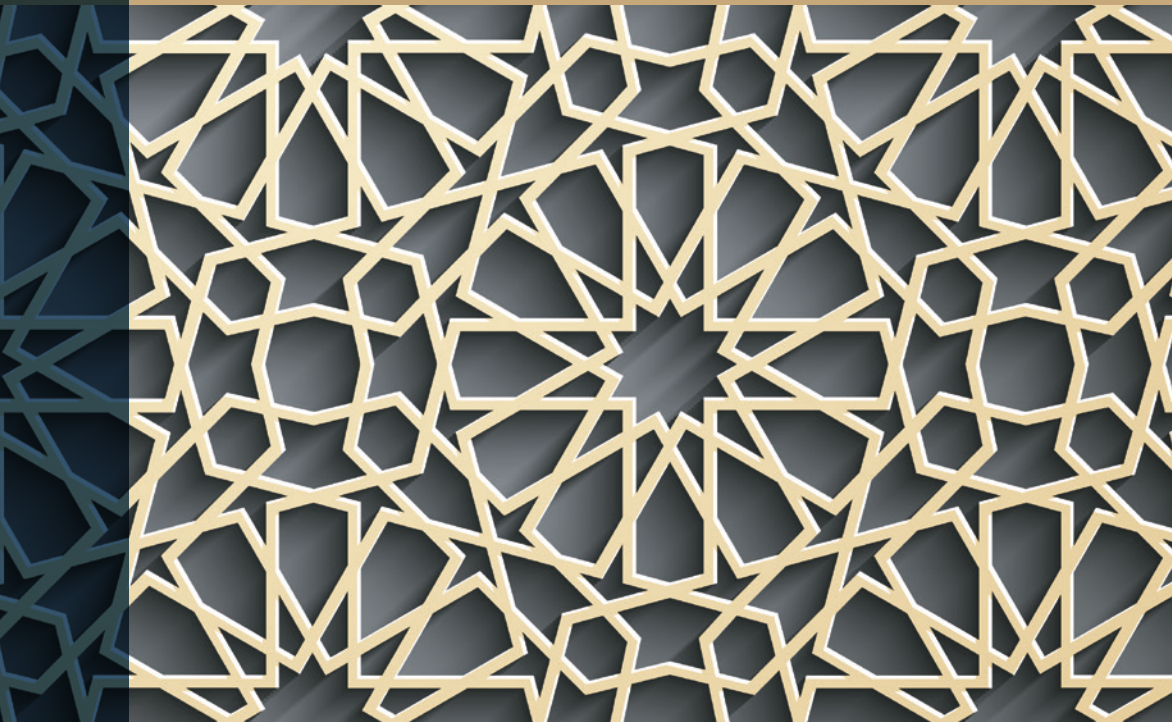


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Key Classical Works on Islamic Ethics

قِرَاءَاتٌ فِي عَيُونِ
التِّرَاثِ الْأَخْلَاقِي الْإِسْلَامِيِّ

Edited by Mutaz al-Khatib



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Key Classical Works on Islamic Ethics

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Mutaz al-Khatib

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*For Yaman,
May this work inspire you and your generation
to explore the beauty of wisdom and ethics,
and may you all grow with curiosity, compassion,
and a love for learning.*



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Notes on Style, Transliteration, and Dates

For referencing, this volume follows the *Chicago Manual of Style* author-date in-text citation system.

Arabic words and names are transliterated according to the system used in Brill's *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three*, which is also adopted in the *Journal of Islamic Ethics* (JIE):

Consonants: ʾ, b, t, th, j, ḥ, kh, d, dh, r, z, s, sh, ṣ, ḍ, ṭ, z, ʿ, gh, f, q, k, l, m, n, h, w, y.

Short vowels: a, i, u.

Long vowels: ā, ī, ū.

Diphthongs: aw, ay.

Tāʾ marbūʿa: -a, -at (construct state).

While classical proper names are fully transliterated (e.g., al-Ghazālī), modern names, i.e., since 1900, also the official or common spellings are adopted (e.g., Muhammad Abdullah Draz). The “l” of the definite article “al-” is always retained, regardless of whether it is assimilated in pronunciation to the initial consonant of the word to which it is attached (*idghām*).

If not otherwise specified, the dates given are common era (CE) dates. If two dates are provided (e.g., 505/1111), the first one is the year according to the Islamic *hijrī* calendar (AH), and the second the CE date. For dates after 1900, only the CE date is provided.

