Mongol territories across Eurasia, appeals to genealogical authority were even more pronounced than they were in Egypt and Syria. After Chinggis Khān’s death in 1227, leadership of his vast empire was premised upon lineage; only the so-called “golden kin” (*altan orugh*) could inherit knowledge of the divine mandate that guaranteed the spread of absolute Mongol rule to the ends of the earth.⁷⁵ Judith Pfeiffer has demonstrated that Muslims living under the Mongols articulated their legitimacy through analogous political discourses, deploying prestigious genealogical claims of their own to secure the support of their new overlords.⁷⁶ Twelver Shī‘īs, for example translated confessional boundaries into a language of lineage, inheritance, and religio-political authority, vaunting themselves as the Mongols of the Muslim community.⁷⁷ These arguments framed the Prophet Muḥammad and Chinggis Khān as paral-

75 On the Mongols, genealogical authority, and Chinggisid legitimacy, see Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 11.405–410; Michal Biran, *Chinggis Khan* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2007), 102 ff.; Anne F. Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 6 ff.; Michael Hope, *Power, Politics, and Tradition in the Mongol Empire and the Ilkhānate of Iran* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 44 ff.; and Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the Islamic World: From Conquest to Conversion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 382 ff.

76 See Judith Pfeiffer, “Confessional Ambiguity vs. Confessional Polarization: Politics and the Negotiation of Religious Boundaries in the Ilkhanate,” in *Politics, Patronage, and the Transmission of Knowledge in 13th–15th Century Tabriz*, ed. Judith Pfeiffer, *Iran Studies*, v. 8 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2014), 129–168. Jonathan Brack argues that these discursive experiments were intellectually and socially productive for Mongols as well as Muslims. As Muslims (along with Buddhists and Jews) translated their claims at the Ilkhānid court, they offered their Mongol patrons new ways of expressing their absolute sovereignty and articulating their inheritance of Chinggis Khān’s heavenly mandate. See Jonathan Z. Brack, “Mediating Sacred Kingship: Conversion and Sovereignty in Mongol Iran” (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 2016), 7–10.

77 The early 14th-century *History of Öljejtü (Tārikh-i Ūljāytü)*, puts the analogy in explicit terms, reporting the following as part of a conversation between the Ilkhān Öljejtü (d. 1316)—who eventually converted to Shī‘ism—and a Mongol amīr: “O Padishah, in Islam a Shī‘ī (*rāfiḍī*) [is he who] recognizes the seed (*urugh*) of Chinggis Khān as his successor after his death according to the Mongol yasa. The Sunnī way (*madhhab-i sunna*) considers the amīr [i.e., someone without Chinggisid descent] worthy of his position.” Translation by Judith Pfeiffer. Parenthetical insertions and clarifications in brackets are Pfeiffer’s. See eadem, “Confessional Ambiguity,” 145. The passage is also translated and analyzed in Jackson, *Mongols*, 177. For the original text, see Abū al-Qāsim Qāshānī (d. 1335/1336), *Tārikh-i Ūljāytü* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Bungāh-i Tarjuma wa Nashr-i Kitāb, 1969), 90–91.

lel founding fathers, each privy to an authorizing divine knowledge that could only be passed on through biological inheritance.⁷⁸ Though of course not all descendants of Muḥammad identified with the Shīʿa, the Twelvers leveraged their support of the Prophet's family to advance a communal identity and political-theoretical discourse that appealed to Mongol elites.⁷⁹

Under the Īlkhān Maḥmūd Ghāzān (d. 1304), these discourses materialized in the form of concrete policies. A self-declared defender of the *ahl al-bayt*, Ghāzān established endowments (*dār al-siyādas*) for the Prophet's descendants in major cities of the Ilkhanate as institutional parallels to *madrasas* and *khānaqāhs*.⁸⁰ Ghāzān's successor Öljeytü (d. 1316) formally adopted Twelver Shīʿism, which he declared the official religion of the Īlkhānid state. In addition to recruiting Shīʿi theologians for his court, minting coins with the Shīʿi *shahāda*, and having the *khutba* read in the Twelver manner across his domain, Öljeytü expanded Ghāzān's policies of official support for the Prophet's descendants.⁸¹ According to Pfeiffer, though the Mongols' allegiance to Shīʿism may have ended with Öljeytü's death, his and Ghāzān's rule represent a formative period for the discourses of genealogical legitimacy that would become central to Perso-Islamic articulations of authority in the Tīmūrid era and beyond.⁸²

The ubiquity and social significance of lineage and genealogical authority among the Mongols and their allies suggest a key framework through which to understand Ḥamūya's rhetorical deployment of his forefather's legacy.⁸³ Evidence from Sa'd al-Dīn's personal correspondences in Khurāsān suggest both that the roots of these genealogical arguments had sprouted even before they garnered official support in Ghāzān's policies *and* that the shaykh was fluent in their usage. In an epistle written to 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭā-Malik Juwaynī (d. 1283)—the famed Īlkhānid historian and administrator—Ḥamūya seeks a sympathetic ear to intercede between him and Bahā' al-Dīn Muḥammad Juwaynī (d. 1254),

78 Pfeiffer, "Confessional Ambiguity," 155–156.

79 Pfeiffer, "Confessional Ambiguity," 144–145, 161.

80 Pfeiffer, "Confessional Ambiguity," 146.

81 Pfeiffer, "Confessional Ambiguity," 151. The Īlkhān's reverence for the Prophet's bloodline was purportedly accompanied by a strict policy of enforcement. After being accused of counterfeiting an 'Alid genealogy, the chief of the Īlkhānate's Twelver Shīʿa community was summarily executed under Öljeytü's orders. See Pfeiffer, "Confessional Ambiguity," 159–160.

82 Pfeiffer, "Confessional Ambiguity," 162–163.

83 The citations of Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya analyzed above are found in texts composed before Ḥamūya's final move back to Khurāsān. However, because the goal of this chapter is to explore the contexts in which Sa'd al-Dīn's work may have been written, taught, and *received*, I argue that reading his citations in relation to the Mongol world nevertheless yields generative insights.

‘Atā’-Malik’s father and the *ṣāhib-dīwān* under Chin Temür (d. 1235), Körgüz (d. 1242), and Arghun Aqā (d. 1275).⁸⁴ While the details of the disagreement are unclear, the crux of the issue seems to have revolved around Sa’d al-Dīn’s support of a *sayyid* whom Bahā’ al-Dīn believed to be of poor character.⁸⁵ To defend his actions, Ḥamūya justifies his reverence for the Prophet’s family through a sustained discussion of genealogical origin and descent, supporting his claims with logical argument and, of course, evidence from the science of letters. He avers:

ولكن احترام أهل البيت واجب وهو الدين الواصب لأن الفرد من المصدر الصحيح لأصل الطيب الصريح الذي له الأفراد والأولاد والأعداد الغالب القادر البالغ اللطيف

إن كان هو على مثال الأصل وبعته وصفته فتعظيمه واحترامه واجب لتعظيم الأصل لأنه به تمام الوصل وتمام الفصل وتمام الفصل كمال الخصل وإن لم يكن على مثال الأصل وبعته وصفته ودينه وملته فلا نعظمه ولا نحرمه من حيث هو بل من حيث هو وغيره من مصدر قوي غالب صحيح وأصل صريح يقتضي التكدير والتطهير لأن الصادر منه في غلباته مكدر بغيره والصادر منه في ملطفاته مطهر غيره وميره فإذا يجب تعظيم الأصل الجامع لإتمام الفصل والوصل وإكمال كرائم الخصل

كما نعظم القرآن وحروفه وأشكاله وصنوفه فسبحان الله كلام معظم من الله يدل على تنزيهه فكل حرف فيه معظم واجب التعظيم إذا نسبناه إلى الله تعالى ومن أفراد الكلمات في القرآن ما هو موهم بنوع من النقصان ومعشر بما لا يليق بجلال الرحمان نحو قوله تعالى ﴿ولا تسبوا الذين يدعون من دون الله فيسبوا الله عدواً بغير علم﴾ (الأنعام ١٠٨) وقوله تعالى ﴿أأنت قلت للناس اتخذوني وأمي إلهين من دون

84 For more on ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Atā-Malik Juwaynī, see George Lane, “JOVAYNĪ, ‘ALĀ’-AL-DĪN,” in *Elr*. For more on Bahā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad Juwaynī, see ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Atā-Malik Juwaynī, *Tārīkh-i Jahān-Gushā-yi Juwaynī*, ed. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb Qazwīnī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Hirmis, 2009), 555–556, 585–587; idem, *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror*, trans. J.A. Boyle (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 487–488, 519–521; and George Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran: A Persian Renaissance* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 180–181.

85 See Ḥamūya, “Makātīb,” 468.

اللَّهُ ﴿ (المائدة ١١٦) فسین السبّ⁸⁶ سین سبحان وبأوه باء سبحان وكلاهما معظمان
من حيث أنّهما صدرا من مصدر صحيح معظّم مع تفاوتهما فيما يليق بجلال الله
وفیما لا يليق

Nay, reverence of the family of the Prophet is obligatory—it is the last-
ing religion. Because, the individual of sound origins (*al-maṣḍar al-ṣaḥīḥ*)
belongs to a good and pure stock (*al-aṣl al-ṭayyib al-ṣarīḥ*), which has indi-
viduals, offspring, and numbers of the utmost power and furthest refine-
ment.

If one conforms to the model of his stock, along with its character
and attributes, then glorifying and revering him is necessary when one
glorifies his stock. Because, through him the conjunction (*al-waṣl*) is per-
fect; through the perfection of the conjunction, the disjunction (*al-faṣl*)
is perfect; and through the perfection of the disjunction comes the con-
summation of the whole bunch (*al-khuṣal*).

If one does not conform to the model of his stock, along with its char-
acter and attribute, its religion and its sect, then we do not glorify and
revere him *qua* him, but rather by virtue of his stock. Those other than
him [still] come from a strong and perfectly sound source, for the pure
stock yields [both] what sullies and what makes pure—[some of] what
stems from it sullies other things in its acts of compulsion and [some of]
what stems from it purifies other things in its acts of kindness. Thus, it is
necessary to glorify the entire stock, due to the perfection of its disjunc-
tion and conjunction, and the consummation of the precious aspects of
the whole bunch.

This is just as we glorify the Qurʾān, with all its letters, shapes, and
forms. “Glory be to God” (*subḥān Allāh*) is glorious speech from God that
testifies to God’s transcendence. Each letter in the Qurʾān is glorious and
necessitates glorification, so we link it to God almighty. Among the indi-
vidual letters in the Qurʾān, however, there are those that suggest a type of
deficiency and indicate what does not befit the majesty of the Merciful.
In this regard, the Exalted says, “Do not revile (*wa-lā tasubbū*) those they
call on beside God in case they, in their hostility and ignorance, revile (*fa-
yasubbū*) God” (Q. 6:108) and, “Did you say to people, “Take me and my

86 The edition reads السبب (“the cause”) here. On the basis of the context of the preceding
Qurʾānic verse (Q. 6:108), السبّ (“insult,” “reviling,” “abuse,” etc.) seem like a more likely
choice.

mother as two gods alongside God?” (Q. 5:116) The *sīn* of “reviling” (*al-sabb*) is the *sīn* of “glory be” (*subhān*) and its *bāʾ* is the *bāʾ* of “glory be.” Both of them are glorious on account of the fact that they both stem from a pure and glorious source, despite their differences with respect to what befits the majesty of God and what does not.⁸⁷

To absolve himself before ‘Aṭā-Mālik Juwaynī and his father Bahāʾ al-Dīn, Saʿd al-Dīn deploys an abstract genealogical language that is wide-reaching in its applicability. The focus here is not on qualities of the Prophet, his divine mission, or the virtues of his family in particular, but rather on questions of inheritance and the relationship between an illustrious ancestor and his progeny. No matter the *apparent* characteristics of individual descendants, Ḥamūya declares, they are all to be exalted by virtue of their genealogical ties to their forefather and their membership within the distinguished family line. At the same time, Saʿd al-Dīn leaves theoretical space for individuals who most perfectly embody the qualities of their noble ancestor. These figures stand in for the sum total of their families, revered both by virtue of their noble stock *and* by virtue of their own perfect qualities. Although Saʿd al-Dīn uses the epistle to defend his reverence for the *sayyids*, his logic is readily adaptable to a wide range of illustrious lineages: Chinggis Khān’s “golden kin,” the Juwaynīs (whose forefathers held distinguished positions under the ‘Abbāsids, Saljūqs, Khwārazmshāhs, and the Mongols), and of course, the Ḥamūya clan.⁸⁸ As Saʿd al-Dīn articulates them, these universalizing genealogical discourses—and in particular, the ideal of the “perfect descendant”—could be deployed just as easily to theorize a contextually potent link between him and his own renowned ancestor, Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya. Even if the shaykh does not explicitly deploy such arguments in extant correspondence or treatises, our analysis nevertheless reveals Saʿd al-Dīn’s adroit grasp of the discursive landscape in Khurāsān, his ability to adapt relevant discourses for specific goals, and the contextual possibilities according to which his own illustrious ancestral history may have been articulated and received.

Towards the end of the epistle, we are met with a familiar recourse to the science of letters, applied here to God’s speech as revealed in the Qurʾān. Citing Q. 6:108 as an example, Saʿd al-Dīn demonstrates how *sīn* and *bāʾ*, the letters that make up the word “reviling” (*sabba*; *al-sabb*), are the very same ones that testify to the glory of God (*subhān Allāh*). Because these—and all letters found in

87 Ḥamūya, “Makātīb,” 468.

88 For a brief history of the Juwaynī family, see Lane, “Jovayni.”

the Qur'ān—originate in God's speech, they are all to be revered and exalted. As was the case in his epistle to 'Imād al-Dīn, Ḥamūya adapts his lettrist analysis to rhetorical strategies suited for the exigencies of this particular correspondence. If the social ties he emphasizes in response to his cousin's cold welcome reflect the institutional context of the Sa'īd al-Su'adā', his claims with regard to illustrious origins and family rights in this epistle are tailored to the genealogical predilections of the Mongols and their allies. In both cases, his lettrist output and laconic genealogical references are equally versatile.

If Sa'īd al-Dīn's reverence for the *ahl al-bayt* and savvy articulation of genealogical authority foreshadow the Twelver Shī'ī strategies identified by Pfeiffer, it may be tempting to take this devotional and discursive affinity as indicative of the shaykh's Shī'ī leanings. Though it may be an exaggeration to suggest (with Jamal Elias) that "most modern studies accept Sa'īd al-Dīn's formal profession of Twelver Shī'ism as beyond doubt," the question of the shaykh's sectarian affiliation still looms large in contemporary scholarship.⁸⁹ The primary historical evidence for Ḥamūya's purported Shī'ī identification stems from 'Azīz Nasafī's (d. before 1300) accounts of his views on the nature of the saints and the Mahdī. In *The Book of the Perfect Human Being (Kitāb al-Insān al-kāmil)*, Nasafī reports, "According to the shaykh, the saints of Muḥammad's community will be no more than these twelve. The last saint, i.e., the twelfth, will be the Seal of the Saints, called the Mahdī and the Master of Time."⁹⁰ Three centuries later, the Qāḍī Nūr Allāh Shūshtarī (d. 1610) would cite a variation of this passage to support his assertion Sa'īd al-Dīn was a Shī'ī who limited the saints to 'Alī and his sinless offspring.⁹¹

89 See Jamal J. Elias, "The Sufi Lords of Bahrabad: Sa'īd al-Dīn and Sadr al-Dīn Hamuwayi," *Iranian Studies* 27, no. 1/4 (1994), 71–72; Fritz Meier and Spencer Trimingham both identify Ḥamūya as a Twelver Shī'ī. See Fritz Meier, "Die Schriften des 'Azīz-i Nasafī," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 52 (1953/1955), 128; and Trimingham, *Orders*, 99. Marijan Molé is more cautious, noting the lack of any specifically Shī'ī elements in the texts to which he had access. See Marijan Molé, "Les Kubrawīya entre Sunnisme et Shiisme aux huitième et neuvième siècles de l'Hégire," *REI* 29, no. 1 (1961), 74–76. With respect to Persian scholarship, Nafīsī's programmatic article (cited also by Molé) argues for a Shāfi'ī affiliation, as does Hirawī's introduction to *The Lamp of Sufism*. See Nafīsī, "Khāndān," 19–20; and Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 18–19. For the most recent analysis of the Shī'ī valences of Ḥamūya's work (and a counter to my arguments below), see Saleh Pezhman, "From 'Alidism to Spiritual Shī'ism: The Kubrawīya Sufi Order's Creedal Evolution in Late Medieval Persia," (PhD dissertation, McGill University, forthcoming).

90 'Azīz Nasafī, *Kitāb al-Insān al-kāmil*, ed. Marijan Molé, 3rd ed. (Tehran – Paris: L'Institut Français de Recherche en Iran / Editions Tahuri, 1993), 32.

91 Nūr Allāh Shūshtarī, *Majālis al-mu'minūn*, 2 vols. (Tehran: Kitābfurūshī-yi Islamiyya, 1986), 11.75–76, also quoted in Nafīsī, "Khāndān," 20. According to Hirawī, Ḥāfiẓ Ḥusayn ibn

Nasafī and Shūshtarī's citations notwithstanding, Ḥamūya did not identify himself as a member of the Twelver Shī'ī community. The shaykh's family history, education, and correspondence all point towards a Shāfi'ī affiliation.⁹² Even a brief perusal of Sa'd al-Dīn's work suggests that he did not limit the saints to twelve. The opening lines of his *Appearance of the Seal of the Saints* (*Risāla fi zuhūr khātim al-awliyā'*), for example, states that three hundred thirteen saints will pledge allegiance to the beloved saint at the end of time.⁹³ In any case, the shaykh's general predilection for expanding, contracting, or otherwise manipulating numbers, letters, and categories within and across works indicates that we should not presume an unwavering commitment to this or any other number.

Ḥamūya offers a host of assertions that counter efforts to identify him as a Twelver Shī'ī. In his *Realities of the Letters* (*Ḥaqā'iq al-ḥurūf*), for example, he cites the first four caliphs and four eponymous founders of the "canonical" Sunnī law schools as fundamental links in cosmic chains of being and manifestations of the four letters of God's name.⁹⁴ Shī'ī Imāms, on the other hand, are nowhere to be found. In the *Levels of Joy*, Ḥamūya mentions what seems to be the sixth Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (d. 765) only to contradict him, citing his *kunya* (Abū 'Abd Allāh) without any honorific formulae whatsoever.⁹⁵

Karbalā'ī (d. 1589) explicitly identifies Ḥamūya as a Twelver Shī'ī. A closer look at Ibn Karbalā'ī's claims reveals no such allegation; only a citation and discussion of a Sa'd al-Dīn's poetry vis-à-vis the coming of the Mahdī. See Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 16–17; and Ḥāfiẓ Ḥusayn Karbalā'ī, *Rawḍāt al-Jinān wa-jannāt al-janān*, 2 vols. (Tabriz: Sutūda, 2005), 11.392.

92 See Appendix 1: Biographical Essay, pp. 234–235. See also Nafisī, "Khandān," 19–20 and Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 18–19. Responding to what in English has been referred to as the "confessional ambiguity" of the period (see Pfeiffer, "Confessional Ambiguity," 129), Nafisī notes that a branch of the Ḥamūya family did seem to have Twelver Shī'ī inclinations. Likewise, while Hirawī rejects the notion that Sa'd al-Dīn was a Shī'ī *per se*, he nevertheless characterizes him as a "Shāfi'ī with an inclination toward Shī'ī thought" (*Shāfi'ī būda wa girāyash ba-fikr-i shī'ī dāshta būda ast*), suggesting a general affinity between Shāfi'īs and Shī'īs on the one hand and Sufis and Shī'īs on the other. See also Elias "Sufi Lords," 70–72, which addresses and rejects Ḥamūya's supposed identity as a Shī'ī.

93 Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Risāla fi zuhūr khātam al-wilāya*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Aya-sofya MS 2058, fol. 206^a. Emphasis mine.

94 Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Ḥaqā'iq al-ḥurūf*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, MS Petrev Paşa 606 (P), fol. 16^a. See also Figure 2.

95 Ḥamūya, *Marātīb*, (P) fol. 88^b. For Ja'far al-Ṣādiq as a revered figure and patriarch of the esoteric sciences, see Matthew S. Melvin-Koushki, "The Quest for a Universal Science: The Occult Philosophy of Ṣā'īn al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī (1369–1432) and Intellectual Millenarianism in Early Timurid Iran" (PhD dissertation, Yale University, 2012), 182, 251, 476 ff.; and İlker Evrim Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran: Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī and the Islamicate Republic of Letters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 122.

If we turn our attention to the *Book of the Beloved*—the text that supposedly proffers Twelver tenets—Ḥamūya offers the following account of the relationship between Sunnīs and Shīʿīs:

وأقرب الناس من اسم السعيد السنِّي المقبل على سنّة وجه الله تعالى والمتّبع لسنة
نبيّه محمّد عليه الصلوة والسلام وأقرب اسم من اسم الشقيّ الشيعيّ المنحرف عن
سنّة رسول الله والمنفي عن مواجهة حريم حرم سنّة وجه الله

The closest of people to the name “the joyous” (*al-saʿīd*) is the Sunnī who devotes himself to the *sunna* of God’s face and who follows the *sunna* of his Prophet Muḥammad. The closest of names to the name “the wretched” (*al-shaqī*) is the Shīʿī who deviates from the *sunna* of God’s messenger and disavows consideration of the sacred sanctuary that is the *sunna* of God’s face.⁹⁶

Ḥamūya’s Sunnī-Shīʿī pair echoes analogous binaries that he draws throughout his work.⁹⁷ In spite of his damning language, the passage in its context suggests that the differences between these poles exists only with respect to manifest being. At the most fundamental level, both Sunnīs and Shīʿīs—and indeed all other binary divisions—are expressions of a single Reality. The perfect saint manipulates these distinctions as he pleases: bouncing between them, blurring them, or transcending them altogether. To a certain degree, Ḥamūya’s textual strategies reflect his universalizing ideals. As we have seen throughout this chapter, he draws from a plurality of social identities and rhetorical techniques, adapting his strategies to move fluidly through diverse circles of actors. Despite the ostensibly ecumenical tenor of Saʿd al-Dīn’s assertions, however, the subtext of the passage is clear enough: at the level of practical reality, it is better to be among the joyous than among the wretched. In this respect, the shaykh heeds his own advice, affirming the Shāfiʿī affiliation of his kin to navigate networks of what were primarily Sunnī teachers, interlocutors, and colleagues. Knowledge as performance, performance as political philosophy.

96 Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fol. 28^b.

97 See, for example, *Ḥamūya, Sharḥ-i basmala-yi sharīf*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Çorulu Ali Paşa MS 4795, fol. 1^b; and Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 66.

8 Conclusion

As a member of an illustrious family who enjoyed a world-class education, cultivated intimate relationships with a trans-regional network of renowned Sufi masters, and maintained close ties with ascendant political authorities, Sa'd al-Dīn had at his disposal a range of diverse and occasionally incommensurable strategies, each shaped by the interplay between theoretical possibilities, material conditions, ideological predilections, individual goals, and a plurality of social contexts. The shaykh could thus cite his relationship with a non-Sufi legal authority to legitimize an infinite esoteric knowledge, uphold interpersonal ideals and genealogical privileges simultaneously, and deploy Mongol political theory to defend the *ahl al-bayt* (and implicitly his own prestigious lineage).

By tracing some of his strategies across these diverse contexts, we are afforded a textured window into Sa'd al-Dīn's intellectual and social worlds, as well as a way to imagine how such an individual might carve out his place(s) within them. Just as his performative writing strategies generated new meanings in relation to diverse readers and generic conventions, his laconic references to his forefather's legacy likely resonated differently for different audiences, as did the relationship between those genealogical claims and the interpersonal master-disciple ideals he promoted more explicitly. Ḥamūya did not seem particularly interested in theorizing these equivocations or stabilizing their ambiguities. Like the letters, these points of irritation yielded a plurality of generative possibilities, both socially and intellectually. All of these diverse strategies reinforce a consistent theme: Sa'd al-Dīn's commitment to the infinite possibilities of his words. More than any abstract system, then, the shaykh's textual-cum-social performances *are* his political philosophy. To quote the well-known feminist dictum, "The personal is political."

If the genealogical bonds that Ḥamūya forged between himself and his forefather obviated the need for legitimating personal narratives, these circumstances may have also contributed to the radical openness and deconstructive potential of his work. Kubrā and Qūnawī's anecdotes authorize the knowledge they produce, but implicitly bind their words to a *specific* history of training and social relationships. Each of their strategies produces a singular authorial persona whose unique mastery of Reality their texts purport to convey. While Sa'd al-Dīn assumes the position of all-powerful shaykh in *The Lamp of Sufism*, this persona is bound primarily to the infinitely generative language of his text. Whether intentional or not, the absence of personal master-disciple narratives from Ḥamūya's theoretical writing may have worked in tandem with his avant-garde strategies to liberate the interpretive possibilities of his words from the

pretension of a single totalizing authorial perspective. As we will see in the next chapter, it is precisely by denying his readers such a stable hermeneutical frame that the shaykh lays out his most forceful claim to ultimate saintly authority.

Real Talk: Language, Revelation, and Human Perfection

BUTT (*miraculising into the Dann Deafir warcry, his bigotes bristling, a, jittinju triggity shittery pet, he shouts his thump and fee fauh foul finngures up the heighohs of their ahs!*) Bluddymuzzlemuzzle! The buckbeshottered! He'll umbozzle no more graves nor horne nor hauder, lou garou, for gayl geselles in dead men's hills! Kaptan (backsights to his bared!), His Cumbulent Embulence, the frustrate fourstar Russkakruscam, Dom Allaf O'Khorwan, connundurum-chuff.

JAMES JOYCE, *Finnegans Wake*¹

•••

First of all, we must internalize the flatulation of the matter by transmitting the effervescence of the Indianization proximity in order to segregate the crux of my venereal infection. Now, if I may retain my liquids here for one moment, I'd like to continue the redundancy of my quote, unquote, "intestinal tract." You see, because to preclude on the issue of world domination would only circumvent—excuse me—*circumcise* the revelation that reflects the Afro-disiatic symptoms which now perpetrates the Jheri curls' activation.

OSWALD BATES, *In Living Color*²

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¹ James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 352.

² *In Living Color*, Season 1, Episode 3, "Lean on Me Beautiful," directed by Paul Miller and Matt Wickline, written by Keenan Ivory Wayans et al., featuring Keenan Ivory Wayans et al., aired April 28, 1990, in broadcast syndication, on FOX.

This final chapter draws together recurring themes from throughout the book to examine how Sa'd al-Din imagines and performs human perfection in writing. While previous chapters have analyzed the epistemological foundations, embodied dimensions, and social context(s) of the shaykh's abstract and esoteric output, I focus here on incomprehensible, deconstructive, and resolutely *weird* speech itself as a mode of knowledge production. Delving deeper into the relational strategies and epistemological sensibilities theorized in the previous chapters, I explore how Ḥamūya's idiosyncratic language may have been meaningful—and even authoritative—for contemporary audiences precisely *because* it subverted expectations and resisted any singular interpretation.

I begin with a brief overview of prophecy and sainthood in Ḥamūya's work, identifying key themes that will set the stage for subsequent analyses. While Sa'd al-Din explores the relationship between prophecy and sainthood through a wide range of metaphysical and temporal frames, he consistently identifies the two as interrelated modes of a single all-encompassing Reality. Despite their fundamental unity, the exigencies of time and space demand that these cosmic principles become manifest as individual prophets and saints, each of whom communicates perfect knowledge of the Real in accordance with the capacities of their respective audiences. According to Sa'd al-Din, prophets articulate inner realities in outer forms, while saints break open outer forms to reveal inner realities. As he emphasizes time and time again, neither prophecy nor sainthood can be considered the superior principle, for each completes the soteriological function of the other.

After sketching Sa'd al-Din's broader claims about prophecy and sainthood, I analyze how he traces their archetypal forms—the Seal of the Prophets and the Seal of the Saints—across space and time. The shaykh reads the two seals against shifting networks of prophets and saints, illuminating diverse dimensions of human perfection through a juxtaposition of outer forms. What matters to him is not the characteristics of individual prophets and saints, but rather the dynamic hidden realities that come into view through new combinations and points of reference. Just like the Divine Essence they embody, the Seal of the Prophets and Seal of the Saints can only be known through the endless webs of relational qualities they make manifest.

From here, I turn to a discussion of the Seal of the Saints from Sa'd al-Din's magnum opus, *The Book of the Beloved*. Focusing in on the poetics and structure of key passages from "The Circle of *Nūn*," I demonstrate how Ḥamūya's modes of expression perform the hagiological claims outlined in earlier sections of the chapter. Through a strategic deployment of disorienting forms and structures, the shaykh denies his audience a totalizing framework within which to ground his vision. Instead, he forces readers to produce meaning for themselves, pro-

voking them to continually negotiate and revise interpretive possibilities across shifting intellectual and experiential frames.

As we will see, Ḥamūya's idiosyncratic strategies implicitly engage with contemporary discussions about the nature of revealed speech and its effects on the human soul. According to medieval theories of Qur'ānic inimitability (*ijāz*), the Qur'ān articulated its message through obscure language that deferred meaning and subverted audience expectations, sending each reader or listener on an active quest for understanding. Through the interplay between text and audience, the Qur'ān opened up nuanced layers of intellectual and affective meaning. Although medieval *ijāz* scholars admitted a certain kinship between poetic speech and revealed language, they maintained that the degree to which the Qur'ān manipulated semantic possibilities remained unparalleled.

Sa'd al-Dīn took up this challenge, appropriating and expanding idiosyncratic forms of Qur'ānic meaning making to force his readers into a state of restless aporia. To express the hidden dimensions behind prophetic realities, he amplifies the techniques of *ijāz* beyond the level of syntax and into the broader architectonics of his text, deferring conceptual resolution for readers indefinitely. By freeing *The Book of the Beloved* from a stable hermeneutical center, Sa'd al-Dīn leaves his language radically open to endless play and possibility. In so doing, he establishes his speech as a manifestation of the Real's self-disclosure—an infinite fount of meaning whose potential is limited only by the capacity of its audience. If Ḥamūya's speech is incomprehensible, then I argue that it is so in ways that would have been *legible* to his readers as revealed speech. The shaykh thus performs saintly authority through the generative possibilities of his language. Like the Qur'ān, the ultimate meaning of Sa'd al-Dīn's words becomes inseparable from what readers are inspired to make of them.

1 Prophecy and Sainthood: An Overview

Sa'd al-Dīn typically articulates his claims about human perfection through a language of prophecy (*nubuwwa*) and sainthood (*wilāya*), imagining the two as both ethical ideals and fundamental metaphysical principles. Ḥamūya consistently binds sainthood to prophecy, characterizing the two principles as interrelated modalities of a single hypostasis that encompasses the totality of the Divine Attributes. The lettrist metaphysical frameworks that Ḥamūya develops in *The Lamp of Sufism* and *The Realities of the Letters* bring prophecy and sainthood together with divinity to form one of several interrelated triads that

emanate from the Primordial Point (i.e., the Divine Essence). As disclosures (*kushūf*) of the Point's presence (*ḥudūr*), these triads become manifest as a single cosmic *alif* (i.e., Divinity) that forms the ontological basis for all created beings.³ Alongside this lettrist metaphysics, *The Lamp of Sufism* and *The Realities of the Letters* map the divine self-disclosure according to an exterior-interior (*zāhir-bāṭin*) binary, framing the relationship between prophecy and sainthood as an expression of these fundamental ontological modes.⁴ Ḥamūya does not attempt to resolve the points of irritation that irrupt between these schemes or the many other cosmogonic narratives, metaphysical hierarchies, and hagiological claims that crop up across his oeuvre. Instead, he weaves prophecy and sainthood into webs of letters and principles, manipulating the productive tension that emerges from their incommensurable juxtapositions.

In the terrestrial world, the constraints of time and matter necessitate that these principles be embodied in two overarching classes of perfect beings—prophets and saints. Though prophets and saints both realize the totality of the Divine Attributes, they are distinguished by *how* they communicate and perform them. According to Ḥamūya, the Primordial Point projects Itself into macro- and microcosmic realms, such that both the universe and human beings encompass the totality of the Divine Attributes. These two realms are interrelated, for humans exist within the cosmos and represent the *telos* of its creation. Put simply, creation disperses the Divine Attributes throughout the cosmos, where they are then gathered together and perfected in the bodies of human beings. In order for individual humans to achieve their cosmic destiny, however, they must fully realize the Divine Attributes by embodying the modes of knowing and being that are established, elucidated, and epitomized by God's prophets and saints. Prophets teach humans to comprehend the Divine Attributes in all of their outer forms while saints guide them through the totality of inner meanings. As Sa'd al-Dīn emphasizes time and time again, the beginning of prophecy is the end of sainthood and the end of prophecy is the beginning of sainthood. Although both inner and outer dimensions exist together in the Primordial Point, human beings need both prophets and saints to show them how to reintegrate the dynamic and relational qualities of the Divine Attributes as they are made manifest in creation.⁵

3 See Figures 1 and 2 on pp. 38–39. See also Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *al-Miṣbāḥ fī al-taṣawwuf*, ed. Najīb Māyil Hirawī (Tehran: Mawlā, 1983), 57–58; and idem, *Ḥaqā'iq al-ḥurūf*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, MS Petrev Paşa 606 (P), fol. 13b.

4 See Figure 6 on p. 52. See also Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 81 and idem, *Ḥaqā'iq*, (P) fol. 14^b.

5 See Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 137–138.

Ḥamūya explains that prophecy and sainthood reach their most perfect expression in two figures—the Seal of the Prophets (*khātam al-anbiyā'*) and the Seal of the Saints (*khātam al-awliyā'*). The Seal of the Prophets refers to the Prophet Muḥammad, whose prophetic mission marks what Ḥamūya calls the beginning of time. Although the Real had disclosed the totality of Its Attributes to Adam in the act of teaching him the Names (Q. 2:31), it was not until the Prophet Muḥammad's mission that these Attributes became perfectly manifest on earth. With Muḥammad, the inner dimensions of the Real reached their fullest expression as outer realities.⁶ When the Seal of the Saints emerges at the end of time, the Divine Attributes will become perfectly manifest once again. At this point, however, the outer dimensions of the Real that were perfected through Muḥammad will reach their fullest expression as inner realities.⁷

As earthly expressions of a single metaphysical principle, the Seal of the Prophets and the Seal of the Saints both embody comprehensive knowledge of the Divine Essence—i.e., the transcendent source from which the totality of Divine Attributes become manifest in being. These perfect microcosmic beings mirror the macrocosmic act of creation as they articulate the Real in speech. Just as the Primordial Point unfolds its Attributes through a series of cosmic letters, words, and pages, the Seal of the Prophets and Seal of the Saints make these Attributes manifest in the letters and sounds of the Qur'ān and Furqān, respectively. It is not through any limitation or hierarchy on the part of the Seals, but rather the exigencies of time, space, and human capacity that shape the differing emphases of their comprehensive messages. Taken together, Muḥammad and the Seal of the Saints lead humanity to perfect knowledge of the Real in inverted, yet complementary ways—the former from inside out and the latter from outside in. Where one ends, the other begins. As Ḥamūya emphasizes, neither seal is superior, for each participates in a single unity whose complete realization marks a full cycle of cosmic time.⁸

2 Prophecy and Sainthood as Relational Principles

While Ḥamūya's accounts of sainthood and prophecy generally conform to this basic sketch, the relationships he traces between specific saints and prophets, metaphysical principles and human manifestations, and apocalyptic temporal

⁶ See Ḥamūya, *Ḥaqā'iq*, (P) fol. 13^b.

⁷ See Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 99–113.

⁸ See Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 112–113.

frames are characteristically slippery. In what follows, I offer a few examples to explore how Ḥamūya illustrates the particulars of these broader themes. Ḥamūya applies many of the same relational strategies from Chapter 1 to his accounts of saints and prophets, illuminating webs of relationships through which the qualities of particular saints and prophets become manifest. By mapping the Seal of the Prophets and the Seal of the Saints across these ever-shifting relationships, Ḥamūya explores how cosmic and terrestrial manifestations of this perfect pair/principle are both embedded within and encompass the full scope of Reality.

In “The Circle of *Wāw*” from *The Book of the Beloved*, Ḥamūya fashions a threefold typology of saints: God’s saint (*walī Allāh*), the saint of God’s right (*walī ḥaqq Allāh*), and the saint for God (*walī li-Llāh*), whom he also calls the saint of God’s spirit, word, and hand (*walī rūḥ Allāh wa-kalimat Allāh wa-yad Allāh*).⁹ After expounding upon the qualities of each saintly type through allusive references to abstract principles, soteriological implications, Divine Attributes, and cosmic time, Ḥamūya binds God’s saint to the prophecy of Muḥammad (*khātām al-anbiyā’ wa-ḥabīb Allāh*), the saint of God’s right to the prophecy of Abraham (*khalīl Allāh*), and the saint for God to the prophecy of Moses (*najī Allāh wa-kalīm Allāh*).¹⁰ Taken together, these three pairs make up God’s eyes, ears, and nostrils, respectively, joining together to form the full expression of God’s face (*jumlat wajh Allāh*). Each prophet-saint pair also constitutes a cycle of two divine days—one from sainthood to prophecy and

9 Sa’d al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Kitāb al-Maḥbūb*, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (SBB), MS Or. fol. 4084, fols. 76^a ff.; Carullah MS 1078 (CE78), fols. 79^a ff.; Nuruosmaniye MS 2577 (NO), fols. 65^a ff.; Ayasofya MS 2058 (AS58), fols. 60^a ff.; and Yeni Camii MS 726 (YC), fols. 170^b ff. Here, Ḥamūya expands al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī’s (d. between 905 and 910) binary hagiological framework. For al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, saints exist according to two broad types: God’s saint and the saint of God’s right. See, for example, al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Drei Schriften Des Theosophen von Tirmid: Das Buch vom Leben der Gottesfreunde. Ein Antwortschreiben nach Saraḥs. Ein Antwortschreiben nach Rayy. Erster Teil: Die arabischen Texte*, ed. Bernd Radtke (Beirut and Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1992); Bernd Radtke and John O’Kane, *The Concept of Sainthood in Early Islamic Mysticism: Two Works by al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1996), 43 ff.; and Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 45–46. For a discussion of Ḥamūya’s theories of sainthood in relation to those of al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, see Elizabeth Ross Alexandrin, “Seals and Sealing of *Walāyah* in Ṣūfī and Shī’ī Texts: The Cases of al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī and Sa’d al-Dīn Ḥamūyah,” in *Philosophy and Intellectual Life in Shī’ah Islam: Symposium 2015*, ed. Sajjad H. Rizvi and Saiyad Nizamuddin Ahmad (Leiden: Brill, 2017): 61–93.

10 Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fols. 77^a–77^b; (CE78) fol. 80^b; (NO) fol. 66^a; (AS58) fol. 61^a; and (YC) fol. 173^a.

the other from prophecy to sainthood—yielding a total of six days. A single seventh day (comprised of the Seal of the Prophets and the Seal of the Saints) completes these three cycles, gathering the three saintly types with the principles of elocution (*al-lisān*), elucidation (*al-bayān*), and visualization (*al-ʿiyān*).¹¹ The threefold typology of saints that Ḥamūya elaborates here helps sharpen the details of the broader framework outlined above. Not only are sainthood and prophecy inextricably linked; they also become manifest through a series of cycles within which each principle ends where the other begins. The pairs/cycles are perfected in the figures/principles of the two seals, who encompass the totality of the other cycles and reveal the full extent of God's Attributes.

Ḥamūya's cycles do not unfold in a straightforward temporal sequence.¹² While he frames Abraham, Moses, and Muḥammad as specific individuals, the shaykh implies that God's saint, the saint of God's right, and the saint for God become manifest in a wide range of figures throughout historical time.¹³ The Prophet Muḥammad is located at multiple overlapping levels of Reality, both as part of a "micro" prophet-saint pair *and* as part of the "macro" sealing principle that binds together the entire system of cycles. As was the case with the lettrist metaphysical principles explored in Chapter 1, Ḥamūya's elaboration of saints and prophets resists systematic organization, reflecting his vision of created existence as infinite webs of interrelated and interpenetrating principles. The cycles of sainthood and prophecy outlined above thus exist primarily as *relationships* of ontological and epistemological perfection that become manifest through multiple temporal, cosmic, and material possibilities.

Ḥamūya continually rearranges webs of prophetic relationships to bring new dimensions of Reality or human perfection to the fore. *The Sea of Gratitude*

11 Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fol. 77^b; (CE78) fol. 80^b; (NO) fol. 661; (AS58) fol. 61^a; (YC) fols. 173^b–174^a.

12 See also Alexandrin, "Seals and Sealing," 86–87.

13 We might draw parallels here to Ibn 'Arabī's theory of saintly inheritances. For Ibn 'Arabī, each saint participates in the spiritual inheritance (i.e., knowledge of the Real) of one or more of the prophets, communicating the Real to human beings through a language and wisdom determined by that specific inheritance. All saints after Muḥammad receive their degree of spiritual inheritance through him, for as the Seal of the Prophets, he gathered together and perfected the knowledge of all other prophets before him. It is only the Seal of the Saints (a title that Ibn 'Arabī claims for himself), however, whose spiritual inheritance encompasses the totality of Muḥammad's comprehensive wisdom. For a sustained discussion of Ibn 'Arabī on prophecy and sainthood, see Michel Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints: Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn 'Arabī*, trans. Liadain Sherrard (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1993). For a brief overview, see William C. Chittick, *Ibn 'Arabī: Heir to the Prophets* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2007), 11–25.

in the River of Disavowal (*Baḥr al-shukr fī nahr al-nukr*), for example, sketches interrelated ternaries of prophets, saints, and unbelievers to model a dynamic convergence and transcendence of divine establishment (*ithbāt*) and erasure (*maḥw*). Initially, Ḥamūya focuses his attention on Adam and the Tree of Eternal Life (here, the Tree of the Command), using the Qur’ānic narrative to frame how Adam embodies divine principles. The shaykh explains:

وثمره شجرة الأمر محلّ نزول الأمر ... وفي أمره المكوّن ﴿إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾
 (القصص ٣٠) أسمع وأرى وأعلم ما لا تعلمون خلقتك بيدي وسويتك ونفخت فيك
 من روحي وجمعت فيك بين ألفات أسمع وأرى وأعلم وبين تاءات نفخت وسويت
 وخلقت وكنت باءات بي وبك وبنا

...

لَمَّا تَابَ عَنْ فِعْلِهِ أُدْرَجَ فِي حَقِيقَتِهِ مِنْ حَقِيقَةِ الشَّجَرَةِ الْقَلْبِ الْحَاضِرِ الْقَابِلِ
 أَعْنِي بِهِ قَلْبَ الْخَاتَمِينَ خَاتَمِ النَّبُوَّةِ وَخَاتَمِ الْوَلَايَةِ

The Tree of the Command’s fruit was the locus for the descent of the command ... In the generative command, there was “Verily, I am God, Lord of Worlds” (Q. 28:30), “I hear, I see, and I know what you do not know,” “I created you with My hand, evened you out, and blew into you from My spirit,” and “I gathered within you the [first person imperfect] *alifs* of ‘I hear, I see, and I know’ (*asma’ wa-arā wa-a’lam*) and the [first person perfect] *tā’s* of ‘I blew, I evened out, and I created,’ (*nafakhtu wa-sawītu wa-khalaqtu*) such that you were the *bā’s* of ‘through Me, through you, and through Us’ (*bī wa-bika wa-binā*).”¹⁴

...

When [Adam] repented of his act, the present and receptive heart—i.e., the heart of the two seals, the Seal of Prophecy and the Seal of Sainthood—was inserted into his reality from the reality of the tree.¹⁵

14 The phrase, “I blew into you from My spirit” (*wa-nafakhtu fika min rūḥī*) alludes to Q. 15:29: “I blew into him from My spirit.”

15 Sa’d al-Dīn Ḥamūya, “Baḥr al-shukr fī nahr al-nukr,” in *Rasā’il Ibn ‘Arabī: Sharḥ Mubtada’ al-ṭūfān wa-rasā’il ukhrā*, by Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ‘Arabī, ed. Qāsim Muḥammad ‘Abbās and Ḥusayn Muḥammad ‘Ajil (Abu Dhabi: Manshūrāt al-Majma’ al-Thaqāfi: Cultural Foundation [sic] Publications, 1998), 206 and 208. The published version of *The Sea of Gratitude* is erroneously attributed to Ibn ‘Arabī. In his review of *Rasā’il Ibn ‘Arabī*, Gerald Elmore argues that on the basis of language, style, and content, the texts contained in the volume “clearly cannot” (emphasis his) be attributed to Ibn ‘Arabī, going so far as to say,

Through the act of eating from the Tree of the Command, Adam's body becomes infused with fundamental divine principles, including dimensions of God's Self-referential "I-ness" (*anānīyya*) and the words "Verily, I am God, Lord of Worlds" (Q. 28:30), which Ḥamūya deploys throughout his oeuvre to represent the initial act of self-disclosure.¹⁶ By receiving the totality of the Real's generative command, therefore, Adam becomes the perfect microcosm and archetypal human being: the unifying principle that encompasses the Seal of Prophecy and the Seal of the Saints.

When Ḥamūya reads Adam in relation to Noah and Moses, however, he assigns the first prophet a different role. In sketching this new prophetic ternary, the shaykh offers an expanded narrative in which each prophet eats fruit from his own designated tree. Adam, Ḥamūya explains, eats from the Tree of Eternal Life (*shajarat al-khuld*) in heaven (*al-janna*), Noah eats from a "good tree" (*shajara tayyiba*) on earth (*al-dunya*), and Moses eats from the Tree of Dyeing (*shajarat al-ṣabgh*) that grows between heavenly and earthly realms (*bayna al-dunyā wa-l-ākhirā*).¹⁷ As Ḥamūya elaborates how each prophet embodies the qualities associated with his respective tree, it becomes clear that Moses, and not Adam, has become the unifying principle of this new prophetic ternary. He writes:

"In short, no one familiar with the Great Shaykh's work would think of attributing these epistles to him ... It is unthinkable that Ibn al-'Arabī could have anything to do with a text in the condition of the present publication." Gerald T. Elmore, Review of *Rasā'il Ibn 'Arabī: Sharḥ Muḥtada' al-ṭūfān wa-rasā'il ukhrā*, *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabī Society* 35 (2004), 109 and 112. Elmore can barely contain his disdain for the treatises contained in the volume, using such language as "a bizarre moral-psychological dissertation," "the usual *ḥurūfi* rigamarole," "rhyming jingles and vapid qabbalistic tropes," and "extremely diffuse and desultory, lacking any sense of the organic composition one always finds in Ibn al-'Arabī's work." He does, however, mention a private correspondence with Paul Ballanfat, who believes that Ḥamūya is the author of these texts. Elmore, Review of *Rasā'il*, 110–111, 13n4. On the basis of style, content, and internal references, I believe Ballanfat is correct in his attribution. The text's date and place of composition—1237/1238, Damascus—likewise align with Ḥamūya's residence in Qāsiyūn. See Ḥamūya, "Baḥr," 215. Elizabeth Alexandrin likewise reads the text as one of Ḥamūya's compositions, and is using it as the foundation for an article currently in preparation. See Alexandrin, "Seals and Sealing," 71; and eadem, "Reading and Reciting the Qur'ān: Calligraphic Spaces in Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūyeh's (d. 649/1252) *Kitāb al-Maḥbūb*," in *Visualizing Sufism*, ed. Giovanni Maria Martini, *Islamic Intellectual History* (Leiden: Brill, 2023), 186n85.

16 For Ḥamūya's use of Q. 28:30—often as a discussion of the three *alīfs* and two *nūns* of *innī anā*—see, for example, Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 81 and idem, *Sharḥ-i basmala-yi sharīf*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Çorlulu Ali Paşa MS 445, fol. 2^a.

17 Ḥamūya, "Baḥr," 210–211.

فالصلب محلّ المحو والجوف محلّ الإثبات والقلب محلّ الماحي والمُثبِت لهذا المعنى محّا الله تعالى بالطوفان أولاد آدم عليه الصلاة والسلام وأثبت أولاد نوح عليه الصلاة والسلام وظهر هو تعالى وتقدّس في قلب موسى عليه الصلاة والسلام حين قال ﴿إني أنا الله ربّ العالمين﴾ (القصص ٣٠)

According to this point of view, [Adam's] loins are the locus of erasure, [Noah's] insides are the locus of establishment, and [Moses'] heart is the locus of the Eraser and the Establisher. By means of the flood, Almighty God erased Adam's offspring, prayers and peace be upon him, and established Noah's offspring, prayers and peace be upon him. Almighty and sanctified He became manifest in Moses' heart, prayers and peace be upon him, when He said, "Verily, I am God, Lord of Worlds." (Q. 28:30)¹⁸

Reading Adam against Noah and Moses, Ḥamūya illuminates a new series of relational qualities that were not discernible in his discussion of Adam alone. Through the relationship between Adam and Noah, establishment and erasure come to the fore as diametrically opposed Divine Attributes manifest in the material plane. While the waters of the flood erased Adam's offspring from the face of the earth, they raised up Noah and his offspring as the sole remaining survivors. Neither above nor below the flood, Moses splits the sea and crosses over, thus transcending the binaries of life and death, establishment and erasure.¹⁹ By juxtaposing Adam, Noah, and Moses vis-à-vis the flood, Ḥamūya illuminates the degrees of Moses' all-encompassing perfection as a figure who transcends/unifies the particularities of other prophetic exemplars. In the context of this specific ternary and narrative frame, therefore, it is now Moses who receives the full extent of the divine self-disclosure epitomized in the words "Verily, I am God, Lord of Worlds" (Q. 28:30).²⁰

18 Ḥamūya, "Baḥr," 211.

19 See Ḥamūya, "Baḥr," 211 and Q. 26:63.

20 By linking Moses to the "Tree of Dyeing," furthermore, Ḥamūya alludes to other contexts in which he characterizes the all-encompassing beloved as "dyed with God's dye" (*munṣabigh bi-ṣibghathi*), thus underscoring the association of Moses with the transcendence of oppositional qualities, at least in this context. See Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fol. 4^a; (CE78) fol. 4^b; (NO) fol. 3^a; (AS58) fol. 3b; and (YC) fol. 7^a. See also Ibn 'Arabī's *Meccan Revelations*, in which he describes the Perfect Human as dyed (*yanṣabighu*) by the each of the world's forms. Muḥyi al-Din Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya* (SD), ed. Aḥmad Shams al-Dīn, 9 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1999), V.263.25–28; and my analysis on pp. 29 ff. of Chapter 1. All of these discussions resonate with Q. 2:138, which states: "[Our life] takes its dye (*ṣibghā*) from God, and who gives better color than God? It is Him we worship." I thank Oludamini Ogunnaike for this Qur'ānic reference.

Ḥamūya uses his discussion of Moses to pivot towards a final ternary, considering the prophet in relation to Yas‘ā, the Seal of the Saints, and Pharaoh, the archetypal prophetic enemy. By juxtaposing the ways in which Moses and Yas‘ā relate to Pharaoh, he explores the differing exterior (*ẓāhir*) and interior (*bāṭin*) emphases of prophets and saints with respect to their soteriological roles. Ḥamūya writes:

فعبّر موسى وهلك فرعون على أثره وكان موسى عليه الصلاة والسلام ذاهباً إلى فرعون
بأمر الله حال حياته ... فلما عبر موسى على حياة فرعون وجردّه عن إحدى صفتيه
وهي الحياة صار حياً بحياة الحيّ النازل إلى ساحل الإثبات وهبط موسى عليه
الصلاة والسلام بين الموت والحياة

وكما أنّ موسى عليه الصلاة والسلام [كان] ذاهباً إلى فرعون حال حياته حتّى
جردّه عن الحياة فكذلك خاتم الأولياء أيضاً ذاهب إلى فرعون بعد موته ... إلى أن
يقول له الحقّ جلّ جلاله أن اضرب بقلمك العصا فإذا ضرب انغلق العصا ويعبر
هو على العصا ويحيي فرعون على أثره حتّى صار مجرداً عن صفة الأخرى وهي
الموت وصار خاتم الأولياء حياً بكلّيته الحيّ النازل إلى ساحل المحو
عند ذلك يتمّ الأمر فيموت الخاتم عند ذلك عن كلّيّة كلّ شيء بكلّيّة كليّة
كلّ شيء وعند ذلك يخرج فرعون من بين حكمة المحو والإثبات والموت والحياة
بموسى ويسعى

Moses crossed over [the sea] and Pharaoh perished immediately afterward. In accordance with God's command, Moses, prayer and peace be upon him, went out to Pharaoh during [Pharaoh's] lifetime ... When Moses crossed over Pharaoh's life and stripped him of the first of his attributes (i.e., life), [Moses] came to life (*ṣāra ḥayyan*) through the life of the Living Who descends to the shore of establishment. Moses, prayer and peace be upon him, thus descended between death and life.

Just as Moses, prayer and peace be upon him, went out to Pharaoh during [Pharaoh's] lifetime to strip him of [his] life, so too the Seal of the Saints will go out to Pharaoh after [Pharaoh's] death ... until the Real—mighty is He—says to him, “Strike the staff with your pen!” When he strikes it, the staff will be locked up. [The Seal of the Saints] will cross over [the staff] and bring Pharaoh to life immediately afterward in order that [Pharaoh] becomes stripped of the second of his attributes (i.e.,

death). Thus, the Seal of the Saints will come to life completely (*ṣāra khātām al-awlīyā'i ḥayyan bi-kullīyatihī*) through the life of the Living Who descends to the shore of erasure.

At that point, the matter will come to completion and the Seal will die with respect to the totality of each thing through the totality of each thing's totality. Likewise, through Moses and Yas'ā, Pharaoh will emerge from between the wisdom of erasure and establishment, life and death.²¹

By bringing Moses in relation to Pharaoh and Yas'ā, Ḥamūya illuminates the fundamentally interrelated emphases of prophecy and sainthood. It is important to note that Ḥamūya typically frames the Divine Name/Attribute of the Living (*al-ḥayy*) as the comprehensive principle that encompasses life and death, rather than a single node in a living-dead binary.²² As complementary manifestations of the Living, therefore, Moses and Yas'ā act through inverted yet reciprocal processes, driving Pharaoh towards the Reality that transcends the particularities of life and death. Whereas Moses strips Pharaoh of the (particular) attribute of life and thus causes him to perish, Yas'ā strips Pharaoh of the (particular) attribute of death, thus bringing him to life. The gestalt effect of prophecy and sainthood takes Pharaoh through life and death in all of its dimensions, allowing him to transcend their opposition.²³ The relationship between Moses, Pharaoh, and Yas'ā in *The Sea of Gratitude in the River of Disavowal* thus gives texture to Ḥamūya's apologetic claim that sainthood should not be considered superior to prophecy. Although we may be tempted to read the Seal of the Saint as the primary agent catalyzing Pharaoh's transition to a state beyond opposing attributes, such an interpretation would fundamentally obscure the holistic and multidimensional processes through which this goal has been achieved.

Taken together, these brief examples from *The Book of the Beloved* and *The Sea of Gratitude in the River of Disavowal* represent a relational approach to prophecy and sainthood that dovetails with the strategies outlined in Chapter 1. Ḥamūya continually rearranges groups of prophets, saints, and even invet-

21 Ḥamūya, "Baḥr," 218–219.

22 See, for example, Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Risāla fi zuhūr khātām al-wilāya*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Ayasofya MS 2058, fols. 206^{a-b} (Moses does *not* bear the name the Living in this example) and idem, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fols. 242^a, 244^a.

23 For another 13th-century take on Pharaoh participating in knowledge of the Real, see "The Wisdom of Eminence in the Word of Moses" from Ibn 'Arabī's *The Bezels of Wisdom*—Muḥyi al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, ed. Abū al-'Alā 'Afifī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, n.d.), 198–212; and idem, *Ibn al-'Arabi: The Bezels of Wisdom*, trans. R.W.J. Austin (Mahwah: Paulist, 1980), 249–266.

erate sinners to illuminate webs of relational qualities and the paradigmatic models/processes through which these qualities are identified, embodied, and transcended. Particular figures are not important here—at least not in and of themselves. What matters for Ḥamūya is how different relationships that emerge between these figures illuminate the Real as reflected in the Seal of the Prophets and the Seal of the Saints. Using Ḥamūya’s language, we could say that these relationships are the inner realities that undergird their outer forms. To truly comprehend and articulate the full scope of prophecy and sainthood, therefore, demands a facility with the relational webs that stretch across metaphysical and temporal realms. To put it another way, one must master the epistemological sensibilities outlined throughout this book, molding oneself into a creative nexus through which the inner realities of saints and prophets become visible. As we will see below, Ḥamūya’s performance of such sensibilities in text is not only a dazzling display of abstract creativity; it is an implicit, yet forceful claim to his own perfection and saintly authority.

3 Endless Deferrals in *The Book of the Beloved*

Although prophets and saints communicate through the medium of human language, the Real inspires them with divine modes of expression that distinguish their words from ordinary text and speech. In *The Sea of Gratitude in the River of Disavowal*, Ḥamūya highlights the *sui generis* and ostensibly unintelligible character of the expressions uttered by prophets and saints he names *ṣiddīqs*.²⁴ After these perfect servants cultivate receptive hearts through total repentance and submission, God opens their breasts as He did for Muḥammad (Q. 94:1) and bestows upon them knowledge of His Essence in the form of the archetypal Divine Book.²⁵ This act of self-disclosure augments (*yazīd*) the speech of the *ṣiddīqs*, refining their language (*yariqqu kalāmuhu*) to the point that it becomes unintelligible (*lā yufham*) to the unworthy. In so doing, God protects His perfect servants from the gaze of strangers (*aghayār*) in order that they may share in His innermost secrets undisturbed.²⁶

As we have seen in Sections 5.1 and 5.2, however, prophets and saints do not merely trade secrets with God; they also communicate their knowledge to other

24 Ḥamūya uses the term *ṣiddīq* in *The Sea of Gratitude in the River of Disavowal* to refer to prophets and saints whom God has granted unshakable knowledge and faith. He writes, “The *ṣiddīq* is one who believes in God through an essential faith and the one who believes through an essential faith is a *ṣiddīq*.” Ḥamūya, “Baḥr,” 224–225.

25 Ḥamūya, “Baḥr,” 221–223.

26 Ḥamūya, “Baḥr,” 225.

human beings so that they too may achieve perfection. In *The Lamp of Sufism*, Ḥamūya underscores the dual function of prophetic and saintly speech—i.e., to articulate meaning in a language appropriate to each audience while simultaneously protecting ultimate secrets from the unworthy.²⁷ For saints, the question of language and communication is particularly important, for Ḥamūya ties their soteriological role directly to the expression of inner realities in writing. While prophets augment their outwardly oriented messages with such armaments as the staff (Moses) and the sword (Muḥammad), such texts as *The Sea of Gratitude in the River of Disavowal* and *The Appearance of the Seal of the Sainthood* (*Risāla fī zuhūr khātām al-awliyā'*) emphasize that it is through the pen that the beloved saint will drive human beings towards the inner dimensions of the Real.²⁸

Sa'd al-Dīn's theoretical claims about sainthood work in tandem with how he produces knowledge of inner realities in writing. The approaches outlined in the previous chapters illuminate hidden dimensions of the Real through an idiosyncratic form of writing that deconstructs conceptual stability. Although the shaykh posits the Real—and, by extension, the beloved—as the ultimate epistemological and ontological foundation, his texts make this foundation manifest through strategies of infinite deferral and dynamic play. Borrowing from Claude Lévi-Strauss, we might say that with respect to Ḥamūya's writing, "Themes can be split up *ad infinitum*. Just when you think you have disentangled and separated them, you realize they are knitting together again in response to the operation of unexpected affinities."²⁹ Or, in Derrida's reading of Lévi-Strauss, "The field is in effect that of *play* ... there is something missing from it: a center which arrests and grounds the play of substitutions."³⁰ Here, however, we must be careful in our comparisons, lest we unwittingly render Ḥamūya a (post-)structuralist *avant la lettre*. It is not that Ḥamūya *completely* does away with any notion of a hermeneutical center, but rather that he projects his endless deferral of meaning beyond his own writing and into the Sufi bodies of his readers. That is to say, he suggests that the semantic and experiential possibilities of his words must overflow past the flat surface of the page, both in a literal and conceptual sense. For Sa'd al-Dīn, it is only readers' living bodies that can totally encompass his discourse *as limitless play*;

27 See Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāh*, 113.

28 See Ḥamūya, "Baḥr," 218–219 (quoted above) and idem, *Zuhūr*, fol. 207^a, which explains, "The Prophet fought and killed unbelievers with his sword in the external reality; the Sealing Saint will fight and destroy them in the inner reality with his pen."