Notes on Contributors

Matthew Anderson (ماثيو أنديرسون)

is Academic Director of the Center for Christian-Muslim Understanding and Partnership in Cairo, Egypt, and currently serves as executive editor for *Dialogue Across Borders: Emerging Perspectives on Intercultural and Interreligious Relations* (Brill). He completed his PhD in the Department of Religious and Theological Studies at Georgetown University in 2018 on the prominent medieval Egyptian jurist Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 756/1355). After that, he taught for several years at the same university.

Ovamir Anjum (عويمر أنجم)

is Professor and the Imam Khattab Endowed Chair of Islamic Studies at the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at the University of Toledo, USA. He obtained his PhD in 2008 from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His work focuses on the nexus of theology, ethics, politics and law in Islam, with a comparative interest in Western Thought. He is the author of *Politics, Law and Community in Islamic Thought: The Taymiyyan Moment* (Cambridge University Press, 2012). He has translated *Madārij al-Sālikīn* ("Ranks of the Divine Seekers," Brill 2020) by Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 751/1350). His current projects include a survey of Islamic history and a monograph on Islamic political thought. He is the Director of Research at the Yaqeen Institute, co-founder of the Ummatics Institute, and editor of the *American Journal of Islam and Society* (AJIS).

Raja Bahlul (رجا بهلول)

is Head of the Philosophy Program at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. He holds a BA degree in English and Philosophy from the American University of Beirut and obtained his PhD from Indiana University Bloomington in 1983 on a dissertation on Leibniz and the identity of indiscernibles. He has taught philosophy in the USA, Palestine, Jordan, UAE, and Qatar. He currently also serves as Editor-in-Chief of *Tabayyun for Philosophical Studies and Critical Theories*, published by the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies. His scholarly contributions are in Arabic and English, covering areas such as metaphysics, Islamic philosophy and theology, contemporary Islamic political thought, human rights, emotion theory, and forgiveness. His notable publications include "Emotion as Patheception" (*Philosophical Explorations*, 2015), "Islamic Law and Legal Positivism" (*Rivista di filosofia del diritto*, 2016), and

several contributions to the volumes of *The Philosophy of Forgiveness* (Vernon Press). His recent works include “Islamic Democracy and Popular Sovereignty” (*Comparative Political Theory*, 2021) and “Skepticism About Other Minds: Propositional and Objectual” (*Philosophical Investigations*, 2022). Additionally, he has forthcoming work in *Tabayyun for Philosophical Studies and Critical Theory* on conspiracy theories (2024).

Hans Daiber (هانس داير)

was Chair of Oriental Languages at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main from 1995 until his retirement in 2010. He obtained his PhD in 1967, and in 1980 his thesis was published under the title *Aetius Arabus*. In 1973 he finalised his monograph titled *Das theologisch-philosophische System des Mu‘ammar Ibn ‘Abbād as-Sulamī* (gest. 830 n. Chr.), which granted him the qualification for teaching Arabic and Islam; the work appeared in print in 1975. Daiber taught at the Free University of Amsterdam 1977–1995, at the University of Tokyo 1992, ISTAC (International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, Kuala Lumpur/Malaysia) 2001, and is member of the KNAW (Royal Dutch Academy of Arts and Sciences) since 1981. His main fields of interest are Arabic and Islam, including Islamic philosophy, theology, the history of sciences and Greek-Syriac-Arabic-Latin translations. Daiber is an expert in analysing and describing Arabic manuscripts. He is the editor of *Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Sciences* (Brill) and *Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus* (Brill). In 1999 and 2007 he published the *Bibliography of Islamic Philosophy* in three volumes. His latest publication *From the Greeks to the Arabs and Beyond* (Brill, 6 volumes, 2021–2023), covers thematically arranged key publications and unpublished articles.

Omar Farahat (عمر فرحات)

is Associate Profesor of Islamic Studies at McGill University and Associate Member at McGill’s Institute of Islamic Studies. He obtained his PhD in 2016 from Columbia University, and subsequently spent a year as a Research Fellow at Yale Law School. His research focuses on Islamic legal and moral theories. Farahat’s first book, *The Foundation of Norms in Islamic Jurisprudence and Theology* (Cambridge University Press, 2019) explores the role of divine commands as a source of normativity in classical Islamic thought. Farahat’s research on Islamic legal theory and ethics has also appeared in the *Canadian Journal of Law and Jurisprudence*, the *Journal of Religious Ethics*, the *Journal of Law and Religion*, the *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies*, among others. He has also contributed to several collected volumes and special issues

of academic journals. His current research focuses on the understanding of social roles in late classical and post-classical Islamic legal theories, as well as the moral foundations of filial and parental duties in comparative religious thought. Farahat served as the Vice-President of the Society for the Study of Muslim Ethics and has contributed to many professional organizations in the fields of ethics and Islamic studies.