29 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*, trans. John Weightman and Doreen Weightman (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 5.

30 Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 2001), 365.

يهدى الله لنوره من يشاء فكيف ينفعه أو يضره أو يذلّه أو يعزه أو يحزنه أو يسره غيره
 أو عينه بل النافع والضارّ أنا في أنا
 الرء رجل والميم مرأة والزاء زوجيّة بينهما والجمع رمز ثمّ انظر من ميم المرأة إلى
 المرأة ومن راي الرجل إلى الرائي والمرئي وإلى [كذا] زاء الزوجيّة إلى الزيادة ﴿للذين
 أحسنوا الحسنى وزيادة﴾ (يونس ٢٦)
 المحبوب أحسن الحسنى فله الزيادة وله السيادة ومنه البداء والإعادة وفيه
 الشقاوة والسعادة فأنّى يؤثر فيه المؤثر أو يتصرف فيه المعبرّ أو يتفكرّ فيه المفسّر
 له الكشف والفتح والنشر له العلم والبيان والنصر له العدل واللفظ والقسر

God guides whomever He wills to His illumination, so how could anyone else (or even he himself) help, harm, humble, honor, sadden, or gladden him? It can only be the One Who Helps and Harms—I in I.

Rā' is man (*rajul*), *mīm* is woman (*mar'a*), and *zā'* is marriage (*zawjiyya*) between them. Together, they make an allusion (*ramz*). Direct your attention from the *mīm* of woman to the mirror (*al-mir'ā*), from the *rā'* (*rāy*) of man to the seer and the seen (*al-rā'ī wa-l-mar'ī*), and from the *zā'* of marriage to even more (*ziyāda*)—i.e., “Those who do well will have what is most beautiful and even more (*li-lladhīna aḥsanū al-ḥusnā wa-ziyāda*).” (Q. 10:26)³³

The beloved is the best of what is most beautiful (*al-maḥbūb aḥsan al-ḥusnā*) and thus has even more—and mastery! From him stems procession and return and in him are wretchedness and happiness. How could what affects affect him? What interprets inflect him? What decodes detect him? He is the one with unveiling, revealing, and unfolding; with knowledge, elucidation, and victory; with candor, kindness, and compulsion.³⁴

Echoing Neoplatonic causal frameworks, Ḥamūya suggests that the beloved saint encompasses all qualities, yet transcends their particularities as the embodiment of their Cause.³⁵ The beloved exceeds even the particularity of his

33 The translation of this Qur'anic passage is mine.

34 Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fol. 12^b; (CE78) fol. 13^a; (NO) fol. 11^b; (AS58) fol. 11^a; and (YC), fols. 28^b–29^a.

35 For a discussion of Neoplatonic causality and its implications in the Arabic adaptation of Plotinus' (d. 270) *Enneads*, see Peter Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus* (London: Duckworth, 2002), 111–170.

own self, inhabiting the world as a manifestation of the Real—i.e., the transcendent “I” Who undergirds all created subjects, or “the I in I.” To introduce the gestalt character of the beloved, Ḥamūya offers his readers a set of interconnected images bound together through a letrist analysis of the word “allusion” (*ramz*). Here, he weaves together (a) a concrete analogy in which marriage between a man and a woman exceeds the two as individuals; (b) a Sufi metaphor in which the moment of union/annihilation transcends (i.e., is “even more” than) the distinction between mirror, seer, and seen; and (c) a linguistic example in which *rāʾ*, *mīm*, and *zāʾ* come together to produce a word (*ramz*) whose meaning (allusion) transcends its individual letters. The shaykh’s meta-discourse on allusion thus bears the form of that which it speaks. On the one hand, one can read each image as an allusion to the others *and* as an allusion to the beloved. On the other hand, the very process of working through how these layers are held together by a single word whose possibilities exceed them is *itself* an allusion to the relationship between the beloved and created attributes.

Ḥamūya epitomizes these interlocking images with the word *ziyāda* (translated loosely as “even more”), deploying the term as an allusion to a Qurʾānic verse that he uses to link the aforementioned letrist analysis to an explicit discussion of the beloved. Saʿd a-Dīn reads the term *al-ḥusnā* (most beautiful) in Q. 10:26 as a reference to the so-called Most Beautiful Names of God that medieval Sufis typically associated with the Divine Attributes. As relationships of difference that express the infinite potential of the Divine Essence, these Names/Attributes serve as the ontological foundation for principles and entities in the created world. By identifying the beloved saint as a figure who encompasses and exceeds the Most Beautiful Names, therefore, Ḥamūya frames him as the perfect manifestation of the Divine Essence—i.e., the Cause of causes that is ontologically prior to all particular agents, qualities, and effects.

While our preceding analysis illuminates the dense allusions through which Ḥamūya characterizes the beloved, it does not quite capture the effect of the passage in context. We have artificially isolated a single unit from a broader structure, exploring this unit as its own conceptual world. Our discussion, for example, has presented Ḥamūya’s letrist analysis of *ramz* (allusion) as if it has *already* been contextualized by the discussion of the beloved’s qualities that follows. As it appears in context, however, the shaykh’s letrist analysis marks an abrupt and disorienting thematic shift. We only catch a glimpse of how the passage fits into Ḥamūya’s broader discussion with the Qurʾānic citation that comes at the end. Likewise, we only understand how the Qurʾānic citation contextualizes the preceding letrist discourse through the exegesis that follows. Even in this brief passage, therefore, we are able to discern a broader

structural pattern in which Ḥamūya continually defers meaning, placing the context and conceptual key for each discussion only *after* the discussion has occurred.

When we situate this isolated unit within its broader context, the neat boundaries of our analysis break down even further. As noted above, Ḥamūya's lettrist manipulation of the word *ramz* and his discussion of the beloved's gestalt character follows a disorienting sequence of sounds and syllables introduced with minimal pretense or context—"I am in illumination, I; in I is illumination, I; in I is *i*; I am in manifestation, I; in I is manifestation, *i*; *i* is in *i*," etc. Although these words bleed into what follows through two brief reprises ("God guides whomever He will towards His illumination"; "I in I"), we are left without a clear tonal center; denied an interpretive framework that could comprehend the passages as a whole. As we dive deeper into his text for clues, Sa'd al-Dīn only accelerates this destabilizing deferral of meaning.

Reading Ḥamūya's work as Sufi free jazz, we draw fruitful comparisons to the title track from Eric Dolphy's (d. 1964) *Out to Lunch!*, which simultaneously deploys and disrupts bebop conventions, turning them inside out to destabilize listeners' sensibilities.³⁶ Like Ḥamūya, Dolphy's band ebbs and flows between the promise of resolution and its continued subversion. As Dan DiPiero explains, "There are rhythms in this abstract space, motifs that surface before disappearing, and just when the band sounds as if they have definitively crossed over into a space of absolute oblivion ... the walking bass returns to establish order, only briefly."³⁷ Such a performative deconstruction of conventions brings even the most ubiquitous forms into question: "... There are moments when it is difficult to know if each or any musician is at any time soloing or comping—the distinction [*itself*] feels under scrutiny here; linked as both practices are by improvisation, they feel pushed toward their logical conclusions, dissolving into one another."³⁸ As listeners strive to make sense (melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, affective) of these deconstructed forms, they must simultaneously expand their own fundamental assumptions about what jazz can be and how they might engage with it.

Like Dolphy, Ḥamūya's implicit promise of a clear limit, conceptual center, or stable ground pulls readers deeper into his text, grasping for new clues through which to tie together all of the moving pieces. With each new passage, however, the possible valences and relationships between these pieces proliferate,

36 Dan DiPiero, *Contingent Encounters: Improvisation in Music and Everyday Life* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2022), 37–53, esp. 50–51.

37 Dan DiPiero, *Contingent Encounters*, 43.

38 Dan DiPiero, *Contingent Encounters*, 42–43.

each one opening an ever-expanding network of interpretations and allusions. Apart from the dense layers of meaning we have uncovered here, Ḥamūya's manipulation of both *ramz* (allusion) and *anā* (I) implicitly ties the passages above to the myriad and often contradictory discussions of *rā*, *mīm*, *zā*, *alif*, and *nūn* scattered across *The Book of the Beloved* and beyond. If readers reach the end of either passage with something akin to the analyses we have sketched above, they must still struggle to harmonize the discussion as a whole, not to mention its ephemeral overtone series. Even if they manage to make the passages cohere, subsequent discussions will inevitably destabilize these readings to open new interpretive possibilities. Taken in context, the meaning of each passage, word, or even letter is always *in process*—subject to revision or expansion in light of what precedes and follows.

As he pulls readers deeper into his text, Ḥamūya transfigures even the most straightforward narratives into fields of limitless play, building a sense of endless tension while continually deferring the promise of release. While the shaykh introduces allusions to the bee from *Sūrat al-Nahl* (Q. 16) to illuminate how the sinless beloved can perform ostensibly immoral acts, he uses lettrist techniques to turn the example in on itself, reconfiguring his previous arguments to reveal new dimensions of Reality. Following a fairly abstract discussion of the beloved's freedom from sin, Sa'd al-Dīn writes:

فإن باشر أمرًا من الأمور فإنما يباشره بإذن وهو على مركب الظهور ومتن النور وإن
 أتى بما يخالف في الصدور أو بما يخالف ظواهر الكتاب المسطور يكون ذلك منه
 بأمر الأمر وهو به مأمور
 اعتبر أيها المعتر حال المحبوب في سبيله التي له في فعله وقيله ونيله ودليله
 وخذ منه مثلاً وقسطاً ومثالاً بالنظر إلى النحلة التاركة لشهوتها المسالكة سبيل ربها
 لربها لا لنفسها كيف تأكل من جميع الثمرات من محبوبها ومكروها
 واذكر فيما أشار إليه نبينا صلى الله عليه وسلم في حديث بلال وهو ما روي أبو
 هريرة رضى الله عنه عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم مرّ ببلال وهو يقرأ من هذه
 السورة وهذه السورة فقال أخطط الطيب بالطيب فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم
 إقرأ السورة على نحوها ثم قال مثل بلال كمثل نحلة غدت تأكل من الحلو والمر
 ثم تمسي حلوا كله

...

فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْهَا ثُمَّ ذَكَرَ ذَلِكَ فِي تَنْزِيلِهِ ﴿وَأَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ أَنْ اتَّخِذِي مِنَ
الْجِبَالِ بَيْوتًا وَمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُونَ ثُمَّ كُلِي مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ فَاسْلُكِي سَبِيلَ رَبِّكَ
ذَلَّلًا يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بَطُونِهَا شَرَابٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِلنَّاسِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِقَوْمٍ
يَتَفَكَّرُونَ﴾ (النحل ٦٨-٦٩)

...

ثُمَّ أَمَرَهَا أَنْ تَأْكُلَ مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ حَلُوهَا وَحَامِضُهَا وَرَطْبُهَا وَيَابِسُهَا وَحَارُّهَا
وَبَارِدُهَا وَمَحْبُوبُهَا وَمَكْرُوهُهَا فَإِنَّ لِكُلِّ ثَمَرَةٍ نَفْعًا فَإِذَا أَكَلَتْ مِنَ الْكُلِّ فَقَدْ جَمَعَتْ
مِنَ النَّفْعِ كُلَّهُ فِي أَكْلِهَا وَإِذَا أَكَلَتْ عَلَىٰ هَذِهِ الصِّفَةِ تَارِكَةً شَهْوَتِهَا قَدْ اسْتَوَتْ
عِنْدَهَا مَحْبُوبُ الثَّمَارِ وَمَكْرُوهُهَا

If [the beloved] engages with anything at all, he only does so with [divine] permission, for he rides the mount of manifestation and sits on the back of light. If he brings forth what troubles hearts or contradicts the Written Book's literal meaning (*ẓawāhir al-kitāb al-maṣṭūr*), he does so only through the command of the Commander—for he is at His command!

Consider—O you who consider—the state of the beloved in the path he has taken with respect to his actions, speech, attainment, and sign. To grasp something of his example, his lot, and his manner, direct your attention towards the bee, which leaves aside its own desires and traverses the path of its Lord for the sake of its Lord, rather than for its own sake. [Consider] how it eats from all fruits; both what it loves and what it loathes.

Recall that to which the Prophet, peace be upon him, alluded in the *ḥadīth* about Bilāl reported by Abū Hurayra (d. 678), may God be pleased with him. The Prophet passed by Bilāl while he was reciting bits and pieces from a few *sūras* (*min ḥādhihi al-sūra wa-ḥādhihi al-sūra*). Bilāl remarked, “I’m mixing together what’s good with what’s good!” The Messenger of God, peace be upon him, responded, “Recite [each] *sūra* in its proper order (*‘alā naḥwihā*),” continuing, “Bilāl [should take] the bee as his model—it spends the morning eating what’s sweet *and* bitter, then spends the evening in total sweetness.”³⁹

...

39 Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fol. 13^a; (CE78) fols. 14^a–14^b; (NO) fol. 12a; (AS58) fol. 11^b; and (YC) fols. 30^b–31^a.

[The bee] was inspired and mention of this [is recorded] in His revelation—“And your Lord inspired the bee, saying, ‘Build yourselves houses in the mountains and trees and what people construct. Then feed on all kinds of fruit and follow the paths made easy for you by your Lord.’ From their bellies come a drink of different colors in which there is healing for people. There truly is a sign in this for people who think.” (Q. 16:68–69)⁴⁰

...

Then, He commanded [the bee] to eat what is sweet, sour, moist, dry, hot, cold, desirable, and loathsome from all kinds of fruit, for each fruit has something beneficial. When it ate from all of them, it gathered together everything beneficial through its act of eating. And, when it ate in this manner—i.e., leaving its own desires behind—the desirable and loathsome aspects of fruits balanced each other out within it. Because [the bee] humbled itself before almighty God’s command, all of this was for God’s sake and not for its own sake.⁴¹

Ḥamūya explicitly identifies the bee as a model through which attentive readers may understand the beloved’s actions (and implicitly, his own preceding discussion). Just as the bee distills the benefits of sweet and bitter fruits into an elixir that heals human bodies, the beloved saint draws together the inner dimensions of incommensurable outer realities to transform human souls. Unlike the cryptic and highly allusive passages cited above, the shaykh carefully explains his analogy here, exploring key themes with concrete evidence from the Qur’ān and *ḥadīth* to drive home his point. For Sa’d al-Dīn, the benefits that God ordains for His creation stem not necessarily from the inherent value of particular acts and attributes, but rather from a divine “grammar” that governs specific relationships between them. The Qur’ān thus brings together verses that humans find sweet with those they find bitter (or even unseemly) to guide them to true knowledge of the Real.⁴² Because human beings are held captive by their own predilections and desires, they are unable to discern this grammar on their own. Bilāl, for example, strings his favorite pericopes together

40 Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fols. 13^{a-b}; (CE78) fol. 14^b; (NO) fol. 12^b; and (AS58) fol. 11^b; (YC) fol. 31^a.

41 Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fol. 13^b; (CE78) fol. 14^b; (NO) fol. 12^b; (AS58) fol. 11^b; and (YC) fols. 31^b–32^a.

42 Ḥamūya makes a similar point in his letter to ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Aṭā-Malik Juwaynī (d. 1283). See Sa’d al-Dīn Ḥamūya, “Makātīb-i Sa’d al-Dīn Ḥammū’ī,” in *Jashn-Nāma-yi Ustād Sayyid Aḥmad Ḥusaynī Ashkūrī*, ed. Aḥmad Khāma-Yār and Rasūl Ja’faryān (Tehran: Nashr-i ‘Ilm, 2013), 468; and my discussion on pp. 175 ff. of Chapter 4.

into what he imagines to be a Qur'ānic "greatest hits" compilation. In so doing, he disrupts the benefits of the text's juxtapositions and prompts the Prophet to correct his recitation. As opposed to ordinary human beings, however, the beloved has annihilated his own will completely and acts as a perfect embodiment of the Real. He is no longer *subject* to the Qur'ān, but rather becomes a dynamic manifestation of its Divine Source: a living expression of the hidden realities and relationships that it encodes. If the Saint's words or actions appear to contradict the Qur'ān, it is only because his audience is unfamiliar with the divine grammar through which the inner dimensions of the Real become inflected in outer realities.

At the same time, the passage opens itself up to divergent readings. Careful readers will note that my translation of Abū Hurayra's *ḥadīth* inverts both its apparent meaning and typical interpretation. Because Ḥamūya's citation draws an explicit contrast between Bilāl's desire to mix "what's good with what's good" (*al-ṭayyib bi-l-ṭayyib*) and the bee's obedient consumption of what is sweet and bitter (*al-ḥulw wa-l-murr*), I have chosen to translate the section above as a rebuke of Bilāl's recitation. For readers like al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), however, the Prophet responds to Bilāl's explanation with approval—"You've done well!" (*aḥsanta*)—and implicitly defends him against those who might condemn his approach.⁴³ With al-Ghazālī in mind, we could read Ḥamūya's citation of the *ḥadīth* as follows:

The Prophet passed by Bilāl while he was reciting bits and pieces from a few *sūras* (*min ḥādhihi al-sūra wa-ḥādhihi al-sūra*). Bilāl remarked, "I'm mixing together what's good with what's good!" The Messenger of God, peace be upon him, responded, "Recite [each] *sūra* in *this* manner (*'alā naḥwihā*)," continuing, "Bilāl is like the bee, which spends the morning eating what's sweet and bitter, then spends the evening in total sweetness."⁴⁴

Such an interpretation would endow Bilāl with a saintly sensibility, such that he savors *all* of the diverse Qur'ānic pericopes he recites, whether they be apparently sweet or bitter. If Bilāl's readings appear to contradict the appar-

43 al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-Dīn*, 10 vols. (Jedda: Dār al-Minhāj, 2011) 1.653. In another section of the same text, al-Ghazālī cites a *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet praises the divergent recitation strategies of Bilāl, Abū Bakr, (d. 634), and 'Umar (d. 644). See al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, II.285.

44 Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fol. 13^a; (CE78) fols. 14^a–14^b; (NO) fol. 12a; (AS58) fol. 11^b; and (YC) fols. 30^b–31^a.

ent order of the Qur'ān, it is only because his audience is unfamiliar with the divine grammar through which the inner dimensions of the Real become inflected in outer realities. Here, the Prophet recognizes Bilāl's saintly performance and compares him favorably to the bee, acknowledging how both submit themselves fully to the Real and are thus divinely inspired in their actions. While the conventions of academic monographs push us to privilege one interpretation over the other, I suggest that negotiating between these two incommensurable interpretations and their manifold implications *in tandem* is precisely the kind of recursive reading that the *Book of the Beloved* demands.

If readers hope that Ḥamūya's continued discussion of the bee might offer a sense of conceptual closure, he quickly disabuses them of any such notion. The real purpose of his Qur'ānic analogy, Sa'd al-Dīn suggests, is not to close a hermeneutical circle, but rather to illuminate the *endless* webs of possibility that bubble beneath the surface of outer forms. He writes:

إذا عرفت ما ذكرنا وتأملت فيما سطرنا فتفطن لشرح ما حشرنا أن الدائرة التي
انشقت دائرة نونية والأصل في التّون نون النور وبعده نون النبي وبعده نون النزول
من النور إلى النبي فنون النحل نون النزول من يفاع صورة الحقيقة إلى بقاع صورة
الطريقة

اعتبر حروف النحل فيما ذكرت من المعاني المتعلقة بالنزول والوقوع والهبوط
والمعالي⁴⁵ والمداني والمباني فنون النحل في معنى النزول نون التّهيّة ومنه ﴿أولوا
النهي﴾ (طه ٥٤، ١٢٨)⁴⁶ وحاء النحل في معنى الوقوع حاء الحجر ومنه ﴿قسم لذي
حجر﴾ (الفجر ٥) ولام النحل في معنى الهبوط لام اللّب ومنه ﴿أولوا الأبواب﴾ (في
آيات كثيرة ومنها البقرة ١٦٩، آل عمران ٧، إبراهيم ٥٢)

فالمرتبة الأولى نزول من أعلى علو إلى أقرب قرب وأدنى دنو يخاطبك في كلّ
قريب وبعيد وعتيق وجديد وبطيء وبريد وغافل وعتيد ها أنا ﴿أقرب إليك من حبل
الوريد لك [كذا]﴾ (ق ١٦) الهني والمرئ والبركة والأمر الرشيد

...

45 المعاني: (SBB)

46 In the Qur'ān, the first word (*muḍāf*) occurs in the genitive case—i.e., ﴿الولي النهي﴾.

شعر
 شَغَفِي بِمَحْبُوبِي وَمَا لِي غَيْرُهُ * وَسِوَاهُ لَا أَرْجُوا وَلَا أَبْغِي سِوَاهُ
 وَمُنَايَ مِنْهُ نَظْرَةٌ أَرْجُوا بِهَا * بُرَائِي وَعَيْشِي مِنْ حَبِيبِي فِي هَوَاهُ⁴⁷

If you understand what we have mentioned and contemplate what we have set down, then you should comprehend the elaboration (*sharḥ*) of all we have brought together. The circle that was split open was a circle of *nūn* (*dā'ira nūniyya*). The root within *nūn* is the *nūn* of light (*al-nūr*), which is followed by the *nūn* of the Prophet (*al-nabī*), which in turn is followed by the *nūn* of the descent from light to the Prophet (*nūn l-nuzūlī min al-nūr ilā al-nabī*). The *nūn* of the bee (*al-naḥl*) is the *nūn* of the descent from the hilltop of Reality's form (*yafā'i šūrati l-ḥaqīqa*) to lowlands of the path's form (*biqā'i šūrati l-ṭarīqa*).

Contemplate the letters of the bee in light of what we mentioned—i.e., the meanings linked to descent (*al-nuzūl*), settling down (*al-wuqū'*), and alighting (*al-hubūt*)—and also in light of things raised high, sunk low, and built up (*al-ma'ālī wa-l-madānī wa-l-mabānī*). Insofar as it means descent, the bee's *nūn* is the *nūn* of understanding [as *nuhā*], from which come “those who understand” (*ūlū al-nuhā*) (Q. 20:54, 128). Insofar as it means settling down, the bee's *ḥā'* is the *ḥā'* of understanding [as *ḥijr*], from which comes “an oath for one who understands” (*ūlū al-ḥijr*) (Q. 89:5). Insofar as it means alighting, the bee's *lām* is the *lām* of understanding [as *lubb*], from which come “those who understand” (*ūlū al-albāb*) (Q. 2:169, 3:70, 14:52, etc.).

The first level is the descent from a higher highness to a closer closeness and a lower lowness, which addresses you in whatever is close by and far off (*qarīb wa-ba'īd*), back then and here now (*'atīq wa-jadīd*), slowed down and sped up (*baṭīr wa-barīd*), heedless and ready to go (*ghāfil wa-'atīd*). Here I am, “closer to you than your jugular vein,” (Q. 50:16) the healthful and the healthy, the blessing and the rightly guided command!

...

A Poem:

My heart is with my beloved (He's all that I've got)

There's no hope without Him (not a single desire)

47 In light of the discrepancy between manuscripts, I transcribe these couplets of poetry from Yeni Camii MS 726 fol. 34^a.

Just one quick look (it's my only hope)
My whole life (loving my Darling)⁴⁸

Ḥamūya reveals that the bee is both a concrete example through which to clarify the outer dimensions of the beloved's actions and a cipher that encodes a host of interrelated principles, processes, and inner realities. To truly comprehend the bee, he explains, readers must double back to the start of the chapter; back to the disorienting moment in which the circle of *nūn* was split in two. It was this very moment that sent readers spiraling through the text, propelled along by Ḥamūya's continued deferral of context and meaning. The shaykh's discussion of the bee, we must remember, does not stand alone as a neatly packaged conceptual unit. Instead, it works to contextualize the abstract discussions that came before; the conceptual key for a bricolage of binary oppositions, and Qur'anic allusions, and cryptic references to healing, harming, beehness (*naḥliyya*) and cow-ness (*baqariyya*). Just as readers approach a sense of narrative clarity and conceptual closure, however, the shaykh pulls the rug out from under them, dropping them into a new world of disorienting possibilities. He introduces interlocking metaphysical principles in the *nūns* of light (*al-nūr*), the Prophet (*al-nabī*), and descent (*al-nuzūl*), which doubles as the *nūn* of the bee (*al-naḥl*); links the letters of the word "bee" to different forms of understanding/intellect (*nuḥā*, *ḥijr*, *lubb*) mentioned in the Qur'an; and ties these forms of understanding/intellect to three metaphysical levels/processes (*nuzūl*, *wuqū'*, *hubūt*) through which the Real becomes present to creatures. In exploring the levels of descent, settling down, and alighting, furthermore, he adds layers of poetic expression to articulate the affective dimensions of the Real's presence at each stage.

By opening the bee up to this new field of interpretive possibilities, Ḥamūya thus continues, or even accelerates, his endless deferral of meaning. His discourse mirrors the doubled *nūn* with which he began the chapter. There is no real beginning or end, for everything turns back in on itself; albeit always in a slightly different way. The clear analogy (along with all it brought together) must now be broken up and reimagined according to the abstract discourse that follows. It is the implicit promise of a clear limit, conceptual center, or structural framework that pulls reader deeper into the text, grasping for new clues through which to tie together all of the moving pieces. Yet, with each new passage, the possible valences and relationships between these pieces prolifer-

48 Ḥamūya, *Maḥbūb*, (SBB) fol. 14^a–14^b; (CE78) fols. 15^a–15^b; (NO) fols. 13^a–13^b; (AS58) fol. 12^b; and (YC) fols. 33^a–34^a.

ate, each one opening up its own world ever-expanding network of conceptual frameworks, interpretive possibilities, and allusions.

Through his twists, turns, and deferrals, Sa'd al-Dīn implicitly frames *The Book of the Beloved* as revelation: an inner counterpart to the outer dimensions of the Qur'ān. Read in this way, Ḥamūya's deferral of meaning, abstract technical terminology, impenetrable letterist analyses, and abrupt conceptual shifts are expressions of the divine grammar through which the Real Discloses Itself to Its elect. The incomprehensible character of the text's language and structure thus work to *confirm* its divine origins. As the story of Bilāl implies, the structure of a revealed text like the Qur'ān does not conform to ordinary human whims or expectations. Here again we must pursue parallel readings simultaneously.

While average individuals like Bilāl may focus their attention on what they find most pleasing (or intelligible), it is precisely the jarring juxtapositions between ostensibly incommensurable elements that lend revealed language its full soteriological force. In this sense, the passage translated above is not only a commentary on the beloved and the Qur'ān, but an implicit reference to Ḥamūya's own speech. As a manifestation of the Real in language, readers should resist the temptation to artificially isolate and stabilize a set of facts or dogmas from *The Book of the Beloved*. Instead, they must submit to the bitter difficulties of its particulars in order that they may benefit from the curative sweetness of its overall form.

Because of his utter submission to God, Bilāl has achieved a total mastery of Qur'anic language. Veiled by myopic assumptions and the particularities of their own limited being, ignorant listeners are prone to misunderstand his speech as a corruption of the Qur'ān's structure. Following the Prophet, however, Ḥamūya recognizes Bilāl's saintly sensibilities and takes him as a paradigmatic model for *The Book of the Beloved*. Ḥamūya thus follows Bilāl's example, breaking apart the Qur'ān and improvising fluently with its source code. Despite the apparent bitterness of its particular elements, the text's language brings together "what's good with what's good," offering careful readers a taste of the curative sweetness suffused throughout the endless unfolding of Reality.

But what, we may ask, was Sa'd al-Dīn's endless deferral of meaning supposed to *do* to his readers? What would they have made of these disorienting shifts? What was the "curative sweetness" that *The Book of the Beloved* could offer them? And what does this all have to do with sainthood? As we saw at the beginning of this section, Sa'd al-Dīn suggests that it is through revealed language—

and more specifically, revealed language in its *written* form—that saints are to transform the inner realities of human beings. To understand the relationship between the idiosyncrasies of his style and the intended effects of his work, we must turn to medieval conversations about eloquence, aesthetic wonder, and the inimitability of the Qurʾān and its language.

4 Inimitability, Incomprehensibility, and Wonder

According to Lara Harb, the 11th century witnessed the rise of a “new school” of literary theory centered around an aesthetics of wonder.⁴⁹ Spearheaded by Ibn Sīna (d. 1037) in philosophy and ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d. 1078 or 1081) in literary criticism, this new aesthetic paradigm framed poetic expression as a special type of strange, unexpected, or obscure language that sent readers’ souls on a quest for understanding.⁵⁰ Poetic wonder, they explained, emerged from the interplay between a concerted effort on the part of the reader and the pleasurable experience of discovering subtle connections. Both philosophers and literary theorists agreed that this interplay provoked not only an intellectual assent, but also an *affective* response inextricable from the reader’s active participation in the meaning-making process. To produce poetic language, al-Jurjānī suggested that poets drew from moments of heightened sensitivity to the affinities underlying the mysteries of existence. The syntax, grammar, and semantic structure of a poet’s language in turn performed their original act of discovery. Thus, as Kamal Abu Deeb argues, the linguistic form of poetry could not be expressed in any other way; it was the *only* means of expressing the nature of the realities that the poet grasped. When readers approached poetry, these images were activated, affording searching souls access to these otherwise hidden relationships and realities.⁵¹ By the 13th and 14th centuries, this notion of wonder had become entrenched as a dominant literary-aesthetic paradigm, with critics such as al-Sakkākī (d. 1229) and al-Khaṭīb al-Qazwīnī (d. 1338) elaborating a formal “science of eloquence” (*‘ilm al-balāgha*) that explored the effects of specific literary devices on the human soul in a systematic manner.⁵²

49 Lara Harb, *Arabic Poetics: Aesthetic Experience in Classical Arabic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 12. For the development of wonder as a broader ethical paradigm in the medieval Islamic world, see Travis E. Zadeh, *Wonders and Rarities: The Marvelous Book That Traveled the World and Mapped the Cosmos* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2023), esp. 97–127.

50 Harb, *Poetics, inter alia* 11–12, 29–30, 68, 127, 132–134, 202, 215.

51 Kamal Abu Deeb, *Al-Jurjānī’s Theory of Poetic Imagery* (Guildford: Biddles Ltd, 1979), 4.

52 Harb, *Poetics*, 11–12, 137.

The paradigm of literary-aesthetic wonder offered medieval scholars new tools with which to theorize the miraculous inimitability (*ijāz*) of the Qurʾān. By the 11th century, scholars of *ijāz* generally agreed that it was not necessarily the Qurʾān's conceptual content, but rather the *way* it articulated its message that could never be reproduced by humans.⁵³ Al-Jurjānī and his followers focused primarily on questions of syntax and sentence structure (*naẓm*), arguing that the very form of Qurʾānic utterances evoked wonder by deliberately withholding or deferring meaning.⁵⁴ Through such techniques as pre- and post-positioning (*taqdīm wa-ta'khīr*), ellipsis (*ḥadhf*), and a nuanced manipulation of conjunctions (*wa-*, *fa-*), definite articles (*al-*), and emphatic particles (*inna*), al-Jurjānī argued that the Qurʾān produced multiple layers of implicit or indirect meanings that its audience must work to understand.⁵⁵ Elaborating on the effects of ellipsis, for example, the 14th-century scholar Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkashī's (d. 1392) *Proof in the Sciences of the Qurʾān* (*al-Burhān fī 'ulūm al-Qurʾān*) suggested that the technique provoked readers and listeners to "wander in every direction and yearn for what is intended, falling short of grasping it."⁵⁶ Theorists like al-Sakkākī and al-Qazwīnī sharpened and systematized earlier approaches, exploring the relationship between *naẓm*, meaning, and context. For these 13th- and 14th-century scholars, the strategies that al-Jurjānī identified operated in relation to a specific set of audience expectations that the Qurʾān manipulated to articulate multiple dimensions of nuance and meaning.⁵⁷ Scholars of *ijāz* working in al-Jurjānī's wake thus distinguished between the "basic sense" of Qurʾānic statements and the final "form of meaning" (*ṣūrat al-ma'nā*) that included the multiple layers of subtle implications that readers and listeners had to uncover for themselves.⁵⁸

Read in relation to contemporary discussions of wonder, meaning, and *ijāz*, Ḥamūya's strategies of endless deferral become an imitation of Qurʾānic inimitability. The shaykh's idiosyncratic modes of expression implicitly mark his text as a miraculous revelation: a "strange, unexpected, and obscure" language that participates in Qurʾānic forms of meaning making. While Ḥamūya certainly disorients his audience with arcane language and imagery, it is primar-

53 Harb, *Poetics*, 205–206.

54 Harb, *Poetics*, 208.

55 Harb, *Poetics*, 219–233. For an excellent example of how this process works in context, see Alexander Key, *Language between God and the Poets: Ma'nā in the Eleventh Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018), 231.

56 Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān fī 'ulūm al-Qurʾān*, ed. Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Turāth, 1957), 111.104. Translated by Lara Harb in eadem, *Poetics*, 226.

57 Harb, *Poetics*, 237–245.

58 Harb, *Poetics*, 212–215, 248.

ily through techniques of structure and form that texts like *The Book of the Beloved* demand active audience participation. The shaykh's deliberate deferral of contextual clues, abrupt shifts in theme, and consistent reconfiguration of conceptual frameworks leave his audience in the state of restless aporia that al-Zarkashī described above: wandering in every direction, yearning for what is intended, but falling short of grasping it. As readers work through the text's form, they negotiate layers of subtle meaning that emerge only through their active engagement with the text.

Unlike the rhetorical devices identified by medieval *ijāz* scholars, however, Ḥamūya's strategies of deferral operate beyond the level of figurative imagery and unexpected sentence structure. What medieval scholars theorized vis-à-vis Qur'ānic syntax, Sa'd al-Dīn does with the meta-structures of composition and organization. To articulate the inner dimensions of the Real, the shaykh expands strategies like ellipsis and pre- and post-positioning beyond the level of the sentence and into the broader architectonics of his text.⁵⁹ If the Qur'ān uses grammar to add subtle layers of meaning to words, phrases, and ideas, Ḥamūya uses organizational structures to nuance entire conceptual frameworks. As we saw in Section 3 of this chapter, *The Book of the Beloved* disorients readers by withholding key points of context, deploying them only after the arcane discussions they purportedly elucidate. Likewise, as we saw in Chapter 2, structural allusions to classic Sufi manuals like al-Ghazālī's (d. 1111) *Revival of the Religious Sciences* and *Alchemy of Happiness* force readers to mine the fifth appendix to *The Levels of Joy* for recognizable embodied cues in which to ground his discussions. By priming then omitting these cues, the shaykh manipulates readers' expectations to open up limitless interpretive possibilities, thus performing the dynamic self-disclosure of the Real. Put simply, within contemporary frameworks of inimitability and wonder, it is the very idiosyncrasy of Ḥamūya's language—or, more precisely, the *way* he performs this idiosyncrasy—that marks his speech as revelation.

Read in conversation with medieval *ijāz* scholarship, Ḥamūya's writing belies a shared assumption about the nature of revelation. Whether it be saintly or prophetic, the *sine qua non* of revealed language and the mark of its mirac-

59 As al-Jurjānī explains, pre- and post-positioning refer to techniques that manipulate the order in which parts of speech are typically arranged—e.g., placing a predicate before the subject of a nominal clause, or the direct object before the subject of a verb. See Harb, *Poetics*, 219; and 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d. 1078 or 1081), *Dalā'il al-ijāz*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākir (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 2004), 106–145. Ellipsis, on the other hand, involves omitting a part of speech that a sentence would typically include—e.g., a subject or object—for effect. See Harb, *Poetics*, 223–227; and al-Jurjānī, *Dalā'il*, 146–172.

ulous authority stem from its engagement with human experience. In short, revelation is quintessentially *performative*. The strange and unexpected forms of revealed language demand the participation of living, breathing, and speaking bodies, forcing them to take part in an active production of meaning. By amplifying the strategies of Qur'anic inimitability, Sa'd al-Dīn draws readers into his text while self-consciously refusing a totalizing "form of meaning" that would encapsulate his vision. We might say instead that the shaykh's goal is to turn each reader into a form that reveals the endless possibilities of his speech; to render them reflections of himself and, through him, reflections of the Real. In this reading, the perfect Sufi body becomes a hermeneutical center that encompasses the infinite semantic-experiential potential of Ḥamūya's words *as boundless play*. Such a state of dynamic comprehension demands that perfect readers not only contemplate, but produce. The shaykh's words must provoke readers to speak for themselves, for it is only through the generative possibilities of language that their own perfect knowledge can be realized. They must become like the beloved: living, breathing, and speaking manifestations of the Qur'ān's source. Despite his frequent recourse to a rhetoric of ineffability, Ḥamūya holds that knowledge only becomes knowable through speech. Whatever is going on in the world beyond letters and sounds, it must always overflow through the words of perfect beings. If Ḥamūya aims to produce knowledge as an embodied sensibility, it is a sensibility that is inextricable from dynamic expression in language.

The effect of Ḥamūya's strategies is thus to project the experiential-epistemological possibilities of his words beyond the totalizing grasp of his own text and into the bodies of his readers. By relinquishing control of his words, however, the shaykh simultaneously *restricts* his texts to an elite audience. As we saw in Chapters 2, 3, and 4, each reader must approach the shaykh's words from within a physically disciplined and socially authorized Sufi body that could draw connections between diverse phenomenal and intellectual realms. These bodies open up the generative possibilities of texts like *The Book of the Beloved*, affording Ḥamūya's words a dynamic experiential-epistemological laboratory in which they can be made meaningful. Readers cannot stabilize his endless deferrals in relation to a fixed textual center, but must negotiate them according to the particularities of their own changing states. It is *only* within the experiential-epistemological laboratory of the Sufi body, therefore, that Ḥamūya's strategies of meaning making can enact their full effects.

While Ḥamūya's writing certainly seems obscure (or even impenetrable) to the uninitiated, its capacity to defy expectations and evoke wonder—to be weird in a way that remains *legible*—stems from its deft manipulation of Sufi conventions. According to medieval *ijāz* scholars, appreciating the seductive

strangeness of Qur'ānic syntax demanded an advanced knowledge of Arabic language and literature.⁶⁰ Without such knowledge, one could neither experience the affective force of its miraculous inimitability nor understand the depths of its meanings. Readers are likewise drawn into Ḥamūya's work *because* of their advanced knowledge of Sufi thought and practice. Without such knowledge, there is no deferral of meaning, no interplay between tension and the promise of release. It is not strange in the right ways. For the uninitiated, the saint's speech simply becomes completely unintelligible; its arcane wonder veiled by an impenetrable illegibility.

The same strategies that bar neophytes from accessing Ḥamūya's texts leave them radically open to an elite cadre of Sufi readers. If Sa'd al-Dīn stakes his claim to sainthood in the infinite possibilities of his language, then it is precisely through the engagement of advanced readers (and speakers) that these possibilities are realized. Alongside the discussions of *i'jāz* outlined above, medieval Sufis understood the Qur'ān as an infinite source of epistemological-experiential possibilities. As Jamal Elias explains, medieval Sufi commentaries aimed to illuminate the Qur'ān's endless possibilities as a pious confirmation of its beauty and excellence.⁶¹ According to Ibn 'Arabī, for example, the language of the Qur'ān eternally reveals new meanings; any sense of limitation stems only from the receptivity of its audience. Each human being thus functions as a prism through which new secrets are continually made manifest.⁶² "Any meaning of whatever verse of the Word of God ... judged acceptable by one who knows the language in which this Word is expressed," he avers, "represents what God wanted to say to those who interpret it so, for His knowledge encompasses all meanings."⁶³ Although medieval Sufis might not put it in this way, their approaches suggest that the Qur'ān and its readers exist in a relationship of mutual dependence. The higher a reader's degree of spiritual realization (disciplined and authorized through Sufi training), the more they can articulate through the language of the Qur'ān. Likewise, the fact that skilled readers elaborate, yet never exhaust the Qur'ān's possibilities is itself a continual confirmation of the text's miraculous authority. By denying readers a stable hermeneutical center through which to ground their readings of

60 See, for example, Harb, *Poetics*, 262–263.

61 Jamal J. Elias, "Šūfī *tafsīr* Reconsidered: Exploring the Development of a Genre," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 12 (2010), 51–52.

62 See Michel Chodkiewicz, *An Ocean Without Shore: Ibn 'Arabī, The Book, and the Law*, trans. David Streight (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 26, 53.

63 Adapted from Chodkiewicz's translation in idem, *Ocean*, 30. See Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya* (OF), ed. Osman Yahia, 14 vols. (Cairo: al-Hay'a al-Miṣriyya al-'Āmma li-l-Kitāb, 1972–1992), XIII.92; and (SD) III.178.

his texts, Ḥamūya provokes them to confirm his authority through their own commentary, citation, appropriation, and imitation. Reflecting the inimitable wonder of the Qurʾān, therefore, Ḥamūya's status as a saintly fount of revelation becomes confirmed not by the specificity of his claims, but rather by the capacity of his words to reveal infinitely generative possibilities.

5 Conclusion

Tracing prophecy and sainthood through all of their metaphysical, terrestrial, and temporal manifestations, Ḥamūya articulates a vision of human perfection rooted in an interplay of shifting qualities and relationships. The hierarchies of saints and prophets that he sketches are always open to revision and reformulation, for it is only through these endless juxtapositions that their realities may be known. Just as saints and prophets illuminate the Real through the infinite potentialities of revealed speech, they are likewise only *knowable* through the inexhaustible play of this very same language. By leaving the interpretive possibilities of his texts radically open to a skilled community of Sufi readers, Ḥamūya stakes a claim to sainthood by self-consciously severing the ties between authoritative meaning and authorial intent. In short, his distinct modes of expression enact what he imagines perfect saints to do. While it is certainly possible that the shaykh's oral instruction guided students towards particular interpretations, the effects of his written language remain the same—i.e., to project knowledge and meaning off of the page and into the dynamic world of living, breathing, and speaking bodies.

Thinking about human perfection in relation to the written performances of 13th-century Sufis opens productive avenues through which to explore a shared episteme. As Elizabeth Alexandrin points out, Ḥamūya's idiosyncratic approach to the Seal of the Saints is difficult to situate within the conversations of his contemporaries.⁶⁴ By illuminating the premises, stakes, and bylines that undergird these discussions, I have offered a means with which to contextualize the diversity of medieval Sufi approaches to sainthood. Running alongside their formal hagiological frameworks, for example, Ḥamūya and Ibn 'Arabī share similar assumptions about the relationship between sainthood, revelation, and meaning. Just as we saw with Ḥamūya, Ibn 'Arabī insists that revelation differs from ordinary human composition with respect to the unexpected structures through which it makes meaning. In his *Meccan Revelations*, Ibn 'Arabī self-

64 Alexandrin, "Seals and Sealing," 92.

consciously frames his text as revelation, marking its jarring juxtapositions and thematic shifts as evidence of its divine provenance. In “On the Knowledge of the Ranks of Consonants and Vowels ...” (*fī maʿrifat marātib al-ḥurūf wa-l-ḥarakāt ...*) he writes:

فإنّ تأليفنا هذا وغيره لا يجري مجرى التواليف ولا نجري نحن فيه مجرى المؤلّفين ...
 ... أنّه يلقي إلى هذا القلب أشياء يؤمر بإيصالها وهو لا يعلمها في ذلك الوقت
 لحكمة إلهية غابت عن الخلق فلهذا لا يتقيّد كلّ شخص يؤلّف عن الإلقاء بعلم
 ذلك الباب الذي يتكلّم عليه ولكن يدرج فيه غيره في علم السامع العاديّ على
 حسب ما يلقي إليه ولكنّه عندنا قطعاً من نفس ذلك الباب بعينه لكن بوجه لا
 يعرفه غيرنا مثل الحمامة والغراب اللذين اجتمعا وتألّفا⁶⁵ لعرج قام بأرجلها وقد
 أذن لي في تقييد ما ألقى به بعد هذا فلا بدّ منه

Neither this composition nor our others proceed in the same way as other compositions, for in it we do not proceed in the same way as other authors ... Things are cast into our heart that we are commanded to transmit—things it did not already know in that moment—on account of a divine wisdom that eludes mankind. Whoever composes by means of a divine casting (*al-ilqāʿ*) is thus not limited with respect to knowledge of the subject of which he speaks. On account of what is cast into him, he may insert into [his discourse] what to the normal listener might seem extraneous. For us, however, it cuts to the core of the issue at hand, but in a way that no one else would understand, just like the dove and the crow that got along well with one another on account of the limp in both their legs (*li-ʿaraj qāma bi-arjulihumā*). In what follows, I’ve been given permission to set down what has been cast into me, so I really have no choice but to do so!⁶⁶

Ibn ʿArabī makes explicit what Ḥamūya implies: his magnum opus is a manifestation of revealed speech, channeled directly from the Real to his heart, from his heart to his hand, and from his hand to the page. If the structure of his text or the order in which he presents ideas seems strange, it is only because ordinary

65 (SD) omits تألّفًا.

66 Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, (OY) I.264–265 and (SD) I.96–97. See also Gril’s translation in Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī, *The Meccan Revelations, Volume II*, ed. Michel Chodkiewicz, trans. Cyrille Chodkiewicz and Denis Gril (New York: Pir Press, 2004), 164.

human beings are unable to grasp the divine grammar through which revealed knowledge becomes articulated.

In “On the Knowledge of Secrets Pertaining to the Roots of Legal Prescriptions” (*fī maʿrifat asrār uṣūl aḥkām al-sharʿ*), Ibn ʿArabī’s claims mirror Ḥamūya’s use of the *ḥadīth* about Bilāl cited above. While he acknowledges that his progression of themes might seem disorganized to the average reader, the shaykh insists that their form indicates the divine root of his text. Ibn ʿArabī thus explicitly compares his speech to the Qurʾān: while certain verses may seem out of place, their organization follows the revealed structures of God’s knowledge.⁶⁷

As Syed Rizwan Zamir argues, Ibn ʿArabī’s style and hermeneutical outlook as a whole might be considered an imitation of the Qurʾān.⁶⁸ While Zamir does not engage explicitly with contemporary *ijāz* literature, I suggest that Ibn ʿArabī’s Qurʾānic imitation mirrors the structural strategies identified above. Here, we could note the form of *The Meccan Revelations* as a whole, which, as Chodkiewicz has demonstrated, unfolds in an almost impossibly complex interplay with the structure of the Qurʾān.⁶⁹ As was the case with *The Book of the Beloved*, the dizzying architectonics of Ibn ʿArabī’s text force readers to double back on crisscrossing patterns of correspondences in ways that open endlessly generative interpretive possibilities. Muḥyī al-Dīn thus expands on the inimitable wonder-making strategies of the Qurʾān while literally binding the form of his *Meccan Revelations* to the structures of revelation. Like Ḥamūya, therefore, we might read Ibn ʿArabī as legitimizing his saintly authority through performative modes of expression whose dynamic engagement with readers aims to reproduce (or even surpass) the productive potential of the Qurʾān.

Reading their differences in style through the lenses of language, knowledge, and authority proves fruitful as well. For Ḥamūya, the first distinguishing mark of the beloved saint is that he will *not* claim sainthood (*lā yaddaʿ l-wilāya*).⁷⁰ Instead, he will make himself known through speech and actions that are recognizable only to other knowing saints. Ibn ʿArabī, on the other hand, makes

67 Ibn ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, (OY) XIII.450–451 and (SD) III.245. See also Chodkiewicz’s translation in Ibn ʿArabī, *Revelations II*, 69.

68 Zamir explains, “In his capacity as the ‘Seal of the Saints,’ it is Ibn ʿArabī’s function to not only divulge the deepest layers of meanings contained within the Word of God, but also to imitate its inimitable style.” Syed Ridwan Zamir, “‘*Tafsīr al-Qurʾān bi’l Qurʾān*’: The Hermeneutics of Imitation and *Adab* in Ibn ʿArabī’s Interpretation of the Qurʾān,” *Islamic Studies* 50, no. 1 (2011), 20.

69 See, for example, Chodkiewicz, *Ocean*, 63 ff.

70 Ḥamūya, *Zuhūr*, fol. 206^a.

no qualms about proclaiming himself the Seal of the Saints—"I am, without a doubt, the Seal of Sainthood / For I am heir to the Hashimite and the Messiah."⁷¹ In light of our analysis above, I suggest that we explore this difference as an implicit dispute over how saintly authority is to be performed in language. While Ḥamūya and Ibn 'Arabī both leave their texts open to the interpretive capacities of skilled readers, the latter attempts to retain a level of control over the meaning of his words. With all his jarring shifts in perspective, Muḥyī al-Dīn always has the last word: it is *his* voice and *his* unique vision that afford readers ultimate access to the infinite complexities of the Real. Reading the two in conversation, the radical openness of Ḥamūya's text and his refusal to claim sainthood becomes an implicit challenge to Ibn 'Arabī. Just as his *Letter to Ibn 'Arabī* critiques his interlocutor for imposing arbitrary limits on the letters, Ḥamūya may have understood Ibn 'Arabī's totalizing hermeneutical posturing as a limitation on the possibilities of his language and saintly potency.

71 Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, (OY) IV.61 and (SD) I.350.

Coda

... They dispose of these relics to suit themselves: all their modern conveniences and fancies are brought with them and concealed among those ancient pillars and tombstones, and it gives rise to great rejoicing when somebody finds, among the dust and cobwebs of antiquity, something that he himself had slyly hidden there not so very long before.¹

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, *On the Future of our Educational Institutions*

• • •

I've arrived, so unashamed, but all my senses no longer seem the same.²

AFI, "Exsanguination"

• •

Throughout the preceding chapters, I have argued that Ḥamūya and his 13th-century colleagues imagined perfect knowledge as an embodied sensibility through which knowing Sufi subjects could navigate the infinite possibilities of Reality. To know for these Sufis was to imagine and inhabit the world in a particular way: to experience and self-consciously partake in Reality as a plurality of dynamic forces and frameworks. Such knowledge was not the detached speculation or anodyne monism of the post-Enlightenment mystic; it was an affirmation of the world in all its shifting relationships, messy contradictions, and incommensurable frames of reference.

Medieval Sufis cultivated their embodied sensibilities through holistic training programs that brought together physical practices, social relationships, and abstract theory. The goal of these programs was to fashion Sufi bodies into abstract-experiential laboratories for specialized corporeal, affective, and intellectual operations. Though Sufis framed their training as a means of peeling back external realities, we can also read them as constructive—historically

1 Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *On the Future of Our Educational Institutions: Homer and Classical Philology*, trans. J.M. Kennedy (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1911).

2 AFI, "Exsanguination," *Black Sails in the Sunset* (Nitro Records, 1999).

contingent modes of discipline that conditioned specific possibilities of knowing and being. Once disciplined, these subjects made their sensibilities manifest through creative performances whose improvised motifs modulated fluently across all dimensions of human experience.

I have read Ḥamūya's treatises as written performances of these sensibilities, analyzing them in conversation with the work of his contemporaries to illuminate how such dynamic forms of knowledge could be produced or even contested in text. A close attention to how the shaykh and his colleagues write reveals a host of strategies that become meaningful *through* the practical and phenomenological dimensions of medieval Sufism. I call these strategies performative because they self-consciously engage readers, drawing them into an active process of meaning making. Ibn 'Arabī uses the science of letters to propel his audience across diverse discourses, technical vocabularies, phenomenological registers, and conceptual worlds, projecting his own totalizing vision as an all-encompassing hermeneutical capacity. Kubrā merges a meticulous attention to the body with personal anecdotes, imaginative exercises, and abstract metaphysical principles, framing himself as an all-powerful shaykh who guides students through the subtle intricacies of their innermost selves. Suhrawardī overlays human bodies with a multitude of practical and theoretical possibilities, vaunting himself and his texts as the keys to realizing the universal realities of Islam. Each of Sa'd al-Dīn's teachers and colleagues subsumes a plurality of practical, affective, and intellectual possibilities within his work to demonstrate the limitless scope of his own sensibilities.³

3 Though my immediate focus has been on medieval Sufism, we must not imagine Sufi worlds as hermetically sealed. As I argue in Chapter 4, for example, elite Sufis like Ḥamūya performed a range of identities indexed to interwoven webs of discourse and social bonds. Even when jockeying for positions of power at prestigious Sufi institutions, he and his colleagues wielded legitimating strategies—genealogy, interpersonal bonds, disciplined affect—common to elites of various professional, confessional, and geographical stripes. One of these shared strategies was a productive engagement with the diverse possibilities of knowing and being. Here, Thomas Bauer's *A Culture of Ambiguity* serves as an illuminative example. Focusing on Arabic Sunnī scholarship *without* an explicit Sufi bent, Bauer excavates a ubiquitous “culture of ambiguity” (or cultural ambiguity) that cut across scholarly circles in Egypt and Syria during the Ayyūbid and Mamlūk periods. Such a culture was characterized by the association of competing meanings with a single term, act, or object; an engagement with differing attributions of meaning in relation to different realms of human life; and the acceptance of diverse interpretations of a given phenomenon. Reading across medieval scholarship on Qur'ānic variants, *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth* and jurisprudence, language, politics, sexuality, and ethics, Bauer's *Mentalitätsgeschichte* illuminates a world of elite knowledge production fundamentally concerned with negotiating (but not erasing) ambiguity and difference. See Thomas

Ḥamūya carves out a distinct place in this competitive field by deconstructing the strategies of his rivals and repurposing the underlying processes through which they make meaning. His work presumes the performative conventions of his contemporaries, then warps them into Sufi free jazz. I have read Ḥamūya against his colleagues because he operates in implicit dialogue with them. His writing is performative not only because it is bound to the experiential dimensions of Sufi practice, but also because it plays with readers' expectations of *how* those bonds might be forged. He implicitly sets his idiosyncratic formulations against contemporary conventions, generating nuanced layers of meaning through the allusive juxtapositions that arise. We might say that the shaykh's work provokes readers to self-consciously interrogate sign and signified—i.e., letter and reality, body and experience, genealogy and authority, text and meaning. If we understand Sufi knowledge as an embodied sensibility that interfaces between abstract and experiential frames, then Ḥamūya forces readers to realize that their mechanisms of negotiation are themselves negotiable.

While Ḥamūya's deconstructive approach renders his texts illegible to the uninitiated, it leaves his writing radically open to advanced Sufi readers. The shaykh parochializes the work of his contemporaries by loosening the reigns of authorial intent, allowing the meaning of his words to proliferate endlessly. Rather than attempting to subsume a totality within his *own* hermeneutical vision, Ḥamūya recruits his audience(s) to produce infinity for him. It is in dialogue with the embodied sensibilities of his elite Sufi readers that the shaykh's language unfolds as boundless play, through their embodied performances that his words become expressions of Reality. As his writing transforms readers into manifestations of the divine self-disclosure, Ḥamūya becomes the fully realized saint who catalyzes their perfection. In this sense, he also becomes the Primordial Point: the inexhaustible source that gives rise to an infinitely generative language.

So what would become of Ḥamūya's avant-garde Sufism? What would be the legacy of his performative deconstruction? Immediately after his death, the embodied and social dimensions of the shaykh's spiritual authority split off from his theoretical work and were inherited along biological-genealogical lines. Ḥamūya's son Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm (d. 1322) assumed the mantle of his father's *baraka* through blood and birth, affording him a prestigious position among the ʿIlkhān elites and administrators. Ṣadr al-Dīn married the daugh-

Bauer, *A Culture of Ambiguity: An Alternative History of Islam*, trans. Hinrich Biesterfeldt and Tricia Tunstall (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021).

ter of the famed ‘Aṭā-Malik Juwaynī (d. 1283) in 1272/1273, then played a central role in the conversion ceremony of Īlkhān Maḥmūd Ghāzān (d. 1304) in 1295. In Ṣadr al-Dīn’s own account of the latter event, he is eager to frame himself as a corporeal link to his father’s legacy.⁴ Two generations later, Sa’d al-Dīn’s great grandson Ghiyāth al-Dīn (fl. 14th c.) laid claim to the same saintly genealogy with a hagiography centered around his forefather’s charisma, spiritual virtuosity, and social bonds. The opening folia of the text foreground Sa’d al-Dīn’s (and thus Ghiyāth al-Dīn’s) noble lineage, amplifying genealogical themes as the shaykh’s primary source of spiritual legitimacy.⁵ Though not much is known about Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ḥamūya, he seems to have been a well-known and well-respected Sufi during his lifetime. According to Ḥāfiẓ Abrū (d. 1430), Shaykh Khalifa Mazāndarānī (d. 1335)—eponym of the Shaykhiyya Sufi order—pledged himself to Ghiyāth al-Dīn in Baḥrābād after being violently expelled from ‘Alā’ al-Dawla al-Simnānī’s (d. 1336) circle of students in Khurāsān.⁶ Despite their success as inheritors of his embodied authority, however, neither Ṣadr al-Dīn nor Ghiyāth al-Dīn would (or could?) attempt the kind of dazzling performances that characterized Sa’d al-Dīn’s written work.

Attending to the afterlife of Ḥamūya’s abstract theoretical output suggests that the radical openness of his work became stabilized and systematized in his wake. Ḥamūya’s student ‘Azīz Nasafī (d. before 1300) staked his authority in an ability to strip away the excesses of his master’s boundless play. He articulates the matter rather explicitly through a dream narrative at the beginning of his *Unveiling the Realities* (*Kashf al-ḥaqā’iq*). According to Nasafī, he was overcome by sleep after staying up late to write on the night of September 3, 1281. His father appeared to him in a dream, then took him to the Friday mosque of Abarkuh (in Iran) where the Prophet Muḥammad, the Sufi shaykh Abū ‘Abd Allāh Mūhammad ibn Khafif (d. 982), and Sa’d al-Dīn Ḥamūya were waiting for

4 Ṣadr al-Dīn’s account was orally transmitted to the Syrian historian al-Birzālī (d. 1338/1339), whose narrative was in turn put into writing by a certain al-Jazarī (d. 1338/1339). See Charles Melville, “*Pādshāh-i Islām: The Conversion of Sultan Maḥmūd Ghāzān Khān*,” in *Pembroke Papers, Vol. 1: Persian and Islamic Studies in Honour of P.W. Avery*, ed. Charles Melville (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Center of Middle Eastern Studies, 1990), 161. See also Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb’s (d. 1318) account in Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh al-Hamadānī, *Kitāb Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghāzānī: dāstān-i Ghāzān Khān*, ed. Karl Jahn (London: Luzac, 1940), 76 ff.

5 Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Murād al-murīdīn*, ed. S.A.A. Mīr-Bāqirī Fard and Z. Najafī (Tehran: Mu’assasat-i Muṭāla’āt-i Islāmī-yi Dānishgāh-i Tihārān – Dānishgāh-i Makgīl, 2011), 34.

6 See Tanvir Ahmed, “Radical Shadows of God: Islam and Sociopolitical Dissent, 1240–1600” (PhD dissertation, Brown University, 2021), 71n38. As the story goes, Shaykh Khalifa did not last long in Ghiyāth al-Dīn’s circle and was soon sent on his way.

him. After they exchanged greetings, Muḥammad revealed that Ḥamūya had just finished discussing Nasafi and his teachings.⁷

Although Ḥamūya (the dream version) certifies the legitimacy of Nasafi's knowledge, his comments belie a point of tension between him and his student. On the one hand, dream Sa'd al-Dīn concedes that Nasafi's language is clear, concise, and effective: it distills four hundred tomes of lettrist operations, cryptic allusions, and destabilizing deferrals into just ten volumes of clear Persian prose. On the other, even this idealized version of the shaykh balks at his student's project. Through the intermediary of the Prophet, Ḥamūya exclaims, "While I've endeavored to hide and conceal [my teachings], *he* tries to make them manifest. I fear [for Nasafi], lest some unlucky event or misfortune befall him on account of this."⁸

Against Ḥamūya's radical openness, Nasafi's writing asserts authorial control over the outer and inner realities it subsumes. Texts like *The Perfect Human* categorize diverse points of view, harmonize technical vocabularies, and envelope interpretive possibilities within a totalizing hermeneutical framework. Nasafi domesticates Ḥamūya with limpid prose, divesting his master's thought of the very qualities that made it compelling during his lifetime. There is a paradoxical play of *bāṭin* and *ẓāhir*, inner and outer, hidden and manifest at work here.⁹ On the one hand, Ḥamūya's performative writing obscures content. The shaykh's deconstructive approach to form, tone, and texture defers meaning indefinitely to render readers living manifestations of his knowledge. Nasafi, on the other hand, strips away the cacophonous excesses of Ḥamūya's free jazz to reveal a neater, cleaner, and clearer transcription of its core motifs. Ironically, Nasafi's efforts conceal the expressive *noise* of Ḥamūya's work, binding the boundless play through which his knowledge became most clearly manifest.¹⁰ Although it

7 'Azīz Nasafi, *Kashf al-ḥaqā'iq*, ed. A. Dāmghānī (Tehran: Bungāh-i Tarjuma wa Nashr-i Kitāb, 1965), 7. See also Ridgeon's translation in idem, *'Azīz Nasafi* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1998), 9–10.

8 Nasafi, *Kashf al-ḥaqā'iq*, 7. Emphasis mine.

9 I thank Oludamini Ogunnaike for helping me articulate this paradoxical dynamic.

10 Fumi Okiji explores a similar dynamic in the relationship between live music and the jazz record. Of the live performance, she writes, "In live jazz, the idea of a hermetic, closed off, completed whole is not always/necessarily useful. At the end of a jazz piece one is left with the impression that it actually continues in some other dimension or that it could be picked up again where it was left, that the piece has not—or cannot—end." Fumi Okiji, *Jazz As Critique: Adorno and Black Expression Revisited* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018), 89. By contrast, she explains, "And in fact, this is not the intention of the studio jazz record. The studio performance is not just a poor substitute for a live performance. Although it can sound quite like the real thing, its very existence—as a cultural artifact, as a commodity, as something made complete, made before us and

is impossible to ascertain whether or not this methodological division soured their relationship while Ḥamūya was alive, Nasafī's dream must recruit no less than the authority of the Prophet to mend the rift between him and his master's legacy.

Around a century later, the Tīmūrid occultist Ṣā'in al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī (Ibn Turka, d. 1432) wrangled the radical openness of Sa'd al-Dīn's lettrist approach into a rigorous occult science. For Ibn Turka, an intellectualized lettrism superseded both philosophy and Sufism, offering operators access to and control of all epistemological and ontological possibilities. Ṣā'in al-Dīn frames his avowedly unprecedented emphasis on the written dimensions of letters as a new era of human possibility: a moment in which all previous knowledge could be unified and transcended. Through manipulation of the letters in writing, he laid claim to a saintly authority (*wilāya*) that actualized the oral revelation of the prophets.¹¹

Ibn Turka vaunted *The Book of the Beloved* as an invaluable textual source, lionizing Ḥamūya (alongside Ibn 'Arabī) as one of the foremost exponents of the universal knowledge to which he was heir.¹² At the same time, however, the Tīmūrid occultist stabilized and repackaged Sa'd al-Dīn's work, transmuting it into a rational technology whose practical applicability was perfectly suited for an age of empires. Under Ibn Turka, Ḥamūya's deconstructive lettrism became a science par excellence: an abstract, intellectualized, and systematic metaphysics rooted in a Neopythagorean mathematization of the cosmos. Ibn Turka thus appropriated Ḥamūya's legacy by subverting the radical openness that distinguished his work in its 13th-century context. In this case, Ḥamūya's unwavering commitment to boundless play may have set the stage for its own deconstruction.

for us—appears to oppose the structuring principles of jazz.” Okiji, *Jazz as Critique*, 91. Finally, on the relationship between live performance and recording: “The paradox inherent in the jazz record is that while the deferral that structures the music is obscured by containment within the product, this deferral, which allows jazz works to be augmented and kept open across generations of musicians, is wholly dependent on jazz being documented.” Okiji, *Jazz as Critique*, 90. While there are key differences at play here—most notably, the fact that both Ḥamūya and Nasafī's writings exist for us as *recordings*—Okiji's insights open up a generative lens through which to explore the relationship between Ḥamūya's endless deferrals and Nasafī's systematic documents.

11 See Matthew S. Melvin-Koushki, “The Occult Challenge to Philosophy and Messianism in Early Timurid Iran: Ibn Turka's Lettrism as a New Metaphysics,” in *Unity in Diversity: Mysticism, Messianism and the Construction of Religious Authority in Islam*, ed. Orkhan Mir-Kasimov (Leiden: Brill, 2014): 247–276.

12 Melvin-Koushki, “Occult Challenge,” 266.

What should we make of these stabilizing tendencies? Is this an implosion of Ḥamūya's embodied sensibilities? A jarring break between an early-modern episteme and a medieval landscape in which Ḥamūya's radical openness made sense? Perhaps. But probably not. Contemporary to Ibn Turka and Ghiyāth al-Dīn, Faḍl Allāh Astarābādī (d. 1394) and the Ḥurūfīs took up Sa'd al-Dīn's equation of authoritative knowledge with productive possibility. Under Faḍl Allāh, the Persian language and its letters became keys to cosmic secrets, allowing him and his followers to break apart any sound, text, or entity for generative meta-linguistic exegesis.¹³ The shaykh taught disciples to map this meta-language onto their own bodies, imagining their faces and daily practices as manifestations of letters whose resonances fed back across the cosmos.¹⁴ Though he did not claim Ḥamūya directly, Faḍl Allāh articulated his messianic dispensation as a new way of reading, writing, speaking, and being: an idiosyncratic mode of meaning making that promised ultimate power through proliferating letterist possibilities.

Faḍl Allāh's example invites us to imagine Ḥamūya's afterlife beyond just those who would claim him by name. If the shaykh performed authority through the generative potential of his deconstructive approach, we might do better to consider the legacy of his knowledge *as a radically open sensibility*. What if we used Sa'd al-Dīn's radical openness as a lens through which to read the proliferation and sheer diversity of Sufi identities across all strata of medieval and early modern Islamic societies? What if it was not the consolidation of monolithic traditions, but rather Sufis' nuanced engagement with plurality and difference that allowed Sufism to thrive as a vehicle for pilgrimage, sacred kingship, corporate identity, institutionalized piety, antinomian critique, occult-scientific practice, encyclopedic scholasticism, and military organization? Perhaps the adaptive, appropriative, and generative potential of the sensibilities pioneered by Ḥamūya (and his colleagues) opened Sufis up to new worlds and catalyzed diverse possibilities of knowing and being that stretched beyond rarefied circles of educated elites. And perhaps, in an age of early-modern empires, it was these very same sensibilities—these same nuanced engagements with plurality and difference—that engendered new modes of domination and control.

And what of Ḥamūya's legacy for us here in the Academy? I suggest that listening carefully to the shaykh's Sufi free jazz attunes us to *ourselves* as both readers and performers of his work—and of knowledge, broadly speaking. In

13 Shahzad Bashir, *Fazlallah Astarabadi and the Hurufis* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), esp. 61–84.

14 Bashir, *Fazlallah*, 52–55, 75–76.

deconstruction and hermeneutics, respectively, theorists have long pointed to the noisy excesses of language and the role of readers in the production of meaning.¹⁵ Recent work in the history of knowledge, in turn, has demonstrated how a text's meaning changes in accordance with new concerns and conventions, new constellations of knowledge, identity, and power.¹⁶ Ḥamūya provokes us to grapple with all of these themes head on. If Sufi free jazz makes meaning by disrupting the sensibilities of its readers, then it behooves us to reflect on *our own* sensibilities as well. What might happen if we were willing to take the risk and open ourselves up to Ḥamūya's Sufi free jazz *as real knowledge*? If we were to let Ḥamūya's words reverberate through us in such a way that deconstructed the assumptions, methods, and even identities by which we would attempt to master his texts?¹⁷ This is not a call to ditch our analytical tools completely, but to use our encounter(s) with Ḥamūya to productively reimagine their constitution, uses, and possibilities.¹⁸

In my case, ironically, the philological techniques in which I had been trained made me eager to get *past* Ḥamūya's words: to mortify his lettrist flesh and liberate the secret meanings encrypted therein. What I presumed to be ascetic devotion was in fact an act of butchery. Hack as a might, I found no rarefied essences, only a heap of flesh that I myself had mangled. And yet, Ḥamūya's lettrist heart kept beating. My attempts at mastery were disturbed—unsettled, unnerved, even—by what John T. Hamilton calls a *philology of the flesh*.¹⁹ I was pulled up short, in other words, by Ḥamūya's loving attention to

15 See, for example, Jacques Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," in *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 61–171; and Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013).

16 See the Introduction, pp. 8 ff.

17 As I note in the Introduction, I understand deconstruction not as an act of demolishing, but as a mode of generative rethinking beyond simple creation and destruction. See p. 4, n. 5.

18 Here I take inspiration from Travis Zadeh's *Wonders and Rarities: The Marvelous Book That Traveled the World and Mapped the Cosmos*, which demonstrates how a serious engagement with Zakariyyā' ibn Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd al-Qazwīnī's (d. 1283) *Wonders and Rarities* (*Ajā'ib al-makhlūqāt*) opens up productive possibilities for illuminating his world and reorienting our own. Zadeh couples rigorous philology with techniques of imagination inspired by Qazwīnī's text to conjure diverse constellations of knowing, being, and feeling from across space and time. In so doing, Zadeh develops tools for *imagining otherwise*, sensitizing us not only to the ruptures that distinguish Qazwīnī's world from our own, but to the occult resonances that bind them together as well. See Travis E. Zadeh, *Wonders and Rarities: The Marvelous Book That Traveled the World and Mapped the Cosmos* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2023); and my review in Cyril V. Uy II, "Wonders and Rarities: The Marvelous Book That Traveled the World and Mapped the Cosmos by Travis Zadeh (Review)," *Magic, Ritual & Witchcraft* 18, no. 3 (Winter 2023): 476–479.

19 As Hamilton explains, "... In contrast to the philology of the body, there is a *philology of the flesh*. Whereas the former attends to the book's instrumental capacity, the philology

the fleshy qualities of the letter: its physicality, how it looks and sounds, its texture and tone, how it puns, rhymes, and associates within and across languages.²⁰ Listening to Ḥamūya and hearing him as Sufi free jazz attuned me to the epistemological (and ontological) implications of his boundless play. The medium is the message. *Ẓāhir* and *bāṭin* are inextricable.

But what can one do with such play? Lawrence Kramer suggests that to grasp a musical expression is to give one back.²¹ I have spent the last decade and a half immersed in Sufi texts, and twice that as a musician. Nevertheless, I imagined music as something I could protect from the merciless theorizing of academic work. I held out hope, conversely, that I could safeguard my scholarship from the uncomfortably unexamined experiences I brought to music.²² Playing along with Ḥamūya's Sufi free jazz—giving back, participating, responding to it as real knowledge—forced me to consider how I might integrate my musical sensibilities with rigorous philological, historical, and critical methods. The resonances that emerged in the process have been both personally satisfying and analytically productive. They have brought historical and philosophical questions into greater relief, pushing me to experiment with different ways of uncovering, identifying, and evaluating evidence. Reflecting on training, performance, and musical experience, for example, has underscored the importance of ritual practices, social bonds, and genre conventions, of the interplay between the material, social, experiential, and intellectual.²³ Hearing Ḥamūya

of the flesh exhibits a love that never wants to part with the word's material manifestation. It effectively denies the separateness of *logos* and its physical form, often taking the verbal form itself as content. In the philology of the flesh, meaning is not merely a detachable kernel of sense *embodied* within the book's binding—like a soul awaiting liberation from its somatic prison—but rather a nondetachable presence *incarnate* in every word." John T. Hamilton, *Philology of the Flesh* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 7.

20 See Hamilton, *Philology*, 6.

21 Lawrence Kramer, *Expression and Truth: On the Music of Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 150. Emphasis mine.

22 Though he explores a different set of personal, methodological, and historical questions, I have found Robert Orsi's work to be crucial for thinking through my own experiences. See, for example, Robert A. Orsi, "Have You Ever Prayed to Saint Jude? Reflections on Fieldwork in Catholic Chicago," in *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 146–176.

23 Integrating theoretical analysis into my relationship with music has also generated new kinds of satisfaction and enjoyment. Reading scholarship in critical improvisation and jazz studies, for example, has enriched how I experience bebop, hard bop, and free jazz, allowing me to enjoy—even at an affective level—records and genres I previously found impenetrable. Likewise, exploring questions of sensibility, performance, interaction, and meaning in Ḥamūya's work has informed a more self-reflexive approach to my own gigs, hopefully for the better.

with an ear for music has foregrounded tone, gesture, feel, and particularity as potent modes of making meaning.²⁴ It has implicated readers and listeners—not as u-topic egos, but historical beings in place and time.

Ḥamūya's Sufi free jazz may inspire these openings, but the dissonance is never resolved. His letters overflow their bounds. I color his voice, and he sets the stage for mine. There's always the question of distance, otherness, and time. What I've come to know of Ḥamūya lies somewhere between me and him, between our worlds, as much resonance as rupture. How you take it is now between us. Perhaps knowledge is in the tension itself.

A young Ibn 'Arabī once said that it's all about the yes and the no, or rather, the yes-no. Between yes and no, he explained, *that's* where spirits take flight from matter—and heads from bodies.

24 For the epistemic value of these elements vis-à-vis musical expression, see Kramer, *Expression and Truth*, 153.

Biographical Essay

Before delving into Sa'd al-Dīn's biography, we must first address the divergent forms of his family name. The Arabic and Persian sources present a wide variety of spellings, but the most common are as follows:

حمويه | حموى | حمويى | الحمويى | الحمويى

Scholars writing in the Latin script have offered their own diverse renderings, including Ḥamūya, Ḥammūya, Ḥamawayh, Ḥamuwayī, al-Ḥamawī, al-Ḥammūī, and the various permutations of these forms that stem from different transliteration systems. Drawing evidence from analogous names dating back to the Sasanian Period, Sa'd Nafīsī argues that the suffix would have been originally pronounced as /-ūyh/, with the *hā'* either lightly enunciated or not at all. Though he cites other examples from the medieval period, he does not explicitly discuss a change in pronunciation apart from a shift to the modern Persian /-ūyih/.¹ Based on evidence from Kubrā's *ijāza* to Sa'd al-Dīn and early manuscripts of *The Book of the Beloved* (*Kitāb al-Maḥbūb*), Jamal Elias argues that the name should be vocalized as Ḥamuwayī.²

In light of this vast diversity of forms, I have adopted the simplest spelling of the name—Ḥamūya—for the sake of convenience and clarity.³

- 1 Sa'd Nafīsī, "Khāndān-i Sa'd al-Dīn-i Ḥamawī," *Kunjkāwihā-yi 'Ilmī wa Adabī* 83 (1950), 8–9.
- 2 Jamal J. Elias, "The Sufi Lords of Bahrabad: Sa'd al-Din and Sadr al-Din Hamuwayi," *Iranian Studies* 27, no. 1/4 (1994), 53–58.
- 3 Systems of transliteration notwithstanding, my choice dovetails with that of Paul Ballanfat, Lisa Alexandrin, Marijan Molé, Spencer Trimmingham, Hamid Algar, Hermann Landolt, and Bruce Lawrence. See Paul Ballanfat, "Controverses sur le rôle de l'imagination: Ibn al-'Arabī et l'école Kubrawī," *Ishraq: Islamic Philosophy Yearbook*, no. 2 (2012), 586; Elizabeth Ross Alexandrin, "Seals and Sealing of *Walāyah* in Ṣūfī and Shī'ī Texts: The Cases of al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī and Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūyah," in *Philosophy and Intellectual Life in Shī'ah Islam: Symposium 2015*, ed. Sajjad H. Rizvi and Saiyad Nizamuddin Ahmad (Leiden: Brill, 2017): 61–93; Marijan Molé, "Les Kubrawīya entre Sunnisme et Shiisme aux huitième et neuvième siècles de l'Hégire," *REI* 29, no. 1 (1961), 74 ff.; J. Spencer Trimmingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 99; Najm al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 1256), *The Path of God's Bondsmen from Origin to Return* (*Merṣād al-'ebād men al-mabdā' elā'l-ma'ād*): *A Sufi Compendium by Najm al-Dīn Rāzī, Known as Dāya*, trans. Hamid Algar (Delmar: Caravan Books, 1982), 3–4; Nūr al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Isfarāyīnī (d. 1317), *Le révélateur des mystères*, trans. Hermann Landolt (Lagrasse:

Now onto biography proper. According to his great-grandson Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ḥamūya (fl. 14th c.), Sa'd al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Mu'ayyad Ḥamūya was born in Baḥrābād (northeastern Iran) on the evening of January 28, 1191.⁴

Verdier, 1986), 31; and Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā' (d. 1325), *Nizam Ad-Din Awliya: Morals for the Heart*, trans. Bruce B. Lawrence (New York: Paulist Pr, 1991), 229–230.

- 4 Ghiyāth al-Dīn gives the Hijrī date as 23 Dhū al-Ḥijja, AH 586. Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Murād al-murīdīn*, ed. S.A.A. Mīr-Bāqirī Fard and Z. Najafī (Tehran: Mu'assasat-i Muṭala'āt-i Islāmī-yi Dānishgāh-i Tīhrān—Dānishgāh-i Makgīl, 2011), 3.

Ghiyāth al-Dīn's *Goal of the Seekers* (*Murād al-murīdīn*) offers the most detailed account of Sa'd al-Dīn's life as the only extant hagiography dedicated to him. I rely primarily on Ghiyāth al-Dīn for the biography that follows, supplementing his account with other sources where relevant. For more on *The Goal of the Seekers*, see S.A.A. Mīr-Bāqirī Fard and Z. Najafī's introduction to their edition of the text and their stand alone article: Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, i–xxv and S.A.A. Mīr-Bāqirī Fard and Z. Najafī, "Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya dar Murād al-murīdīn," *Muṭala'āt-i 'Irfānī* 88, no. 9 (2009): 133–154.

Other premodern sources that report biographical information about Ḥamūya include Shams al-Dīn Abū al-Muzaffar Yūsuf ibn Qizūghlī Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī (d. 1257), *Mir'āt al-zamān fī ta'rīkh al-a'yān*, ed. Muḥammad Barakāt, Kāmil al-Kharrāt, and 'Ammār Rihāwī, 23 vols. (Damascus: Dār al-Risāla al-'Alamiyya, 2013), XXII.424; Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī al-Qazwīnī (d. 1349), *Tārīkh-i guzīda* (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1983), 670–671 and idem, *The Ta'rīkh-i-Guzīda or "Select History" of Ḥamdu'llāh Mustawfī-i-Qazwīnī. Compiled in A.H. 730 (A.D. 1330) and Now Abridged in English from a Manuscript Dated A.H. 857 (A.D. 1453). Part II, Containing the Abridged Translation and Indices*, ed. Edward G. Browne (Leiden: Brill, 1913), 216; 'Afīf al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh ibn As'ad al-Yāfī'ī (d. 1367), *Mir'āt al-jinān wa-'ibrat al-yaqzān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1997), IV.34, 94; Faṣīḥ Aḥmad ibn Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Khwāfī (d. 1445), *Mujmal-i Faṣīḥī*, ed. Muḥsin Naṣrābādī (Tehran: Asāṭir, 1966), II.268–269, 290–291, 313, 319; and Amīn Aḥmad Rāzī (17th c.), *Tadhkira-yi Haft Iqlīm*, ed. Sayyid Muḥammad Riḍā Tāhirī (Tehran: Soroush Press, 1999), II.837.

Premodern sources that report accounts of Ḥamūya's thought and anecdotes about his relationships with other Sufis include the following:

- 'Azīz Nasafī (d. before 1300), *Kitāb al-Insān al-kāmil*, ed. Marijan Molé, 3rd ed. (Tehran-Paris: L'Institut Francais de Recherche en Iran / Editions Tahuri, 1993), esp. 80, 109, 316, 320–322—Nasafī recounts his time as a student of Sa'd al-Dīn in Khurāsān and relates anecdotes about his teachings.
- idem, *Kashf al-ḥaqā'iq*, ed. A. Dāmghānī (Tehran: Bungāh-i Tarjuma wa Nashr-i Kitāb, 1965), 7—Nasafī recounts a dream in which he is visited by the Prophet Muḥammad, Sa'd al-Dīn, and Abū 'Abd Allāh Mūhammad ibn Khafīf (d. 982). See my brief discussion of the dream in the Coda, p. 224.
- Mu'ayyad al-Dīn al-Jandī (d. ca. 1300), *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Mashhad: Intishārāt-i Dānishgāh-i Mashhad, 1982), 107—al-Jandī reports an anecdote involving Ḥamūya, Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 1274), and a student of Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī's (d. 1240) named Shams al-Dīn Ismā'īl ibn Sawdakīn (d. 1248) in Damascus. See the discussion on p. 239 below.
- Nūr al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Isfarāyīnī (d. 1317), *Kāshif al-asrār*, ed. Hermann Landolt (Tehran: University of Tehran—McGill University, 1980), 45–55—al-Isfarāyīnī reports that while in Juwayn, he heard Ḥamūya's disciples advance their master's claim that the begin-

Sa'd al-Dīn's family took their name from Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya Juwaynī (d. 1136), a renowned Sufi shaykh with connections to 'Ayn al-Quḍāt al-Ḥamadānī (d. 1131).⁵ Through the Ḥamūya family namesake, Sa'd al-Dīn traced his lineage back to such luminaries as the Khurāsānī Ḥanbalī Sufi 'Abd Allāh al-Anṣārī (d. 1089)—author of the classic *Stations of the Travelers* (*Manāzil al-sā'irīn*) and *Generations of the Sufis* (*Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*)—and

ning of sainthood was the end of prophecy. He notes that he rejected the claim at first, but then came to accept it after God revealed its meaning to him.

- Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā' (d. 1325), *Morals*, 229–230—Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā' reports a story in which Sa'd al-Dīn is commanded to visit Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī (d. 1261) in a dream, but dies before he can complete the journey.
- 'Alā' al-Dawla Simnānī (d. 1336), *Chihil majlis-i Shaykh 'Alā' al-Dawla Simnānī*, ed. Najib Māyil Hirawī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Adīb, 1987), 172–176—Simnānī reports that Ḥamūya set sainthood above prophecy, then offers a lengthy refutation of his claim.
- 'Abd al-Rahmān Jāmī (d. 1492), *Nafahāt al-uns min ḥaḍarāt al-quds*, ed. Maḥmūd 'Ābidī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Iṭṭilā'āt, 1991), 431–433 (see also 423, 426–427, 428–429, 474, 554)—Jāmī offers a brief discussion of Ḥamūya's work ("... so long as one's vision is closed to the light of unveiling, [his writing] will be impossible to apprehend"), transcribes several lines of his poetry, and records anecdotes about his spiritual feats and relationships with other Sufis (e.g., Kubrā, Majd al-Dīn Baghdādī (d. 1219), and Qūnawī). These narratives are often lifted directly from other sources, including al-Yāfi'ī, al-Jandī, and an uncredited citation from Nasafī's *Kitāb al-Insān al-kāmil* (Jāmī, 432 and Nasafī, 109).
- Ḥāfiẓ Ḥusayn Karbalā'ī (d. 1589), *Rawḍāt al-Jinān wa-jannāt al-janān*, 2 vols. (Tabriz: Sutūda, 2005), 11.392—Karbalā'ī cites a few lines of Ḥamūya's poetry about the coming of the Mahdī.
- Nūr Allāh Shūshtarī (d. 1610), *Majālis al-mu'minīn*, 2 vols. (Tehran: Kitābfurūshī-yi Islamiyya, 1986), 11.75–77—Shūshtarī cites a quote from Nasafī (*Insān al-Kāmil*, 320–321) to support his assertion that Sa'd al-Dīn was a Shī'ī who limited the saints to the Twelver Imāms. He also reports what he alleges to be Ḥamūya's last will and testament.

For detailed discussions of the medieval and early modern sources that reference Ḥamūya's life and thought, see Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *al-Miṣbāḥ fī al-taṣawwuf*, ed. Najib Māyil Hirawī (Tehran: Mawlā, 1983), 9–12; Nafisī, "Khāndān," 15–28; Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, i–viii; and Mīr-Bāqirī Fard and Najafī, "Sa'd al-Dīn," 135–137.

Finally, our Ḥamūya should not be confused with another important member of the Ḥamūya clan: Sa'd al-Dīn ibn Ḥamūya al-Juwaynī (d. 1274), a Damascene military commander, historian, and later Sufi whose lost chronicle was a key source for Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī's *Mir'āt al-zamān*. For more on him, see Claude Cahen, "Une source pour l'histoire ayyubide: Les mémoires de Sa'd al-Dīn ibn Ḥamawīya al-Juwaynī," in *Les peuples musulmans dans l'histoire médiévale*, by Claude Cahen (Damas: Institut français, 1977), 457–482.

- 5 Nafisī reconstructs Sa'd al-Dīn's full genealogy as follows: Sa'd al-Dīn Abū al-Sa'ādāt Muḥammad ibn Mu'īn al-Dīn [al-]Mu'ayyad ibn Jamāl al-Dīn Abū Bakr 'Abd Allāh [al-]Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Abī 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya. See Nafisī, "Khāndān," 8. For Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya and 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, see Jāmī, *Nafahāt*, 417–418.

Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī (d. 674), a companion of the Prophet Muḥammad.⁶ By the 13th century, the prestigious Ḥamūya clan had produced a dynasty of powerful Sufis who claimed seats of institutional authority across Egypt and Greater Syria.⁷

After completing his elementary Qurʾānic education in Baḥrābād, Saʿd al-Dīn traveled to Nīshāpūr to study at the Sulṭāniyya Madrasa under a certain Muʿīn al-Dīn Jājarmī. While Ghiyāth al-Dīn does not offer much about this period of the shaykh's life, he reports a brief incident in which a precocious young Saʿd al-Dīn bested a formidable group of Ḥanafīs in a public debate, much to the delight of his teacher and beleaguered Shāfiʿī comrades.⁸ From Nīshāpūr, the young Ḥamūya traveled to Khwārazm, where he stayed from July/August 1208 to July/August 1212. There he studied the exoteric religious sciences under Shihāb al-Dīn al-Khīwaqī (d. after 1218), a Shāfiʿī scholar renowned for his legal and linguistic knowledge.⁹ After Saʿd al-Dīn completed his course of study with al-Khīwaqī, Ghiyāth al-Dīn reports that the Khwārazmshāh ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. 1220) recruited him to replace the late Jājarmī as an instructor at the Sulṭāniyya Madrasa in Nīshāpūr.¹⁰ Although Saʿd al-Dīn had already resolved to give up the exoteric sciences in favor of Sufi practice, ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn's vizier and notables showered him with such lavish gifts and praise that

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- 6 See Nafīsī's discussion in "Khāndān," 6–10. For ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī, see Ahmet T. Karamestafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 93–96; and Alexander Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History* (Boston: Brill, 2000), 135–138. For Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī, see Michael Lecker, "Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī" in *EI3*.
- 7 These Ḥamūya family shaykhs include, for example, ʿImād al-Dīn Abū Faṭḥ ʿUmar ibn ʿAlī (d. 1181), who was appointed the first Chief Sufi (*shaykh al-shuyūkh*) of Greater Syria and Ṣadr al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad (d. 1220), who presided over Damascus before being appointed Chief Sufi of Egypt. Ṣadr al-Dīn, in turn, passed the position down to his four sons—ʿImād al-Dīn ʿUmar ibn Muḥammad (d. 1239), Kamāl al-Dīn Aḥmad (d. 1242), Muʿīn al-Dīn Ḥasan (d. 1246), and Fakhr al-Dīn Yūsuf (d. 1249)—and a few of his grandsons. See Nafīsī, "Khāndān," 11–13; and Nathan Hofer, "The Origins and Development of the Office of the 'Chief Sufi' in Egypt, 1173–1325," *Journal of Sufi Studies* 3, no. 1 (2014): 1–37. For more on these figures, their positions, and Ḥamūya's relationship with them, see Chapter 4, especially Section 5 (pp. 162 ff.).
- 8 Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 4.
- 9 Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 4–5, 163. For more on al-Khīwaqī, see Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Nasawī (d. 1249/1250), *Sīrat al-sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Mankubirtī*, ed. Ḥafīz Aḥmad Ḥamdī (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, 1953), 109–113; Ibn al-Athīr (d. 1233), *al-Kāmil fī al-tāʾrikh*, ed. Muḥammad Yūsuf al-Daqqāq, 4th ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2003), x.402 ff. (under AH 617); and Chapter 4, p. 171.
- 10 For more on ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad, see Charles E. Bosworth, "ALĀʾ-AL-DĪN MOḤAMMAD" in *Elr*.

he could not in good faith refuse their offer. Instead, Ḥamūya donned his new robes, rode into the madrasa at Nishāpūr, and delivered a series of erudite inaugural lectures. When the day was finished, he stepped down from his post and left the madrasa, never to return again.¹¹

From Nishāpūr, Sa'd al-Dīn made a brief stop in Baḥrābād where he sold the Khwārazmshāh's gifts and used the money to rebuild his family's mosque and *khānaqāh*.¹² He then set out from Baḥrābād for Mosul, where he met up with Ṣadr al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad (d. 1220)—his father's cousin and Chief Sufi (*shaykh al-shuyūkh*) of Egypt—and his son 'Imād al-Dīn 'Umar ibn Muḥammad (d. 1239), who were returning from a diplomatic mission to Baghdad on behalf of the Ayyūbids.¹³ From Mosul, Sa'd al-Dīn accompanied his relatives to the al-Aqṣā Mosque in Jerusalem, where Ṣadr al-Dīn initiated him into the illustrious lineage of Ḥamūya family Sufis.¹⁴ Although the older shaykh secured Sa'd al-Dīn a salaried teaching post at the local Shāfi'i madrasa, the

11 Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 5–6.

12 Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 6–7. Often translated as a Sufi lodge, convent, inn, or monastery, the term *khānaqāh* refers to an institution of Sufi teaching, residence, and practice, organized under the authority of a spiritual master. See Gerhard Böwering and Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "KĀNAQĀH", *Elr*.

13 According to Ghiyāth al-Dīn, his report of the event is an Arabic translation of Sa'd al-Dīn's words as relayed to his student Muḥammad al-Mu'adhhdhan al-Dihistānī (d. ?) and transcribed by his son Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm (d. 1322). See Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 9–11. As Mīr-Bāqirī Fard and Najafi explain in their Persian introduction to the text, no extant sources have been found to shed light on Dihistānī's biography. See Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, xiv.

14 Faṣīḥ Khwāfi dates Ḥamūya's initiation under Ṣadr al-Dīn to the year 1219/1220. See Khwāfi, *Mujmal*, 11.290. Ghiyāth al-Dīn places the event around 1217 when Ṣadr al-Dīn returns with his son 'Imād al-Dīn from a diplomatic mission to Baghdad and the caliphal palace (*dār al-khalīfa*), though he suggests the date is conjectural. See Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 10–11.

Ghiyāth al-Dīn records Sa'd al-Dīn's spiritual genealogy through Ṣadr al-Dīn as follows: (i) Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, (ii) Ṣadr al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan, (iii) 'Imād al-Dīn 'Umar, (iv) Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya, (v) Abū 'Alī Fārmadī, (vi) Abū al-Qāsim Kurragānī, (vii) Abū 'Uthmān Maghribī, (viii) Abū 'Amr Zujājī, (ix) Junayd Baghdādī, (x) Sarī Saqaṭī, (xi) Ma'rūf Karkhī, (xii) 'Alī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā, (xiii) Mūsā Kāzīm, (xiv) Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, (xv) Muḥammad Bāqir, (xvi) Imām Zayn al-'Ābidīn, (xvii) Imām Ḥusayn, (xviii) 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, (xix) The Prophet Muḥammad. See Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 37–38. Ghiyāth al-Dīn also presents an alternate line: (x) Ma'rūf Karkhī, (xi) Dāwūd al-Ṭā'i, (xii) Ḥabīb al-'Ajāmī, (xiii) Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, (xiv) 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, (xv) The Prophet Muḥammad.

See also Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a (d. 1270), who records the same genealogy for Ṣadr al-Dīn, along with several "alternate lines," including a direct bestowal of the *khirqā* from the Prophet Muḥammad, to Khidr, to Muḥammad ibn Ḥamūya. Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *Uyūn al-anbā' fi ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*, ed. Nizār Riḍā (Beirut: Manshūrāt Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāt, n.d.), 740–741; and Trimingham, *Orders*, 262.

newly initiated Ḥamūya politely declined the offer and set out for the Ḥijāz to memorize the Qurʾān.¹⁵

After a stint in the Ḥijāz, Saʿd al-Dīn set off for Khwārazm where he underwent a rigorous program of Sufi training under Najm al-Dīn Kubrā (d. 1221).¹⁶ Saʿd al-Dīn mastered Kubrā's curriculum with characteristic aplomb and was granted a teaching license (*ijāza*) in March 1220.¹⁷ As one of Kubrā's *khalīfas*, he joined a renowned group of luminaries that included Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī (d. 1219), Bābā Kamāl Jandī (d. 1273), Raḍī al-Dīn ʿAlī Lālā (d. 1244), Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī (d. 1261), Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1256, also known as Najm al-Dīn Dāya), and Jamāl al-Dīn Gīlī (d. 1258).¹⁸ Even among Kubrā's elite disciples, Saʿd al-Dīn seems to have held an important place. According to Jāmī (d. 1492), Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī turned to him for help after he accidentally insulted their master with his arrogant boasting.¹⁹ Multiple sources highlight Saʿd al-Dīn's intimate friendship with Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī.²⁰ Ghiyāth al-Dīn reports that

15 Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 9–11. Later in his hagiography, Ghiyāth al-Dīn reports on the authority of Kamāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Māhān al-Simmānī (d. ?) that Ḥamūya enjoyed the company of a certain Zayn al-Dīn al-İşfahānī (d. ?) while in Mecca. He also recounts on the authority of “most of [Ḥamūya's] companions” that the shaykh referred to Zayn al-Dīn as his “shaykh from the unseen world whose command he was ordered to obey” (*kāna ... shaykhī min ʿalam al-ghayb wa-kuntu maʾmūran bi-imtithāl amrihi*), though his narrative also includes the moment when this order was lifted. See Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 64, 66. Mīr-Bāqirī Fard and Najafī do not mention Zayn al-Dīn al-İşfahānī in their introduction to the *Murād*, and I have been unable to track down any bibliographic information regarding him.

16 For Ḥamūya's training under Kubrā, see Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 13–15. For more on Kubrā's program of Sufi training, see Gerhard Böwering, “Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā on Ṣūfī Seclusion, *Risāla fi ʿl-khabwa*,” *Ishraq: Islamic Philosophy Yearbook*, no. 5 (2014): 268–291.

17 Kubrā's *ijāza* to Saʿd al-Dīn records the following spiritual genealogy: (i) Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, (ii) Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, (iii) Ismāʿīl al-Qaṣrī, (iv) Muḥammad ibn Mānkīl, (v) Dāwūd ibn Muḥammad, known as Khādīm al-Fuqarāʾ, (vi) Abū al-ʿAbbās ibn Idrīs, (vii) Abū al-Qāsim ibn Ramaḍān, (viii) Abū Yaʿqūb al-Ṭabarī, (ix) Abū ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUthmān, (x) Abū Yaʿqūb al-Nahrajūrī, (xi) Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sūsī, (xii) ʿAbd al-Wāḥid ibn Zayd, (xiii) Kumayl ibn Ziyād, (xiv) ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, (xv) The Prophet Muḥammad.

For the *ijāza*, see Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, *Ijāza li-Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Murad Buhari MS 318, fols. 57^b–58^a and Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 17–19.

18 Jāmī, *Nafahāt*, 427. Jāmī notes that some also list Bahāʾ al-Dīn Walad (d. 1231), the father of Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 1273) among Kubrā's disciples. For more on Kubrā's disciples, see Hamid Algar, “KOBRAWIYA IL THE ORDER,” in *Elr*.

19 Jāmī, *Nafahāt*, 428–429. See also Eyad Abuali's analysis of the narrative in idem, “The Genesis of Kubrawī Sufism: A Study of Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī” (PhD dissertation, SOAS, University of London, 2017), 39 ff.

20 See, for example, Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 23–25 and Faṣīḥ Khwāfī, *Mujmal*, 11.290. Reports

the bond between the two was so strong that it carried over into their spiritual training and visionary experiences. Likewise, when their time together came to an end, each scribbled touching farewell verses for the other as a parting gift.²¹

When the Mongols reached Khwārazm in 1220/1221, al-Yāfi'ī reports that Kubrā commanded Ḥamūya and a few other disciples to flee while he and the rest stayed behind to fight.²² Following his master's orders, the newly minted shaykh left Khwārazm, traveling through Khurāsān and Ṭabaristān (Mazanderan) to Iraq, Diyarbakır, the Ḥijāz, Egypt, and Greater Syria.²³ While he does not offer specific dates for Ḥamūya's time in Central Asia and Iran, Ghiyāth al-Dīn puts him in the Ḥijāz in 1228/1229, Egypt in September/October 1230 (when he wrote an *ijāza* for a certain 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Miṣrī), Mosul and Baghdad from June to August 1230, and Hebron (*al-Khalīl*) in November/December 1230. From March to June 1232, Ḥamūya found himself in Baghdad, where he led sessions teaching al-Baghawī's (d. 1122) *Lamps of the Sunna* (*Maṣābiḥ al-sunna*) to a group of companions and disciples (including a certain 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Umar ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥakīm al-Arghiyānī) in the Manṣūr mosque.²⁴

of a close friendship between Ḥamūya and Bākharzī are corroborated by extant copies of an epistolary exchange between the two that the latter initiated on March 6, 1220. For Sa'd al-Dīn's letter to Bākharzī, see Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, "Makātīb-i Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥammū'ī," in *Jashn-Nāma-yi Ustād Sayyid Aḥmad Husaynī Ashkūrī*, ed. Aḥmad Khāma-Yār and Rasūl Ja'faryān (Tehran: Nashr-i 'Ilm, 2013), 482–483. For Bākharzī's letter to Sa'd al-Dīn, see Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī, *Nāma ba-Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehid Ali Paşa MS 1382 fols. 81^a–83^b and idem, *Maḥmū'a-yi āthār-i shaykh al-'ālam Sayf al-Dīn-i Bākharzī*, ed. Ghulām-Nabī Tawakkulī Pushta-ī, 'Āmir Tawakkulī Pushta-ī, and Muḥammad Nāṣir Mawdūdī (Tehran: Dībāya, 2018), 55–57.

21 Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 23–25.

22 Yāfi'ī, *Mir'āt*, 1v.34.

23 Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 19, 163.

24 Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 164. It is possible that the dates for Sa'd al-Dīn's first stint in Baghdad have been misprinted in Mir-Bāqirī Fard and Najafī's edition or miscopied in their manuscript source. Ghiyāth al-Dīn's timeline skips from AH 627 in Egypt to AH 628 in Hebron, back to AH 627 in Mosul and Baghdad, and then forward again to AH 629 in Baghdad. It may be the case that either the scribe or the editors misread a seven (*sab*⁷) for a nine (*tis*⁹), which are nearly indistinguishable when written in undotted characters (سع vs سعة). In my copy of the manuscript, the dates are undotted, though the *sin* of *sab*⁷ is written as an extended line, rather than a set of three teeth. See Kitābkhāna-yi Markazī-yi Danishgāh-i Tihārān MS 2451, ~fol. 51^b (the folia numbers are mostly illegible in my microfilm copy).

Adjusting for such an error would produce a much more plausible timeline, placing Ḥamūya in Egypt in September/October 1230, Hebron in November/December 1230, Baghdad from March to June 1232, Mosul in June/July 1232, and then back to Baghdad in August

While in Baghdad, Sa'd al-Dīn also studied with Shihāb al-Dīn 'Umar al-Suhrawardī (d. 1234), from whom he learned a special *dhikr* formula.²⁵ Suhrawardī's disciples purportedly had trouble grasping the meaning of Sa'd al-Dīn's arcane teachings, leading them to reject him and dismiss his abilities. According to Ghiyāth al-Dīn, Suhrawardī intervened, scolding these naysayers and confirming the authority of Sa'd al-Dīn's knowledge with the following words: "All of what he says is the Truth, for it is hidden knowledge with which God has distinguished him, teaching him directly from Himself ... He is among those who fly, not those who walk!"²⁶

From December 1232 to May 1233, Sa'd al-Dīn passed through Harran, Aleppo, Homs, and al-Nabk on the road to Damascus, where he resided until September/October 1240.²⁷ According to Nafisī, Mount Qāsiyūn in Damascus was a hotbed for 13th-century Sufi activity and it was not uncommon to find young Sufis flocking to the area in hopes of devoting themselves to a renowned shaykh.²⁸ It was here in Qāsiyūn that Ḥamūya mingled with the group of disciples that had gathered around Ibn 'Arabī (d. 1240).²⁹ While other sources equivocate as to whether or not Sa'd al-Dīn ever met Ibn 'Arabī in person, *The*

1232. As another point of evidence external to *The Goal of the Seekers*, a copy of Ḥamūya's, *Risālat al-qahr wa-l-luṭf* extant in H. Çelebi MS 442 (fol. 95^a) dates its composition to September 4, 1231 in Baghdad.

25 See Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 11, 26–27 and Faṣīḥ Khwāfi 11.290, 319. Ghiyāth al-Dīn's accounts of Ḥamūya's shaykhs and their roles are not completely clear. Although he relates the story of Sa'd al-Dīn's training under Kubrā (including both *khalwa* and *dhikr*) before his encounter with Suhrawardī, he refers specifically to the latter as the shaykh who taught him *dhikr* (*shaykh dhikrihi*), Kubrā as the shaykh under whom he underwent spiritual retreat and companionship (*shaykh khalwatihi wa-ṣuḥbatihī*), and Ṣadr al-Dīn Ḥamūya as the shaykh who bestowed the *khirqā* upon him (*shaykh khirqatihi*). Faṣīḥ Khwāfi, on the other hand, explains that Sa'd al-Dīn learned *dhikr* from both Kubrā and Suhrawardī. Though Khwāfi does not specify where Ḥamūya initially met Suhrawardī, he does mention a gathering of Sufi shaykhs in Mecca during the year 1219/1220 that included Ḥamūya, Suhrawardī, Awḥad al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (d. 1238), and a certain Majd al-Dīn al-Abharī (d. ?). For more on this discrepancy, see pp. 163 ff. in Chapter 4.

26 Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 27.

27 Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 164–165. More specifically, Ghiyāth al-Dīn puts Ḥamūya in Harrān from December 1232 to February 1233; in the environs of Aleppo on March 18, 1233; in Homs on May 1, 1233; and in al-Nabk on May 3, 1233. Although he does not specify when Sa'd al-Dīn arrived in Damascus, Ghiyāth al-Dīn reports that the shaykh penned a treatise entitled *ʿĪd al-fiṭr* in Qāsiyūn on September 6, 1233. Coincidentally, Google Maps suggests the same itinerary for one wishing to drive from Harran to Damascus.

28 Nafisī, "Khāndān," 15.

29 Sa'd al-Dīn's time in Qāsiyūn is well recognized. See, for example, Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt*, xxii.424; al-Yāfi'ī, *Mir'āt*, iv.94; and Jāmī, *Nafahāt*, 431.

Goal of the Seekers (*Murād al-murīdīn*) paints the two Sufis as respectful colleagues who gathered frequently to discuss advanced topics.³⁰

While in Qāsiyūn, Ḥamūya developed a close friendship with Ibn ‘Arabī’s chief disciple Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 1274). According to Jāmī, the latter spent a great deal of time with Sa’d al-Dīn, from whom he would seek answers to his many questions.³¹ Qūnawī’s own *Unraveling of the Mysteries behind the Wisdom of the Bezels* (*al-Fukūk fī asrār mustanadāt ḥikam al-Fuṣūṣ*) remembers Ḥamūya fondly, recalling how he could contemplate existents in the absolute world of subtle exemplars (*‘ālam al-mithāl al-muṭlaq*) and grasp the nuances of self-disclosure.³² Shedding light on their personal relationship, Mu’ayyad al-Dīn al-Jandī’s (d. ca. 1300) *Commentary on the Bezels of Wisdom* (*Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*) records an incident in which Ṣadr al-Dīn and another of Ibn ‘Arabī’s disciples named Shams al-Dīn Ismā‘īl ibn Sawdakīn (d. 1248) met up with Ḥamūya for a *samā’* session in Damascus.³³ In the middle of the session, Ḥamūya rose up, crossed his arms over his chest, and bowed his head in reverence. As the session came to a close, he kept his eyes closed and called out for Qūnawī and Ibn Sawdakīn. When the two stepped forward, Sa’d al-Dīn pulled them in for a tight embrace. Finally opening his eyes, the shaykh revealed that he had just experienced a vision of the Prophet and wanted to gaze upon their faces while the image was still fresh in his mind.³⁴

30 Ghīyāth al-Dīn reports that whenever Ḥamūya would drop by for a visit, Ibn ‘Arabī’s pen would immediately run dry, leading him to remark, “One who is more deserving of us than writing has now come to the door of the mosque!” Ghīyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 29. Jāmī, on the other hand, notes that Qūnawī brought Ḥamūya’s teachings to Ibn ‘Arabī, but does not record evidence of any direct interaction. See Jāmī, *Nafahāt*, 431–432. Whether or not they met in person, copies of an epistle penned by Sa’d al-Dīn suggest that the two were at least in correspondence with one another. Ḥamūya, “Makātīb,” 459–462 and idem, *Sharḥ bāl wa-rashḥ ḥāl* (*Risāla ilā Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ‘Arabī*), Los Angeles, UCLA Library, Special Collections, Caro Minasian MS 32, fols. 99–108. See also my discussion of the epistle on pp. 72 ff. in Chapter 1.

31 Jāmī, *Nafahāt*, 554.

32 Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, *al-Fukūk fī asrār mustanadāt ḥikam al-Fuṣūṣ*, ed. ‘Āsim Ibrahim al-Kayyālī (Lebanon: Books—Publisher (Kitāb—Nāshirūn), 2013), 55. For more on the *Fukūk*, see Richard Todd, *The Sufi Doctrine of Man: Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī’s Metaphysical Anthropology* (Boston: Brill, 2014), 42–43.

33 *Samā’*, often glossed as “audition,” refers to Sufi sessions in which *dhikr* formulae, prayers, and/or poetry were recited—often accompanied by musical instruments—as a means of cultivating divine knowledge, ecstatic states, or visionary experiences. See, for example, Knysch, *Islamic Mysticism*, 170–172.

34 al-Jandī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ*, 107. Jāmī quotes the passage directly, but translates it from Arabic into Persian. See Jāmī, *Nafahāt*, 432.

Ḥamūya's time in Ayyūbid territories was not without difficulties. In 1235/1236, he journeyed to Egypt, where his cousin 'Imād al-Dīn 'Umar ibn Muḥammad (d. 1239) had assumed the rank of Chief Sufi at the Sa'īd al-Su'adā', the premier state-backed *khānaqāh* in Cairo. Despite their familial bonds and the time they had spent together as travel companions, an extant epistle suggests that 'Imād al-Dīn refused to send Sa'īd al-Dīn so much as a message of welcome, much to the latter's chagrin.³⁵ Upon his return to Damascus, Ḥamūya's financial situation seems to have slowly deteriorated. The historian Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī (d. 1257) reports that Ḥamūya eventually fell into a state of utter poverty, adding that despite his dire straits, the shaykh refused to ingratiate himself with political elites, shunning even his paternal cousins.³⁶ (Perhaps the incident with 'Imād al-Dīn left him with wounded pride.³⁷)

Whatever the reason for his departure, Ḥamūya left Damascus and set his sights back east. From September/October 1241 to October/November 1244, Ghiyāth al-Dīn places him on a journey through Jākūra, Baalbek, Nusaybin, Tabriz, Gilan, Herat (where he penned an *ijāza* for a certain Kamāl al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn al-'Azīz al-Marāghīnī), and Jajarm. From this point onward, Sa'īd al-Dīn spent his time writing and teaching students between Amol and Khurāsān.³⁸ During his time in Khurāsān, Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī reports that the shaykh enjoyed the company of Mongol overlords who held him in high esteem, showered him with wealth, and even converted to Islam at his hand. He likewise received a grand reception in Amol, where he oversaw the construction of a *khānaqāh* and adjacent burial ground.³⁹

Ḥamūya issued several teaching licenses during this period. Ghiyāth al-Dīn lists a license to transmit (*ijāzat fī al-rivāya*) for Shams al-Dīn Abū Bakr ibn

35 See Ḥamūya, "Makātib," 463 and Ghiyāth al-Dīn *Murād*, 169–172. For more on the incident and Sa'īd al-Dīn's relationship with the Ḥamūyas of Egypt and Greater Syria, see Chapter 4, Section 6.

36 See Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt*, xxii.424.

37 Despite this apparent antagonism, however, Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī reports that 'Imād al-Dīn's body was buried in Sa'īd al-Dīn's *zāwiya* in Qāsiyūn after his murder in 1274. Drawing on the lost chronicle of Sa'īd al-Dīn ibn Ḥamūya—i.e., the *other* Sa'īd al-Dīn—he writes: "According to Sa'īd al-Dīn ... 'We carried him to Qāsiyūn and buried him in the *zāwiya* of the shaykh Sa'īd al-Dīn. We stitched up his wounds, and Sa'īd al-Dīn—i.e., his cousin—prayed over him'" (*qāla Sa'īd al-Dīn ... ḥamalnāhu ilā Qāsiyūn fa-dafannāhu fī zāwīyat al-shaykh Sa'īd al-Dīn wa-khayyaṭnā jirāḥātahu wa-ṣallā 'alayhi Sa'īd al-Dīn ibn 'ammihī*). Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt*, xxii.362.

38 Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 165–166. Faṣīḥ Khwāfi reports that Ḥamūya returned from Amol to Baḥrābād in 1243/1244, but does not seem to indicate any further travel. See Faṣīḥ Khwāfi, *Mujmal*, ii.313.

39 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt*, xxii.424.

‘Alī al-Maqqarī al-Jārmī in 1246; licenses to teach (sing. *ijāza*) for Najm al-Dīn ‘Uthmān ibn al-Muwaffaq al-Adkānī and Sharaf al-Dīn al-Ṭabīb al-Khūrāndī in 1247 and 1250; and certificates of investiture (sing. *nisbat al-khirqa*) for Muḥammad Zakriyyā al-Rāzī and Shihāb al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Māhān al-Simnānī in 1249/1250 and 1251.⁴⁰ One student from this period, a certain ‘Izz al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī al-Mukārim al-Ṭā’ūsī al-Qazwīnī (fl. 1260), pointed to Ḥamūya’s *Book of the Beloved* as the source of his letrist knowledge in a treatise titled *Explication of the Letters, Bringing Together the Knower and the Known (Sharḥ al-ḥurūf al-jāmi‘ bayna al-‘arīf wa-l-ma’rūf)*.⁴¹ It was during this time as well that Ḥamūya must have taught

40 Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 165–166. For the exact dates of the *ijāzas* and *nisbat khirqas*, see Section 5 of Appendix 3: List of Ḥamūya’s Works (p. 255). Ghiyāth al-Dīn also records the births of Ḥamūya’s sons Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm and Yahyā on January 13, 1247 and in March 1251, respectively. Both children were born in Khurāsān while their father was in Amol.

41 See ‘Izz al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī al-Mukārim al-Ṭā’ūsī al-Qazwīnī (fl. 1260), *Sharḥ al-ḥurūf al-jāmi‘ bayna al-‘arīf wa-l-ma’rūf*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, E.G. Browne Collection MS Y4, fols. 38^b–57^a. Ghiyāth al-Dīn names ‘Izz al-Dīn as one of Ḥamūya’s greatest disciples (*min ajallat murīdihī*) and relates a few anecdotes about him. In one tale, ‘Izz al-Dīn beseeches Ḥamūya to teach him the greatest of God’s Divine Names, but is continually rebuffed. On a journey from Ṭabaristān to Khurāsān, however, ‘Izz al-Dīn is so absorbed in Ḥamūya’s words that he fails to notice his feet have been sliced open by a bed of reeds. It is at this moment that Ḥamūya judges him worthy and begins to teach him the secrets of God’s Greatest Name. Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 66. According to Kāmil Muṣṭafā al-Shaybī, ‘Izz al-Dīn’s *Interpretation of the Letters* develops a series of prophetic and saintly cycles that culminate in Ḥamūya as the Seal of the Saints and Yas‘ā al-‘Ajām. See Kāmil Muṣṭafā al-Shaybī, *al-Ṣila bayna al-taṣawwuf wa-l-tashayyū‘*, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, 1982), II.183–185.

Unfortunately, ‘Izz al-Dīn’s *Interpretation* only came to my attention towards the end of the publication process, so I have been unable to undertake more than a cursory survey of its contents. My initial analysis confirms both that ‘Izz al-Dīn frames Ḥamūya’s *Book of the Beloved* as the fount of his own letrist knowledge and that he sketches a series of prophetic cycles that culminate in the Seal of the Saints. See al-Ṭā’ūsī al-Qazwīnī, *Sharḥ al-ḥurūf*, fol. 38^b and 45^a. At the same time, however, I have not been able to corroborate al-Shaybī’s claim that ‘Izz al-Dīn names Ḥamūya *specifically* as the Seal. Al-Shaybī seems to read ‘Izz al-Dīn’s assertion that the Seal of the Saints is the *sa‘īd al-su‘adā’* as a definite reference to Ḥamūya’s name (i.e., Sa‘d al-Dīn). See al-Shaybī, *al-Ṣila*, II.183; and al-Ṭā’ūsī al-Qazwīnī, *Sharḥ al-ḥurūf*, fol. 45^a. Such a reading is plausible, but the passage in question does not contain much else that would support al-Shaybī’s argument. Likewise, the honorifics with which ‘Izz al-Dīn introduces Ḥamūya and *The Book of the Beloved* do not name him the Seal of the Saints. Al-Ṭā’ūsī al-Qazwīnī, *Sharḥ al-ḥurūf*, fol. 38^b. In any case, a more rigorous analysis of the *Interpretation* is sure to yield fruitful insights into the afterlife of Ḥamūya’s thought and 13th-century messianism.

‘Azīz Nasafī (d. before 1300), who would go on to present his own didactic and wildly popular writings as lucid expositions of his shaykh’s abstruse thought.⁴²

Sa’d al-Dīn died in his family *khānaqāh* in Baḥrābād on a night in early March 1252.⁴³

42 For Nasafī’s explicit references to having served Ḥamūya in Khurāsān, see for example, Nasafī, *al-Insān al-kāmil*, 316, 321. For Nasafī’s framing of his work vis-à-vis that of Sa’d al-Dīn, see Nasafī, *Kashf al-ḥaqā’iq*, 7 and my discussion in the Coda.

43 Sources are not entirely consistent with respect to the date of Ḥamūya’s death, but sometime during Dhū al-Ḥijja, AH 649 (March, 1252) seems most probable.

The genealogy of shaykhs upon which Nafisi bases “Khāndān-i Sa’d al-Dīn-i Ḥamawī” records Ḥamūya’s death date as 12 Dhū al-Ḥijja, AH 649 (March 3, 1252). See Nafisi, “Khāndān,” 19. This date is corroborated by a note included in the Berlin copy of *The Book of the Beloved*, as well as the Topkapı manuscript (Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Museum Library MS A1418 (TK)), which also contains an *ijāza* for the text’s copyist signed by Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm. See Sa’d al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Kitāb al-Maḥbūb*, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (SBB), MS Or. fol. 4084, fol. 306a; and (TK) fols. 2^a (*ijāza*), 295^a (death date). (Elias erroneously records the death date listed in the Topkapı manuscript as 10 Dhū al-Ḥijja, AH 649.)

Ghiyāth al-Dīn’s *Goal of the Seekers* reports the date as the night of Saturday 18 Dhū al-Ḥijja, AH 649 (March 9, 1252). See Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Murād*, 166.

Faṣīḥ Khwāfi puts Ḥamūya’s death in AH 649 (1251/1252), but notes that some say he died in AH 650 (1252/1253) or AH 665 (1266/1267). Faṣīḥ al-Khwāfi, *Mujmal*, 11.319.

Jāmī puts his death on ‘Īd al-Aḍḥā, AH 650 (ca. February 18, 1253). Jāmī, *Nafahāt*, 433.

Ṣibt ibn al-Jawzī and al-Yāfi put his death in AH 650 (1252/1253). Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir’āt*, XII.424 and al-Yāfi, *Mir’āt*, IV.94.

Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfi puts his death in AH 658 (1260). Mustawfi, *Tārīkh*, 670.

For an in-depth discussion of the multiple dates reported for Sa’d al-Dīn’s death, see Nafisi, “Khāndān,” 18–19.

Literature Review

As this book is the first to develop a monograph-length study of Ḥamūya, it may be helpful to sketch an overview of the extant literature on him here. We can organize secondary scholarship on Ḥamūya's life and work according to the following four categories:

1 Scholarship Devoted to Mongol-Era Sufism in General and the Kubrawī Lineage in Particular

Studies devoted to “normative” Kubrawīs like ‘Alā’ al-Dawla al-Simnānī (d. 1336) often cite Ḥamūya as a polemical target, framing his engagement with Ibn ‘Arabī’s esoteric teachings as an anomaly vis-à-vis the early antagonism between Kubrawī and Akbarī worldviews.¹ Scholarship on Ḥamūya’s student ‘Azīz Nasafī typically frames the former as a precursor to Nasafī’s deep interest in Ibn ‘Arabī, his ambiguous relationship with Shī‘ism, and/or his tenuous place within the Kubrawī lineage.² Finally, broader surveys occasionally marshal Ḥamūya’s theories of prophecy and sainthood to explore the connections between Sufism and Shī‘ism during the Mongol period.³

1 See, for example, Jamal J. Elias, “The Sufi Lords of Bahrabad: Sa’d al-Din and Sadr al-Din Hamuwayi,” *Iranian Studies* 27, no. 1/4 (1994), 43–44, 156–157; and Hamid Algar, “KOBRAWIYA II. THE ORDER,” in *Elr*. An important exception here is Eyad Abuali’s 2017 doctoral dissertation, “The Genesis of Kubrawī Sufism: A Study of Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī,” which intervenes against the claim that Kubrā’s disciples rejected Sa’d al-Dīn on the grounds of “heterodox” teachings and roots the antagonism instead in a political struggle between factions gathered around the prominent Ḥamūya family and another one of Kubrā’s disciples, Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī. See Abuali, “Genesis,” 45–53.

2 See, for example, Lloyd V.J. Ridgeon, *Azīz Nasafī* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1998), 5–7, 22–28, 127, 152, 192, 195; Fritz Meier, “Die Schriften des ‘Azīz-i Nasafī,” *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 52 (1953/1955), 137–138; and Hermann Landolt, “NASAFI, ‘AZIZ,” *Elr*.

3 See, for example, Marijan Molé, “Les Kubrawīya entre Sunnisme et Shiisme aux huitième et neuvième siècles de l’Hégire,” *REI* 29, no. 1 (1961), 74–76, 100–102; J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 99, 261n3; and Kāmil Muṣṭafā al-Shaybī, *al-Ṣila bayna al-taṣawwuf wa-l-tashayyū‘*, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, 1982), II.183–185.

2 Scholarship on Ibn ‘Arabī and His School

In these studies, Ḥamūya appears as a peripheral figure influenced by the metaphysical speculation of Ibn ‘Arabī and his followers.⁴ These works often emphasize a mutual respect between Sa‘d al-Dīn and Ibn ‘Arabī, likewise underscoring his close friendship with Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī to cement the link between him and the Akbarīs. As is the case with scholarship on Sufis in Kubrā’s lineage, these studies point to Ḥamūya’s disciple ‘Azīz Nasafī as a primary exponent of Ibn ‘Arabī’s thought in Persian.

3 Scholarship on Lettrism and the Occult Sciences

These studies generally reference Sa‘d al-Dīn as a central figure in the development of the science of letters in Islamic intellectual history, but direct their focus towards later thinkers who systematized his thought.⁵

4 Journal Articles, Encyclopedia Entries, and Introductions to Critical Editions that Focus Specifically on Sa‘d al-Dīn Ḥamūya and/or His Family

The most meticulous contemporary study of Sa‘d al-Dīn’s life continues to be Sa‘īd Nafīsī’s “Khāndān-i Sa‘d al-Dīn-i Ḥamawī,” published in 1950.⁶ Nafīsī’s article is based upon a genealogy of Ḥamūya family shaykhs (*mashyakha*) that

4 See, for example, William C. Chittick, “The School of Ibn ‘Arabī,” in *History of Islamic Philosophy. Part 1*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman (London: Routledge, 1996), 519–521; and idem, “A History of the Term *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*,” in *In Search of the Lost Heart: Explorations in Islamic Thought*, by William C. Chittick, ed. Mohammed Rustom, Atif Khalil, and Kazuyo Murata (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012), 82–83; Claude Addas, *Quest for the Red Sulphur: The Life of Ibn ‘Arabī*, trans. Peter Kingsley (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1993), 231, 271–272; Henry Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn Arabi*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 30–31; and Richard Todd, *The Sufi Doctrine of Man: Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī’s Metaphysical Anthropology* (Boston: Brill, 2014), 50n23.

5 See, for example, Shahzad Bashir, *Fazlallah Astarabadi and the Hurūfīs* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), 67; idem, *Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions: The Nūrbakhshīya Between Medieval and Modern Islam* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 52, 79, 82, 92; Matthew S. Melvin-Koushki, “The Quest for a Universal Science: The Occult Philosophy of Ṣā‘īn al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī (1369–1432) and Intellectual Millenarianism in Early Timurid Iran” (PhD dissertation, Yale University, 2012), 200–204; and İlker Evrim Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran: Sharaf al-Dīn ‘Alī Yazdī and the Islamicate Republic of Letters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 122, 147.

6 Sa‘īd Nafīsī, “Khāndān-i Sa‘d al-Dīn-i Ḥamawī,” *Kunjkāwihā-yi ‘Ilmī wa Adabī* 83 (1950): 6–39.

had belonged to one of Sa'd al-Dīn's descendants, a Ni'matullāhī Sufi by the name of Sālik al-Dīn Muḥammad Ḥamūya (fl. 16th c.). After discussing the Ḥamūya clan's primogenitor and the etymology of their family name (he insists on Ḥamūyh as the original pronunciation), Nafisī offers biographical information for twenty-eight of the family's shaykhs. Notably, each of Nafisī's entries includes full citations from a range of medieval and early modern chronicles, hagiographies, and biographical dictionaries, as well as modern studies when appropriate. The section on Sa'd al-Dīn (the longest in the article) includes accounts of the shaykh's birth, life, death, and thought from the likes of 'Azīz Nasafī, Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī (d. 1349), 'Afif al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh ibn As'ad al-Yāfi'ī (d. 1367), 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 1492), Qāḍī Mīr-Ḥusayn Maybudī (d. 1504), Qāḍī Nūr Allāh Shūshtarī (d. 1610), Fu'ād Köprülü Zāde (d. 1966) and many more. Over the course of his study, Nafisī establishes the shaykh's complete genealogy; untangles conflicting accounts of his birth (he settles on January 28, 1191); explores his ties to contemporary Sufis like Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, Majd al-Dīn Baghdādī, and 'Azīz Nasafī; addresses his sectarian allegiance (he affirms a Shāfi'ī affiliation over the claims of Shūshtarī the "Shī'a-maker"); briefly characterizes his theoretical work ("veiled, obscure, and twisted discourses"); and records a veritable treasure trove of Ḥamūya's poetry.⁷

Apart from Nafisī's piece, the Persian introductions to published editions of Ḥamūya's texts offer important analyses of Sa'd al-Dīn's life and work. Foremost among these studies is Najīb Māyil Hirawī's introduction to *The Lamp of Sufism (al-Miṣbāḥ fi al-taṣawwuf)*, published in 1983.⁸ Though Hirawī draws from many of the same sources as "Khāndān-i Sa'd al-Dīn-i Ḥamawī" in his examination of Sa'd al-Dīn's biography, he also incorporates information inaccessible to Nafisī from Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ḥamūya's *Goal of the Seekers (Murād al-murīdīn)*, offering readers a precise itinerary for Ḥamūya's life, travels, and compositions.⁹ Analyzing the claims of later Sufis like 'Azīz Nasafī and 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, Hirawī likewise explores Sa'd al-Dīn's approach to such themes as asceticism, *dhikr*, spiritual ascent, and predetermination.¹⁰ His discussion of Ḥamūya's thought focuses primarily on the question of sainthood, reading key

7 Nafisī, "Khāndān," 8–10, 15–28.

8 Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *al-Miṣbāḥ fi al-taṣawwuf*, ed. Najīb Māyil Hirawī (Tehran: Mawla, 1983), 9–52.

9 Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 13–15 and 46–48. Hirawī also benefits from Muḥammad-Taqī Dānishpazhūh's study of Ghiyāth al-Dīn's hagiography, published in volume 13 of *Farhang-i Īrān-Zamīn* (1965).

10 Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 22–26.

quotes from *The Lamp of Sufism* in conversation with comments from ‘Azīz Nasafi, Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Isfarāyīnī (d. 1317), and ‘Alā al-Dawla al-Simnānī. Ultimately, Hirawī argues that Ḥamūya did not set sainthood above prophecy (*pace* Simnānī), but acknowledges that his views regarding the dialogical relationship between the two principles were certainly controversial in their context.¹¹ With respect to the relationship between the saints and the Mahdī in the shaykh’s teachings, Hirawī accepts Nasafi’s claims with little to no objection, reporting that Sa’d al-Dīn limited the saints after Muḥammad to twelve, the twelfth being the Seal of the Saints, the Lord of Time, and the Mahdī.¹² Finally, Hirawī includes a prodigious collection of the shaykh’s poetry in Arabic and Persian, building upon Nafīsī’s work with excerpts absent from “Khāndān-i Sa’d al-Dīn-i Ḥamawī.”¹³

To Hirawī’s introduction to *The Lamp of Sufism* we may also add his introduction to *The Heart of the Hereafter* (*Qalb al-munqalab*) (1988), S.A.A. Mīr-Bāqirī Fard and Z. Najafī’s stand alone study and introduction to Ghiyāth al-Dīn’s *Goal of the Seekers* (2009, 2011), Aḥmad Khāma-Yār’s introduction to his edition of Ḥamūya’s correspondences (2013), and most recently, Sārā Kashfī’s introduction to her edition of *The Repose of the Righteous* (*Sakīnat al-ṣāliḥīn*) (2015).¹⁴ Each of these pieces covers similar ground to the studies mentioned above, contextualizing their text editions with information regarding key sources for Ḥamūya’s biography, a general itinerary of his life, comments on his primary associates, and discussions of his work and thought. Of these studies, Kashfī’s introduction deserves special mention for its detailed reflection on Ḥamūya’s work in relation to key Sufi themes—the character of his Sufism; his attitude towards ecstatic utterances; his penchant for the science of letters; his opinions regarding spiritual intoxication and audition; his approach to Sufi practice; and his theories of prophecy and sainthood.

Apart from a trio of brief encyclopedia entries penned by Fu’ād Köprülü Zāde (E11), Louis Massignon (E11), and Hermann Landolt (E12), only a hand-

11 Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 26–33.

12 Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 33–35. See also my discussion on pp. 181ff. in Chapter 4.

13 Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 36–46.

14 Sa’d al-Dīn Ḥamūya, “Qalb al-munqalab,” ed. Najīb Māyil Hirawī, *Ma’ārif* 5 (1988), 256–259; idem, “Makātib-i Sa’d al-Dīn Ḥammū’ī,” in *Jashn-Nāma-yi Ustād Sayyid Aḥmad Ḥusaynī Ashkūrī*, ed. Aḥmad Khāma-Yār and Rasūl Ja’faryān (Tehran: Nashr-i ‘Ilm, 2013), 451–458; S.A.A. Mīr-Bāqirī Fard and Z. Najafī, “Sa’d al-Dīn Ḥamūya dar Murād al-murīdīn,” *Muṭala’āt-i ‘Irfānī* 88, no. 9 (2009): 133–154; Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Murād al-murīdīn*, ed. S.A.A. Mīr-Bāqirī Fard and Z. Najafī (Tehran: Mu’assasat-i Muṭala’āt-i Islāmī-yi Dānishgāh-i Tihirān – Dānishgāh-i Makgīl, 2011), i–xxv; and Sa’d al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Sakīnat al-ṣāliḥīn*, ed. Sārā Kashfī (Qom: Majma’-i Dhakhā’ir-i Islāmī, Mu’assasat-i Tārīkh-i ‘Ilm wa Farhang, 2015), 8–50.

ful of articles on Ḥamūya have been published in English (and none, of which I am aware, in other European languages).¹⁵ Jamal Elias' "The Sufi Lords of Bahrabad: Sa'd al-Din and Sadr al-Din Hamuwayi" (1994) remains the definitive English-language piece on Sa'd al-Din, sketching a biography of the shaykh and his son culled together from a range of medieval, early-modern, and modern sources, including Nafisī's "Khāndān-i Sa'd al-Din-i Ḥamawī."¹⁶ Weighing in on Ḥamūya's sectarian identity, Elias sides with Nafisī and Hirawī, affirming the shaykh's Sunnī affiliation against Meier and Trimmingham's matter-of-fact claims that he was a Shī'ī.¹⁷ With respect to Sa'd al-Din's relationship with other Sufis in Kubrā's lineage, Elias argues for an antagonistic shift later in the shaykh's life, brought about by his keen interest in Ibn 'Arabī's teachings and close affiliation with the Īlkhānid state.¹⁸ Apart from laying out important biographical sources, "The Sufi Lords of Bahrabad" offers an impressive list of Sa'd al-Din's extant manuscripts, along with their locations, catalogue numbers, and, where possible, brief descriptions of their contents and provenance.¹⁹

Most recently, Paul Ballanfat and Elizabeth Alexandrin have begun work on critical editions of Ḥamūya's *Book of the Beloved*, *Mirror of Spirits*, and several other texts centered around the themes of messianism and sainthood. Building upon a string of talks and conference papers, Alexandrin has published "Seals and Sealing of *Walāyah* in Šūfī and Shī'ī Texts: The Cases of al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī and Sa'd al-Din Ḥamūyah" (2017) on the Seal of the Saints in Ḥamūya's thought and "Reading and Reciting the Qur'ān: Calligraphic Spaces in Sa'd al-Din Ḥamūyeh's (d. 649/1252) *Kitāb al-Maḥbūb*" (2023) on his esoteric diagrams.²⁰ Alexandrin's work focuses primarily on Sa'd al-Din's approach to questions of mystical and messianic authority, reading his texts in conversation with colleagues like Ibn 'Arabī, Najm al-Din Kubrā, and 'Azīz Nasafī. In so doing,

15 For encyclopedia articles, see Fu'ād Köprülü Zāde, "Sa'd al-Din al-Ḥamawī" in *EI*; Louis Massignon, "Ḥamawī" in *EI*; Hermann Landolt, "Sa'd al-Din al-Ḥammū'ī" in *EI*. Until 17 April, 2021, Sa'd al-Din was even without an English Wikipedia page (though the Persian entry was first created in March 2012).

16 Elias, "Sufi Lords."

17 Elias, "Sufi Lords," 70–72; Meier, "Die Schriften," 137–138; and Trimmingham, *Orders*, 99. For a discussion of Ḥamūya and Shī'ism, see pp. 181 ff. in Chapter 4.

18 Elias, "Sufi Lords," 72–75. Cf. Abuali, "Genesis," 45–53.

19 Elias, "Sufi Lords," 61–66.

20 Elizabeth Ross Alexandrin, "Seals and Sealing of *Walāyah* in Šūfī and Shī'ī Texts: The Cases of al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī and Sa'd al-Din Ḥamūyah," in *Philosophy and Intellectual Life in Shī'ah Islam: Symposium 2015*, ed. Sajjad H. Rizvi and Saiyad Nizamuddin Ahmad (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 61–93; and eadem, "Reading and Reciting the Qur'ān: Calligraphic Spaces in Sa'd al-Din Ḥamūyeh's (d. 649/1252) *Kitāb al-Maḥbūb*," in *Visualizing Sufism*, ed. Giovanni Maria Martini, *Islamicate Intellectual History* (Leiden: Brill, 2023), 155–191.

she offers a fine-grained analysis of Sufi themes whose echoes would envelop the social, intellectual, and political landscapes of the following centuries.

It is my hope that *Lost in a Sea of Letters* enriches this body of literature, paving the way for exciting new work on Ḥamūya in the future.

List of Ḥamūya's Works

The following is not meant to be an exhaustive representation of Ḥamūya's work. Because several other scholars have already drawn up lists of the shaykh's texts, here I list only published editions, manuscripts to which I have access, and works whose mention I have come across in primary sources.

1 Lists of Ḥamūya's Work in Secondary Scholarship

- Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *al-Miṣbāḥ fī al-taṣawwuf*, ed. Najīb Māyil Hirawī (Tehran: Mawlā, 1983), 46–52.
- Jamal J. Elias, "The Sufi Lords of Bahrabad: Sa'd al-Din and Sadr al-Din Hamuwayi," *Iranian Studies* 27, no. 1/4 (1994), 61–66.
Elias' article is incredibly helpful in that it includes an extensive list of manuscript locations.
- Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Murād al-murīdīn*, ed. S.A.A. Mīr-Bāqirī Fard and Z. Najafī (Tehran: Mu'assasat-i Muṭāla'āt-i Islāmī-yi Dānishgāh-i Tihirān—Dānishgāh-i Makgīl, 2011), xiv–xv.
- Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Sakīnat al-ṣāliḥīn*, ed. Sārā Kashfī (Qom: Majma'ī Dha-khā'ir-i Islāmī, Mu'assasat-i Tārīkh-i 'Ilm wa Farhang, 2015), 33–36.

2 Published Texts

- *The Lamp of Sufism*
Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *al-Miṣbāḥ fī al-taṣawwuf*, ed. Najīb Māyil Hirawī (Tehran: Mawlā, 1983)
- *The Heart of the Hereafter (Qalb al-munqalab)*
Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, "Qalb al-munqalab," ed. Najīb Māyil Hirawī, *Ma'ārif* 5 (1988), 256–259.

As Hirawī notes in his Persian introduction to the text, Sa'd al-Dīn originally composed *The Heart* in Arabic, titling it *The Knowledge of the Heart's Stages (Ma'rifat aṭwār al-qalb)*. The treatise was translated into Persian only after Ḥamūya's death, undertaken by a certain Akhī Manṣūr under the command of his shaykh, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ḥasan al-Bulghārī (d. 1299). According to Hirawī, the Arabic *Knowledge of the Heart's Stages* had

become quite popular among the shaykhs of Kirmān by the time al-Bulghārī arrived there in 1274, prompting his need for a Persian translation and analysis. This manuscript was said to have been sealed away in the royal library of a certain Kirmānī notable (known only by the *laqab* Majd al-Milla wa-l-Ḥaqq wa-l-Dunyā wa-l-Dīn Rukn al-Islām wa-ʿImād al-Muslimīn) until the 14th century, when it was discovered by an anonymous scribe who copied the text and penned an extended introduction in praise of the aforementioned Majd al-Dīn. Accordingly, Hacı Selim Ağa MS 491 (to which Hirawī did not have access) is titled *Translation of the Epistle Entitled the Heart of the Hereafter (Tarjumāt al-risāla al-musammā bi-Qalb al-munqalab)*.

- *The Sea of Gratitude in the River of Disavowal (Baḥr al-shukr fī nahr al-nukr)* Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, “Baḥr al-shukr fī nahr al-nukr,” in *Rasāʾil Ibn ʿArabī: Sharḥ Muḥtadaʾ al-tūfān wa-rasāʾil ukhrā*, by Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1240), ed. Qāsim Muḥammad ʿAbbās and Ḥusayn Muḥammad ʿAjil (Abu Dhabi: Manshūrāt al-Majmaʿ al-Thaqāfi: Cultural Foundation [sic] Publications, 1998), 204–226.

In its published form, the text is erroneously attributed to Ibn ʿArabī.

- A collection of correspondence
Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, “Makātīb-i Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥammūʿī,” in *Jashn-nāma-yi ustād Sayyid Aḥmad Ḥusaynī Ashkūrī*, ed. Aḥmad Khāma-Yār (Tehran: Nashr-i ʿIlm, 2013).

Epistle to Ibn ʿArabī

Epistle to Shaykh al-Shuyūkh ʿImād al-Dīn ʿUmar (d. 1239), son of Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. 1220)

See also Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ḥamūya (fl. 14th c.), *Murād al-murīdīn*, ed.

S.A.A. Mīr-Bāqirī Fard and Z. Najafī (Tehran: Muʿassasat-i Muṭālaʿāt-i Islāmī-yi Dānishgāh-i Tih-rān—Dānishgāh-i Makgīl, 2011), 169–172.

Second epistle to ʿImād al-Dīn ʿUmar

Epistle to ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ʿAṭā-Malik Juwaynī (d. 1283)¹

Epistle to Burhān al-Dīn Jājarmī

Epistle to one of his companions by the name of Sharaf al-Dīn

Epistle in response to one of Najm al-Dīn Kubrāʾs (d. 1221) disciples

Epistle to Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī (d. 1261)

¹ The table of content reads “Alāʾ al-Dīn, son of ʿAṭā-Malik Juwaynī” (*Alāʾ al-Dīn farzand-i ʿAṭā-Malik*), but this is incorrect. The Arabic of the epistle reads, rather ambiguously, *ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ibn šāḥib dīwān al-mālik ʿAṭā-Malik al-Juwaynī*.

- *The Repose of the Righteous (Sakīnat al-ṣāliḥīn)*
Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Sakīnat al-ṣāliḥīn*, ed. Sārā Kashfī (Qom: Majma'ī Dha-khā'ir-i Islāmī, Mu'assasat-i Tārīkh-i 'Ilm wa Farhang, 2015).
- *The Knowledge of Realities and Wisdom of Subtle Points ('Ulūm al-daqa'iq wa-ḥikam al-daqa'iq)*
This text can be found on pages 487–498 of an Egyptian collection of epis-tles, published in 1910. See Nafīsī, “Khāndān,” 23 and Ḥamūya, *Miṣbāḥ*, 50.

3 Published Collections of Poetry

- Sa'īd Nafīsī, “Khāndān-i Sa'd al-Dīn-i Ḥamawī,” *Kunjkāwihā-yi 'Ilmī wa Adabī* 83 (1950), 15–28.
- Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *al-Miṣbāḥ fi al-taṣawwuf*, ed. Najīb Māyil Hirawī (Teh-ran: Mawlā, 1983), 36–46.

4 Texts Extant in Manuscript Collections (*majāmi'*)²

- *Ta'wīl-i ḥadīth-i 'ashara*
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Esad Efendi MS 1760, fols. 1^b–8^b
- *Tamāmī-yi asāmī*
Istanbul, İzmir MS 800, fols. 41^b–55^a.
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Fatih MS 5378, fols. 100^b–114^a
- *Majmū'a* (H. Çelebi MS 422)
Risālat al-'Aynayn fi al-'aynayn, fols. 1^b–6^a
Completed at the end of Shawwāl AH 628 (August/September 1231)
Risālat Shu'bat al-īmān, fols. 6^a–23^a
Risālat al-Ta'jīz wa-muqaddimat al-tabrīz, fols. 23^a–31^b
Completed 26 Dhū al-Qa'da AH 628 (2 October 1231)
Rizālat Izdiwāj al-amr wa-l-qalam, fols. 32^a–33^b
Manām, fols. 34^a–34^b
Risālat Kashf al-'ālam al-subḥānī, fols. 34^b–45^a
Risālat al-Marfū' al-maṣnū' fi al-majmū' al-masmū', fols. 45^a–52^a
Risālat al-Ism wa-l-ṣifa, fols. 52^a–53^b

2 The following are texts that I have been able to track down in manuscript form. I have added an asterisk next to those manuscripts whose attribution I believe to be incorrect. The texts are in rough Arabic alphabetical order, excluding articles and prepositions.

Risālat al-Qahr wa-l-lutf, fols. 54^a–95^a

Completed in Baghdad, 27 Shawwāl AH 628 (4 September 1231)

Risālat al-Ghālib wa-l-maghlūb, fols. 96^a–105^a

Risālat al-Hādir ma'a al-khātir, fols. 106^a–146^b

Completed 7 Rabī' II AH 637 (13 November 1239)

Risālat Hurūf al-kalimāt wa-ṣarf al-ṣalawāt, fols. 147^a–151^a

Completed 16 Dhū al-Qa'da AH 638 (5 June 1241)

Risālat Haqq al-waqt wa-l-sā'a wa-ḥazz al-ḥāla wa-l-ṭā'a, fols. 151^a–163^a
(HC)

See also Princeton, Princeton University Library, Garrett Collection
MS 3793Y, fols. 138^a–143^b (P)

Also mentioned on fol. 1^a of Yani Camii MS 726

– *Majmū'a* (Hacı Selim Ağa MS 491)

Istanbul, Hacı Selim Ağa MS 491

Risāla fī bayān inbisāt al-wujūd al-muṭlaq 'alā mazāhir al-kā'ināt (= *Laṭā'if al-tawhīd wa-gharīb al-tafrīd*), fols. 1^b–3^b

See also Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Carullah MS 2077, fols.
31^a–32^b

Qalb al-munqalab, fols. 4^b–22^a

Title listed as *Tarjumat al-risāla al-musammā bi-Qalb al-munqalab*

Dā'irat rijāl al-ghayb, fol. 22^b

Mafātīḥ al-asrār (sharḥ arba'īn min aḥādīth al-nabī), fols. 23^b–118^a (HSA)

See also Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Haşim Paşa MS 4 (HP)

al-Wasīla fī kashf al-waṣīla, fols. 120^a–123^b

Risāla fī bayān aqsām al-tajalliyāt al-ilāhiyya, fols. 124^b–126^a

Fawā'id min kalimāt al-mashāyikh (*), fols. 126^a–131^a

– *Ḥīrz Sa'd al-Dīn al-Ḥamawī*

Bursa, Bursa İnebey Kütüphanesi, H. Çelebi MS 1183, fols. 72^a–75^b

– *Ḥaqā'iq al-ḥurūf*

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Carullah MS 2077, fols. 96^b–101^a (CE)

Title listed as *Risāla*

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Mahmud Paşa MS 278, fols. 25^b–42^a
(MP)

Title listed as *Risāla*

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehid Ali Paşa MS 2771, fols. 175^b–181^b
(SAP)

Title listed as *Risāla dar taşawwuf*

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Bursa Genel MS 4393, fols. 111^b–119^a (BG)

Title listed as *Risāla-yi naşiha*

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Petrev Paşa MS 606, fols. 13^b–18^a (PP)

Title listed as *Risāla-yi sharīfa*

- *Ḥaqq al-waqt wa-l-sā'a*
Princeton, Princeton University Library, Garrett Collection MS 3793Y, fols. 138^a–143^b (P)
See also *Majmū'a* (H. Çelebi MS 422), fols. 151^a–163^a (HC)
Also mentioned on fol. 1^a of Yani Camii MS 726
- *Mukhtaşâr-i Asāmî*
Istanbul, Sütlüce Dergahı, Elif Efendi MS 40, fols. 2^a–6^a
- *Ad'îya*
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya MS 4819, fol. 172
- *Risâla fi bayân tahqîq-i şalât* (*)³
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Serez MS 3931, fols. 1^b–32^b (incomplete)
- *Risâla-yi Dhikr-i Jibra'îl*
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Raşid Efendi MS 450, fols. 205^b–208^a / 190^b–193^b (RE450)
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Raşid Efendi MS 1295, fols. 353^b–357^a (RE1295)
- *Risâla dar taşawwuf* (*)⁴
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Serez MS 3931, fols. 33^b–43^b.
- *Risâlat Sharḥ âyat al-kursî*
Princeton, Princeton University Library, Garrett Collection MS 3793Y, fols. 144^a–151^a
- *Risâlat Sharḥ al-şadr*
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehid Ali Paşa MS 1351, fols. 135^a–149^b
- *Risâla fi zuhûr khâtam al-awliyâ'*
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya MS 2058, fols. 206^a–207^b
- *Risâlat Ma'rifat al-nabî wa-l-rusûl al-mursal*
Princeton, Princeton University Library, Garrett Collection MS 3793Y, fols. 125^b–134^a
- *Risâla fi 'ilm al-hurûf*
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Fatih MS 5378, fols. 89^b–100^a (F)
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehid Ali Paşa MS 1342, fols. 263^b–266^b (SAP)
- *Risâla fi ma'ânî hurûf al-hijâ*
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya MS 4795, fols. 177^a–177^b

3 Includes stanzas penned by such later poets as Sa'dî (d. 1291), Awḥad al-Dîn ibn Awḥadi Marāgha'î (ca. 1274/1275–1338), and Ḥâfiz (d. 1390), suggesting a spurious attribution. For quotations of Sa'dî's poetry, see, for example, fol. 2^a. For Awḥadi Marāgha'î see, for example, fol. 2^b. For Ḥâfiz, see, for example, fol. 3^b.

4 The text's frequent yet uncredited citation of the later Sufi poet Awḥad al-Dîn ibn Awḥadi Marāgha'î suggests a spurious attribution. See, for example, fols. 34^b and 36^a.

- *Risālat Kashf al-ghitā' wa-raf' al-ḥijāb*
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya MS 2058, fols. 208^b–214^a (AS)
Princeton, Princeton University Library, Garrett Collection MS 3793Y, fols. 134^b–138^a (P)
Also mentioned on fol. 1^a of Yani Camii MS 726
- *Sajanjal al-arwāḥ wa-nuqūsh al-abwāḥ*
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Fatih MS 2645 (F)
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Carullah MS 1541 (CE)
Mashhad, Kitābkhāna-yi Āstān-i Quds, Mashhad MS 3194 (M)
Princeton, Princeton University Library, Garrett Collection MS 3G (P)
Erroneously labeled *al-Khatma al-Maghribiyya al-sultāniyya wa-l-khulla al-Ibrāhimiyya al-burhāniyya* and attributed to Ibn 'Arabī
- *Sharḥ bāl wa-rashḥ ḥāl (Risāla ilā Muḥyi al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī)*
Los Angeles, UCLA Library, Special Collections, Caro Minasian MS 32, fols. 100–108
- *Sharḥ-i Basmala-yi sharīf*
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Çorlulu Ali Paşa MS 445, fols. 1^a–7^b
- *Sharḥ-i ḥadīth-i kuntu kanzan makhfiyyan*
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Serez MS 3931, fols. 49^b–51^a
- *Sharḥ qawlihi inna Allāh wa-malā'ikatahu yuṣallūna 'alā al-nabī (Q. 33:56)*
Princeton, Princeton University Library, Garrett Collection MS 3793Y, fols. 151^a–153^a
- *al-Miṣbāḥ fī al-taṣawwuf*
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya MS 3832, fols. 237^b–318^b
Title listed as *Risālat al-Miṣbāḥ*
- *'Ulūm al-ḥaqā'iq wa-ḥikam al-daqā'iq*
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Bağdatlı Vehbi Efendi MS 2155, fols. 43^b–44^b (BVE)
Istanbul, Kasideci Zade MS 800, fols. 58^a–60^b (KZ)
- *Mafātīḥ al-asrār*
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Haşim Paşa MS 4 (HP)
See also *Majmū'a* (Hacı Selim Ağa MS 491), fols. 23^b–118^a (HSA)
- *Kitāb Baḥr al-ma'ānī*
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Fazıl Ahmed Paşa MS 706
- *Kitāb al-Maḥbūb*
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Carullah MS 1078 (CE78)
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Carullah MS 1096 (CE96)
Istanbul, Hekimoğlu Ali Paşa Kütüphanesi MS 507 (HAP)
Istanbul, Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi MS 2577 (NO)
Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Museum Library MS A1418 (TK)

- Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Yani Camii MS 726, Süleymaniye (YC)
 Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehid Ali Paşa MS 1342, fols. 1^a–139^a
 (SAP)
 Title listed as *Maḥbūb al-qulūb*
 Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, MS Or. fol. 4084 (SBB)
<http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB00008DAF00000000>
 Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya MS 2058 (AS58)
 Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya MS 2057 (AS57)
 Volume II only
 Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Fatih MS 2758 (F)
 Volume II only
 Manisa, Manisa İl Halk Kütüphanesi MS 1224 (MIH)
 Volume II only
- *Kitāb Marātib al-qurra fī ‘uyūn al-quḍra*
 Princeton, Princeton University Library, Garrett Collection MS 3793Y, fols. 1^b–
 125^a (P)
 Cairo, Dār al-Kutub MS 2070 (DK)
- *Kitāb al-nuqṭa*
 Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehid Ali Paşa MS 1364, fols. 76^b–77^a
- *Laṭā’if al-tawḥīd wa-gharā’ib al-tafrīd* (= *Risāla fī bayān inbisāṭ al-wujūd al-
 muṭlaq ‘alā mazāhir al-kā’ināt*)
 Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Carullah MS 2077, fols. 31^a–32^b
 See also *Majmū’a* (Hacı Selim Ağa MS 491), fols. 1^b–3^b
- *al-Wasā’il al-sab’*
 Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehit Ali Paşa MS 2735, fols. 224^b–225^a

5 Texts Mentioned by Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ḥamūya’s *Murād al-murīdīn*⁵

- *Risālat al-Iḥṣā’ fī ‘ilm al-asmā’ al-ḥusnā*
 Completed at the end of Rajab AH 626 (late June 1229) in the Ḥijāz
- *Kitāb Zuhūr al-tawḥīd fī nūr al-tajrīd*
 Completed on 9 Ramaḍān AH 626 (8 August 1229) in the Prophet’s Mosque
 in Medina
- *Risālat Asrār al-Bārī’ fī naḡhamāt al-qārī’*
 Completed on 28 Ramaḍān AH 627 (17 August 1230)

5 Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ḥamūya, *Murād al-murīdīn*, ed. S.A.A. Mīr-Bāqirī Fard and Z. Najafī (Tehran: Mu’assasat-i Muṭāla’āt-i Islāmī-yi Dānishgāh-i Tihirān – Dānishgāh-i Makgīl, 2011), 163–166.

- *Jāza* for ‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Miṣrī
Written in Dhū al-Qa‘da AH 627 (September/October 1230) in Egypt
- *Risālat Asbāb al-faṣl li-‘arbāb al-faḍl*
Composed in Muḥarram AH 628 (November/December 1230) in Hebron
- *Risālat Ḥikmat Luqmān fī ma‘ālam al-insān*
Composed on 5 Dhū al-Ḥijja AH 627 (22 October 1230)⁶
- *al-Fath al-Mawṣilī*
Composed in Sha‘bān AH 627 (June/July 1230)⁷
- *Kitāb Manār al-muhlik*
Composed in Shawwāl AH 627 (August/September 1230) in Baghdad⁸
- *Kitāb Shu‘bat al-īmān*
Composed on 10 Dhū al-Qa‘da AH 627 (27 September, 1230)⁹
See also *Majmū‘a* (H. Çelebi MS 422), fols. 6^a–23^a
- *Kitāb Ikhrāj al-durar al-baḥriyya*
Composed on 1 Jumāda I AH 629 (2 March 1232) in the mosque of Baghdad
- *Kitāb Wijdān al-umm fī sharḥ Allāhumma*
Composed on 1 Jumāda II AH 629 (1 April 1232) in the mosque of Baghdad
- *Majlis al-radd fī al-ḥirz wa-l-madd*
Composed on 20 Jumāda II AH 629 (20 April 1232) in the *ḥarīm* [of Baghdad?]
- *al-Ishāra fī al-ishāra*
Composed on 11 Sha‘bān AH 629 (9 June 1232) in the mosque of Baghdad
- *Risālat Ṣabāḥ al-ḥayāt wa-anfāsihā*
Composed on 12 Rajab AH 630 (1 May 1233) in a *zāwiya* outside the city of Homs
- *‘Īd al-fiṭr*
Composed on 22 Dhū al-Qa‘da AH 630 (6 September 1233) in Qāsiyūn
- *Risālat Ṣūltān ‘alā al-Shayṭān*
Composed on 25 Muḥarram AH 631 (7 November 1233) at the *zāwiya* of Shams al-Dīn al-Rūmī in Ṣāliḥiyya
- *al-Du‘ā’ ‘inda fath bāb al-Ka‘ba*
Composed in Ramaḍān AH 632 (May/June 1235) in the Mosque in Jerusalem
Completed on 29 Ramaḍān AH 632 (24 June 1235)

6 Or, possibly 5 Dhū al-Ḥijja AH 629 (29 September 1232). See the discussion in note 24 on p. 237 of the Biographical Essay.

7 Or, possibly Sha‘bān AH 629 (June 1232). See the discussion in note 24 on p. 237 of the Biographical Essay.

8 Or, possibly Shawwāl AH 629 (August 1232). See the discussion in note 24 on p. 237 of the Biographical Essay.

9 Or, possibly 10 Dhū al-Qa‘da AH 629 (4 September 1232). See the discussion in note 24 on p. 237 of the Biographical Essay.

- *Kitāb Ta'rif fi ma'nā al-kashf*
Composed in Ṣafar AH 639 (August/September 1241) in Damascus; specifically, in Jākūra on the Barada river (*nahar Barand* [sic])
- *Risālat al-Ta'yīd wa-l-nuṣra*
Composed on Rabī' I AH 639 (September/October 1241) in Jākūra
Also mentioned on fol. 1^a of Yani Camii MS 726
- *al-Maqāmāt al-nuzūliyya*
Composed on Rabī' I AH 639 (September/October 1241) in Ṣan'a, one of the provinces of Baalbek
Likely mentioned on fol. 1^a of Yani Camii MS 726
- *Sharḥ manām*
Ḥamūya had a dream in Ṣafar AH 640 (August/September 1242) that he subsequently interpreted
- *Sharḥ al-ṣād*
Composed in Jumādā I AH 640 (November 1242) in Tabriz
- *Risālat Ilhāḥ al-qāṣid*
Composed in Dhū al-Qa'da AH 640 (April/May 1243)
- *Risālat al-Jam' bayna al-anfus wa-l-a'yun*
Composed in Muḥarram AH 641 (June/July 1243) in Georgia, Gilan (*bi-Gurjūstān Jilān*) [sic]
- *Ijāza* for Kamāl al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn al-'Azīz al-Marāghīnī
Written on 1 Muḥarram AH 641 (28 June 1243)
- *Ijāza fī al-riwāya* for Shams al-Dīn Abū Bakr ibn 'Alī al-Maqqarī al-Jārmī
Written in the beginning of Shawwāl AH 643 (February 1246)
- *Ijāza* for Najm al-Dīn 'Uthmān ibn al-Muwaffaq al-Adkānī
Written on Jumādā I AH 645 (September/October 1247)
Ghiyāth al-Dīn specifies that al-Adkānī studied *Kitāb Wasīlat al-ṣiddīqīn wa-waṣīlat al-muqarrabīn 'alā khātām al-nabīyīn* with Sa'd al-Dīn, who gave him permission to transmit it and narrate all of his works
See also *Majmū'a* (Hacı Selim Ağa MS 491), fols. 120^a–123^b
- *Risālat Khalq al-janna fī kashf al-qubba*
Written on 1 Rabī' II AH 646 (31 July 1248) in al-Kābād (Iran)
- *Nisbat al-khirqa* for Muḥammad Zakriyya al-Rāzī
Written in AH 647 (1249/1250) in Amol
- *Ijāza* for Sharaf al-Dīn al-Ṭabīb al-Khūrāndī
Written on 6 Jumādā II, AH 648 (12 September 1250) in Khurāsān
- *Nisbat al-khirqa* for Shihāb al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Māhān al-Simnānī in Amol
Written on 20 Rabī' II AH 649 (19 July 1251) in Amol

6 Texts Mentioned on the Cover (fol. 1^a) of the Yani Camii MS 726 of
The Book of the Beloved:

- *Sajanjal al-arwāḥ*
- *Kitāb Aṣl fī l'al-mughrib*
- *Kashf 'anqā' al-mughrib*¹⁰
- *Risālat al-ḥall wa-l-'uqd*
- *Kitāb Kashf al-ghitā'*

See also Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya MS 2058, fols. 208^b–214^a (AS) and Princeton, Princeton University Library, Garrett Collection MS 3793Y, fols. 134^b–138^a (P)

- *Ḥarf al-ma'ārij*
- *Kitāb al-'ayn wa-l-naẓr*
- *Kitāb Ṭahārat al-nabī 'alayhi al-salām*
- *Kalimāt al-injīliyya wa-ḥiyya ḥarf al-kalimāt*
- *Kitāb Ḥaqq al-waqt wa-l-sā'a*

See also Princeton, Princeton University Library, Garrett Collection MS 3793Y, fols. 138^a–143^b (P) and *Majmū'a* (H. Çelebi MS 422), fols. 151^a–163^a (HC)

- *Kitāb Saṭr al-ḥarf wa-l-kalimāt*
- *Kitāb al-ta'yīd wa-l-naṣr*

According to Ghiyāth al-Dīn, composed on Rabī' I AH 639 (September/October 1241) in Jākūra

- *Kitāb al-muqābila al-nuzūliyya*

Ghiyāth al-Dīn cites a text entitled *al-Maqāmāt al-nuzūliyya* composed on Rabī' I AH 639 (September/October 1241) in Ṣan'a, one of the provinces of Baalbek

- *Kitāb Maqāmāt al-ṣāliyya*
- *Kitāb al-ta'arruf fī ma'nā al-takashshuf*
- *Kitāb Kashf al-ghitā' min kunh al-'aṭā'*
- *Kitāb muthallathāt al-malk wa-l-mulk*
- *Kitāb al-Ṣalāt fī qālab*
- *Risālat Istiwā' al-Raḥmān*
- *Kitāb fī waṣāyā li-ba'd al-aṣḥāb*
- *Rasā'il ilā ba'd al-aḥbāb*

10 Jamal Elias notes that this text is the same as *Risāla fī zuhūr khātam al-awliyā'*. See Jamal J. Elias, "The Sufi Lords of Bahrabād: Sa'd al-Dīn and Sadr al-Dīn Hamuwayi," *Iranian Studies* 27, no. 1/4 (1994), 65.

Mirror of Spirits Structure

1 Fatih MS 2645 [F]

*Night-long vigil [F 1^a–7^a] (Unique to [F])

Sequence of labeled prayers [F 7^a–22^b]

- The Prayer of Ecstasy (صلوة الوجدان)
- The Prayer of Thankfulness for God's Bounties (صلوة الشكر لنعم الله)
- The Prayer of Seeking Refuge (صلوة الاستعاذة)
- The Prayer of Seeking Absolute Divine Favor [in] all Affairs (صلوة الاستخارة)
- (المطلق الجمع الامور)
- The Forenoon Prayer (صلوة الضحى)
- The Prayer of Deliverance (صلوة النجاة)
- The Prayer of Need (صلوة الحاجة)
- The Prayer of Sufficiency (صلوة الكفاية)
- The Prayer of Opening the Heart (صلوة انشراح الصدر)
- The Prayer of Acceptance (صلوة القبول)
- The Prayer of Cessation (صلوة الزوال)
- The Prayer of Desire and Dread (صلوة الرغبة والرغبة)
- The Prayer Gathering Together Intention and Peace (صلوة الجمع بين النية والسلام)
- The Prayer Gathering Together Life, Death, Dispersal, and Assembly, as well as Opening, Good News, and Aid/Triumph (صلوة الجمع بين الحيوية والموت والنشر والجمع بين الفتح والبشارة والنصر)
- The Prayer of Striving for God's Mention (صلوة السعي إلى ذكر الله تعالى)
- The Prayer of Hastening to Forgiveness (صلوة المسارعة إلى المغفرة)
- The Prayer of Racing to Forgiveness (صلوة المسابقة إلى المغفرة)
- The Prayer of Facilitation and Heading to God (صلوة التيسير والذهاب إلى الله تعالى)
- The Prayer of Mercy (صلوة الرحمة)
- The Prayer of Sending Out/Resurrection (صلوة البعث)
- The Prayer of Eternity/Time (صلوة الدهر)
- The Prayer of Gathering (صلوة الجمعة)
- The Prayer of Being Split Open (صلوة الانفطار)
- The Prayer of Submission (صلوة التسليم)
- The Prayer of Secrets (صلوة السرائر)

- The Prayer of Veiling (صلوة التستر)
- The Prayer of Seeking Refuge (صلوة الاستعاذة)
- The Prayer of Forgetfulness (صلوة التنسية)
- The Prayer of Good News (صلوة البشارة)
- The Prayer of Seeking Divine Favor (صلوة الاستخارة)
- The Prayer of Memorizing the Qur'ān (صلوة حفظ القرآن)
- The Prayer of Glorification (صلوة التسبيح)

Sajanjal al-arwāḥ wa-nuqūsh al-abwāḥ [F 23^a ff.] (Absent from [C]; [M] begins here)

Beginning of the *wird* [F 27^b] (Absent from [C])

Recitation of the *basmala* and verses from most *sūras* of the Qur'ān [F 35^a] (Absent from [C])

Keys to the Heavens and Earth; Keys to What is Unseen and Obligatory [F 73^a] ([C] begins here, though without a title)

Diagrams [F 73^b] (= [C 1^b; M73^b])

Qur'ānic verses (قل اللهم)

Qur'ānic verses (قل هو)

Diagrams [F 77^b] (= [C 5^a; M 78^b])

Qur'ānic verses (الإنسان) [F 79^a]

Qur'ānic verses (علام الغيوب) [F 83^b]

Qur'ānic verses (ترجع الأمور) + var. [F 84^a]

Qur'ānic verses (بشرًا بين يدي رحمته) [F 84^a]

Prayer sequence [F 84^b]

*Colophon with date of copy (Jumādā I, AH 656) [F 86^b] (Unique to [F])

Brief diagram sequence [F 87^b] (Absent from [C])

Qur'ānic verses (لله) [F 89^b]

F 90^a Diagram [F 90^a] (= [M 95^b; C 73^b])

Qur'ānic verses (الإِنْسَان); also includes Divine Names, prayers, diagrams [F 90^a]
(= [M 95^b; C 74^a])

Mini diagram (upper left) [F 93^a] (Absent from [C])

End of section, followed by blank space [F 93^a]

Diagrams [F 93^b] (Absent from [C])

Qur'ānic verses (سُلْطَان + شَيْطَان) [F 94^b]

Diagram [F 103^b] (= [C 82^b])

Qur'ān quotations [F 104^a]

Long diagram sequence [F 107^b] (= [C 84^b])

Repeated Allāh sequence [F 113^a]

Repeated *ilāh* sequence v1 [F 121^b]

Diagram sequence [F 122^b] (= [C 21^a])

Note: Date of composition on [F 123^a] (Tuesday 7 Rajab, AH 630)

Qur'ānic verses (اللَّهُ) [F 124^b]

Qur'ānic verses (رَبِّ) [F 126^b]

Qur'ānic verses (رَبَّنَا) [F 127^a]

Prayer, Qur'ān, and diagrams [F 128^b] (= [C 24^a])

Qur'ānic verses (يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ) [F 140^a]

Prayer, Qur'ān, and diagrams [F 141^b] (= [M 144^b; C 32^a; P 91^a])

Qur'ānic verses (سُبْحَانَ) + var. [F 144^b]

Diagrams [F 146^b] (= [M 151^a; C 36^a; P 73^b])

Qur'ānic verses (وَبَشِّرِ) [F 147^b]

Qur'ānic verses (وَبَشْرِي) [F 148^b]

Qur'ānic verses (خَيْرِ) [F 149^a]

Diagram [F 149^b] (= [M 154^b; C 38^b; P 77^a])

Qur'ānic verses (سلام); prayers [F 150^a]

Qur'ānic verses (تبارك) [F 152^b]

Qur'ānic verses (حمد) + var. [F 153^a]

Qur'ānic verses (محمد\احمد) [F 155^b]

Diagram [F 156^a] (Absent from [C])

Prayers [F 156^b] (Absent from [C])

Qur'ānic verses (سلطان) [F 157^a] (Absent from [C])

Diagrams [F 160^a] (Absent from [C])

Qur'ānic verses (نفس، أنفس) + var. [F 164^a]

Diagrams [F 182^a] (= [M 197^a; P 34^a; C 66^a])

Prayer [F 184^a] (Absent from [M])

Diagrams, Qur'ān, Prayers, Letter Manipulation [F 184^b] (= [M 198^a; C 66^a ff., 40^b ff.; P inter alia])

Note: Contains an extra prayer [F 184^a] (Absent from [M; P])

Section on *Dīm* (includes diagrams and Qur'ānic quotes) [F 201^b]

Qur'ānic verses (هل) v2 (no v1 in [F, M, P]) [F 209^a]

String of broken letters and lines [F 212^b] (Absent from [C])

Repeated *ilāh* sequence v2 [F 212^b]

Diagram [F 213^b] (= [F 122^b; C 21^a])

2 Mashhad MS 3194 [M]

Sajanjal al-arwāh wa-nuqūsh al-alwāh [M 1^b ff.]

Note: [F] contains instructions in Persian and Arabic; [M] in Arabic only

Beginning of the *wird* [M 9^b] (Absent from [C])

Recitation of the *basmala* and verses from most *sūras* of the Qur'ān [M 17^a]
(Absent from [C])

Keys to the Heavens and Earth; Keys to What is Unseen and Obligatory [M 73^a]
 ([C] begins here, though without a title)

Diagrams [M 73^b] (= [F 73^b; C 1^b])

Note: Diagrams on [F 74^a–74^b] are absent from [M]

Qur'ānic verses (قل اللهم) [M 75^a]

Qur'ānic verses (قل هو) [M 76^a]

Diagrams [M 78^b] (= [F 77^b; C 5^a])

Qur'ānic verses (الإنسان) [M 81^a]

Qur'ānic verses (علام الغيوب) [M 87^a]

Qur'ānic verses (ترجع الأمور) + var. [M 87^b]

Qur'ānic verses (بشرًا بين يدي رحمته) [M 88^a]

Prayer sequence [M 88^b]

Brief diagram sequence [M 92^a] (Absent from [C])

Qur'ānic verses (لله) [F 89^b]

F 90^a Diagram [M 95^b] (= [F 90^a; C 73^b])

Qur'ānic verses (الإنسان); also includes Divine Names, prayers, diagrams
 [M 95^b] (= [F 90^a; C 74^a])

Mini diagram (upper left) [M 100^a] (Absent from [C])

End of section, followed by blank space [M 100^a]

Diagrams [M 100^b] (Absent from [C])

Qur'ānic verses (سلطان + شيطان) [M 101^b]

Diagram [M 114^b] (= [C 82^b])

Qur'ān quotations [M 115^a]

Long diagram sequence [M 118^b] (= [C 84^b])

Note: diverges slightly from [F], omitting diagrams and adding those from
 [F 124^a ff.]

Qur'ānic verses (الله) [M 122^b]

Qur'ānic verses (ربّ) [M 125^b]

Qur'ānic verses (ربّنا) [M 127^a]

Prayer, Qur'ān, and diagrams [M 128^b] (= [F 128^b; C 24^a])

Qur'ānic verses (يا أيّها الناس) [M 142^b]

Prayer, Qur'ān, and diagrams [M 144^b] (= [F 141^b; C 32^a; P 91^a])

Brief prayers [M 148^b] (Absent from [F, C])

Qur'ānic verses (سبحان) + var. [M 148^b]

Diagrams [M 151^a] (= [F 146^b; C 36^a; P 73^b])

Qur'ānic verses (وبشر) [M 152^a]

Note: [M] has unique prayers (إِنَّ اللَّهَ) written in the margins

Qur'ānic verses (وبشري) [M 153^a]

Qur'ānic verses (خير) [M 154^a]

Diagram [M 154^b] (= Diagram [F 149^b; P 77^a; C 38^b])

Qur'ānic verses (سلام); prayers [M 154^b]

Note: [M] diverges slightly from [F, C] in its prayers

Qur'ānic verses (تبارك) [M 158^b]

Qur'ānic verses (حمد) + var. [M 159^b]

Qur'ānic verses (محمّد\احمد) [M 162^b]

*Diagram [M 163^b] (Absent from [C])

*Prayers [M 164^a] (Absent from [C])

*Qur'ānic verses (سلطان) [M 164^b] (Absent from [C])

*Diagrams [M 168^b] (Absent from [C])

Page with scribbled notes [M 168^a] (Absent from [F, C, P])

Qur'ānic verses (نفس، أنفس) + var. [M 172^b]

Diagrams, Qur'ān, Prayers, Letter Manipulation [M 197^a] (= [F 182^a; P 34^a; C 66^a ff., 40^b ff.])

Section on Dīn (includes diagrams and Qur'ānic quotes) [M 222^b]
 Qur'ānic verses (هل) v2 (no v1 in [M, F, P]) [M 233^a]

String of broken letters and lines [M 238^a] (Absent from [C])

Repeated Allāh sequence [M 238^b]

Repeated *ilāh* sequence [M 243^a]

Diagrams [M 243^b] (= [F 122^b ff.])

Note: Date of Composition on [M 244^a] (Tuesday, 7 Rajab AH 630)

Unlabeled instructions for prayers *in media res* [M 245^a] (= [F 5^a])

Sequence of labeled prayers [M 247^b]

- The Prayer of Ecstasy (صلوة الوجدان)
- The Prayer of Thankfulness for God's Bounties (صلوة الشكر لنعم الله)
- The Prayer of Seeking Refuge (صلوة الاستعاذة)
- The Prayer of Seeking Absolute Divine Favor [in] all Affairs (صلوة الاستخارة)
- (المطلق الجمع الامور)
- The Forenoon Prayer (صلوة الضحى)
- The Prayer of Deliverance (صلوة النجاة)
- The Prayer of Need (صلوة الحاجة)
- The Prayer of Sufficiency (صلوة الكفاية)
- The Prayer of Opening the Heart (صلوة انشراح الصدر)
- The Prayer of Acceptance (صلوة القبول)
- The Prayer of Cessation (صلوة الزوال)
- The Prayer of Desire and Dread (صلوة الرغبة والرغبة)
- The Prayer Gathering Together Intention and Peace (صلوة الجمع بين النية والسلام)
- The Prayer Gathering Together Life, Death, Dispersal, and Assembly, as well as Opening, Good News, and Aid/Triumph (صلوة الجمع بين الحياة والموت والنشر والجمع بين الفتح والبشارة والنصر)
- The Prayer of Striving for God's Mention (صلوة السعي إلى ذكر الله تعالى)
- The Prayer of Hastening to Forgiveness (صلوة المسارعة إلى المغفرة)
- The Prayer of Facilitation and Heading to God (صلوة التيسير والذهاب إلى الله تعالى)
- The Prayer of Mercy (صلوة الرحمة)
- The Prayer of Sending Out/Resurrection (صلوة البعث)
- The Prayer of Eternity/Time (صلوة الدهر)

- The Prayer of Gathering (صلوة الجمعة)
- The Prayer of Being Split Open (صلوة الانفطار)
- The Prayer of Submission (صلوة التسليم)
- The Prayer of Secrets (صلوة السرائر)
- The Prayer of Veiling (صلوة التستر)
- The Prayer of Seeking Refuge (صلوة الاستعاذة)
- The Prayer of Forgetfulness (صلوة التنسية)
- The Prayer of Good News (صلوة البشارة) (×2)
- The Prayer of Seeking Divine Favor (صلوة الاستخارة)
- The Prayer of Memorizing the Qurʾān (صلوة حفظ القرآن)

- The Supplication of Sealing the Qurʾān (دعاء ختم القرآن) [M 263^a]
- The Prayer of Generosity for the Lords of Intellect (صلوة الندى لأرباب النهى)

[M] seems to end *in media res* with increasingly scribbled handwriting

3 Carullah MS 1541 [C]

Diagrams [C 1^b] (= [F 73^b])

Qurʾānic verses (قل اللهم)

Qurʾānic verses (قل هو)

Diagrams [C 5^a–6^a] (= [F 77^b])

Qurʾānic verses (الإنسان) [C 6^b]

Qurʾānic verses (علام الغيوب) [C 9^a]

Qurʾānic verses (ترجع الأمور) + var. [C 9^a]

Qurʾānic verses (بشرًا بين يدي رحمته) [C 9^b]

Prayer sequence [C 9^b]

Repeated Allāh sequence [C 11^a]

Repeated *ilāh* sequence v1 [C 20^a]

Diagram sequence [C 21^a]

Qurʾānic verses (الله) [C 22^b]

Qurʾānic verses (ربّ) [C 23^b]

Qurʾānic verses (ربّنا) [C 23^b]

Prayer, Qur'ān, and diagrams [C 24^a–31^a] (= [F 128^b; M 128^b])

Qur'ānic verses (يا أيها الناس) [C 31^b]

Prayer, Qur'ān, and diagrams [C 32^a] (= [F 141^b; M 144^b; P 91^a])

Qur'ānic verses (سبحان) + var. [C 34^b]

Diagrams [C 36^a] (= [F 146^b; M 151^a; P 73^b])

Qur'ānic verses (ويشتر) [C 37^a]

Qur'ānic verses (وبشري) [C 37^b]

Qur'ānic verses (خير) [C 38^a]

Diagram [C 38^b] (= [F 149^b; M 154^b; P 77^a])

Qur'ānic verses (سلام) + prayers [C 38^b]

Diagrams, Qur'ān, Prayers, Letter Manipulation [C 40^b] (= [F 184^b; M 198^a; P inter alia])

Section on Dīn (includes diagrams and Qur'ānic quotes) [C 52^a]

Qur'ānic verses (هل) v1 [C 57^b]

Qur'ānic verses (نفس، أنفس) + var. [C 58^b]

Diagrams [C 66^a] (= [F 182^a; M 197^a; P 34^a])

Qur'ānic verses (هل) v2 [C 68^a]

Repeated *ilāh* sequence v2 [C 69^b]

*Diagram sequence [C 70^b–71^a] (Unique to [C])

Blank pages [C 71^b–72^a]

*Diagram [C 72^b] (Unique to [C])

Qur'ānic verses (لله) [C 73^b]

F 90^a Diagram [C 73^b] (= [F 90^a; M 95^b])

Qur'ānic verses (الإنسان); also includes Divine Names, prayers, diagrams [C 74^a]
(= [F 90^a; M 95^b])

Qur'ānic verses (سلطان + شيطان) [C 76^b]

Diagram [C 82^b] (= [F 103^b; M 114^b])

Qur'ān quotations [C 82^b]

Long diagram sequence [C 84^b] (= [F 107^b; M 118^b])

Qur'ānic verses (تبارك) [C 87^b]

Qur'ānic verses (حمد) + var. [C 88^a]

Blank page, followed by unlabeled instructions for prayers *in media res* [C 90^a–91^a] (= [F 4^b, bottom])

Labeled sequence of prayers [C 91^a]

- The Prayer of Ecstasy (صلوة الوجدان)
- The Prayer of Thankfulness for God's Bounties (صلوة الشكر لنعم الله)
- The Prayer of Seeking Refuge (صلوة الاستعاذة)
- The Prayer of Cessation (صلوة الزوال)
- The Prayer of Desire and Dread (صلوة الرغبة والرغبة)
- The Prayer Gathering Together Intention and Peace (صلوة الجمع بين النية والسلام)
- The Prayer Gathering Together Life, Death, Dispersal, and Assembly, as well as Opening, Good News, and Aid/Triumph (صلوة الجمع بين الحيوية والموت والنشر والجمع بين الفتح والبشارة والنصر)
- The Prayer of Striving for God's Mention (صلوة السعي إلى ذكر الله تعالى)
- The Prayer of Hastening to Forgiveness (صلوة المسارعة إلى المغفرة)
- The Prayer of Racing to Forgiveness (صلوة المسابقة إلى المغفرة)
- The Prayer of Facilitation and Heading to God (صلوة التيسير والذهاب إلى الله تعالى)
- The Prayer of Mercy (صلوة الرحمة)
- The Prayer of Sending Out/Resurrection (صلوة البعث)
- The Prayer of Eternity/Time (صلوة الدهر)
- The Prayer of Gathering (صلوة الجمعة)
- The Prayer of Being Split Open (صلوة الانفطار)
- The Prayer of Submission (صلوة التسليم)
- The Prayer of Secrets (صلوة السرائر)
- The Prayer of Veiling (صلوة التستر)

- The Prayer of Seeking Refuge (صلوة الاستعاذة)
- The Prayer of Forgetfulness (صلوة التنسية)
- The Prayer of Good News (صلوة البشارة)
- The Prayer of Seeking Divine Favor (صلوة الاستخارة)
- The Prayer of Memorizing the Qurʾān (صلوة حفظ القرآن)
- The Prayer of Glorification (صلوة التسبيح)

4 Princeton, Garrett Collection MS 3G [P]

Erroneously labeled *al-Khatma al-Maghribiyya al-sultāniyya wa-l-khulla al-Ibrāhimiyya al-burhāniyya* and attributed to Ibn ʿArabī

- Qurʾānic verses (تبارك) [P 1^b]
 Qurʾānic verses (حمد) + var. [P 2^b]
 Qurʾānic verses (محمد\احمد) [P 5^a]

- Diagram [P 6^a] (Absent from [C])
 Prayers [P 6^b] (Absent from [C])
 Qurʾānic verses (سلطان) [P 7^a] (Absent from [C])
 Diagrams [P 10^b] (Absent from [C])

- Qurʾānic verses (نفس، أنفس) + var. [P 14^b]
 Diagrams, Qurʾān, Prayers, Letter Manipulation [P 34^a] (= [F 182^a; M 197^a; C 66^a ff., 40^b ff.])

Note: Order of [P] is slightly different from [F, M]

- Section on Dīn (includes diagrams and Qurʾānic quotes) [P 59^b]
 Qurʾānic verses (هل) v2 (no v1 in [M, F, P]) [P 66^b]

String of broken letters and lines [P 70^a] (Absent from [C])

Blank Page [P 70^b]

- Qurʾānic verses (سبحان) + var. [P 71^a]

Diagrams [P 73^b] (= [F 146^b; M 151^a; C 36^a])

- Qurʾānic verses (وبشر) [P 74^b]
 Qurʾānic verses (وبشري) [P 75^b]
 Qurʾānic verses (خير) [P 76^b]

Diagram [P 77^a] (= [F 149^b; M 154^b; C 38^b])

Qur'ānic verses (سَلَام) [P 77^b]

Prayer, Qur'ān, Diagrams [P 79^a]

Note: Begins with same diagram as [F 131^a] and continues sequence

Qur'ānic verses (يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ) [P 89^b]

Prayer, Qur'ān, and diagrams [P 91^a] (= [F 141^b; M 144^b; C 32^a])

Note: Continues up to diagram on [F 144^a]

Diagrams [P 94^a] (= [F 186^a–186^b])

Qur'ānic verses [P 95^a] (= [F 107^a])

Diagrams [P 95^b] (= [F 107^b–108^a])

Diagram and Composition Date [P 96^a] (= [F 123^a])

Qur'ānic verses (اللَّهُ) [P 97^b]

Qur'ānic verses (رَبِّ) [P 100^a]

Qur'ānic verses (رَبَّنَا) [P 101^a]

Diagrams [P 101^b] (= [F 128^b–129^a])

Prayers for Muḥammad [P 102^b]

Prayers [P 104^a] (= [F 151^a])

Qur'ānic verses (سَلَام) [P 104^b] (= [F 151^b])

Diagram [P 105^b] (= [F 174^b])

Diagrams [P 106^a] (= [F 107^a ff., but out of order])

Repeated Allāh sequence [P 111^a]

Repeated *ilāh* sequence [P 116^a]

Diagram [P 117^a] (= [F 122^b, 213^b; M 243^b; C 21^a])

Bibliography

(For works by Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūya, see Appendix 3: List of Ḥamūya's Works)

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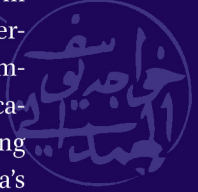
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In *Lost in a Sea of Letters*, Cyril Uy explores the life and work of Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamūya (d. 1252), a Mongol-era Sufi whose arcane treatises inspired generations of mystics and messiahs. Reading Ḥamūya in dialogue with contemporaries across Central Asia, Iran, and the Eastern Mediterranean, Uy excavates a world in which knowledge was an embodied sensibility: a way of being that could improvise across all dimensions of human experience. Ḥamūya's performative writing reworked the foundations of this knowledge, provoking readers to live reality through the cacophony of his Sufi free jazz. Foregrounding Ḥamūya's deconstructive ethos and radical openness to interpretation, Uy reveals how embracing plurality could thrive as a mode of social, intellectual, and spiritual competition.

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