Mohammed Ghaly (محمد غالي)

is professor of Islam and Biomedical Ethics and Head of the Research Center for Islamic Legislation & Ethics (CILE), College of Islamic Studies at the Hamad Bin Khalifa University in Doha, Qatar. He holds a BA degree in Islamic studies from Al-Azhar University, Egypt, and both his MA and PhD degrees in the same field from Leiden University, the Netherlands. Ghaly taught at Leiden University from 2007 to 2013 and has been a faculty member of the European Master of Bioethics under the Erasmus Mundus Program since 2011. His research focuses on Islamic ethics in biomedical sciences and artificial intelligence. Ghaly has published extensively on topics such as disability, biomedical ethics principles, genetic ethics, human genome editing, and infertility treatment. His works are available at <https://cilecenter.academia.edu/MohammedGhaly>. He is also the founding editor and editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Islamic Ethics*, published by Brill. Ghaly has held visiting positions at the Kennedy Institute of Ethics (Georgetown University, USA), the School of Anthropology (University of Oxford, UK), and the School of Philosophy (Erasmus University, Netherlands). Additionally, he leads and consults on several funded research projects.

Paul Heck (بول هيك)

is a faculty member in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Georgetown University, focusing on the significance of Islam's ethical heritage. He obtained his PhD in Islamic studies from the University of Chicago in 2000. His notable works include *Common Ground: Islam, Christianity, and Religious Pluralism* (Georgetown University Press, 2009), exploring Islam's role in Christian-Muslim relations; *Skepticism in Classical Islam: Moments of Confusion* (Routledge, 2013), examining the role of doubt in Islamic theology; and *Political Theology and Islam: From the Birth of Empire to the Modern State* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2023), which integrates Islamic studies with political theology. Heck's research interests encompass the history of atheism and scepticism, mysticism, spirituality in society, martyrdom across monotheistic traditions, theo-humanism, comparative scripture, and political theology. Recent works focus on Muslim perspectives on conscience, friendship, and

pious travel, with forthcoming publications on emotions and Christian-Muslim relations as an ethical and spiritual collaboration. Heck has also taught in Morocco, supervising “The Study of Religions across Civilizations” project, which connects scholars from North Africa, Europe, and the U.S. to enhance the global understanding of religious life through diverse theological insights.

Mutaz al-Khatib (معتز الخطيب)

is Associate Professor of Islamic Ethics at the Research Centre for Islamic Legislation and Ethics (CILE) at Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) in Doha, Qatar, where he also directs the MA program in Applied Islamic Ethics at the College of Islamic Studies. He earned his PhD from the Omdurman Islamic University, Sudan, in 2009 with a dissertation on text-critical *ḥadīth* studies. He has authored and edited several books, contributing significantly to the field of Islamic studies through both refereed articles and monographs. His works include *Radd al-Ḥadīth min Jihat al-Matn: Dirāsa fī Manāhij al-Muḥaddithīn wa-l-Uṣūliyyīn* (“*Matn* Criticism: A Study of the Methods of Traditionists and Muslim Jurists,” 2011), *Ma’ziq al-Dawla bayna al-Islāmiyyīn wa-l-‘Ilmāniyyīn* (“The Dilemma of the State between Islamists and Secularists,” 2016), *al-Unf al-Mustabāḥ: al-Sharī’a fī Muwājahat al-Umma wa-l-Dawla* (“Violence Made Permissible: ‘Sharī’a’ versus the People and the State,” 2017), *Qabūl al-Ḥadīth* (“The Acceptance of *Ḥadīth*,” 2017), and as a co-editor, *Islamic Ethics and the Trusteeship Paradigm* (Brill, 2020). His most recent work is *Ḥadīth and Ethics through the Lens of Interdisciplinarity* (Brill, 2023).

Taneli Kukkonen (تانلي كوكونن)

is Professor of Philosophy at New York University Abu Dhabi. He received his doctoral degree from the University of Helsinki in 2002 and became a junior Canada Research Chair in the Aristotelian Tradition in 2003. Kukkonen subsequently held appointments in Finland and in New Zealand before settling in Abu Dhabi, where he additionally served as Dean of Arts and Humanities through 2018–2020. His early research focused on Platonic and Aristotelian cosmologies in late antiquity, Arabic philosophy, and the Latin medieval and Renaissance period. He then pivoted to the study of al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), a theorist whose thought Kukkonen has covered extensively in his publications, and to Ibn Ṭufayl’s (d. 581/1185) *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān*, a subject on which he wrote the monograph *Ibn Ṭufayl* (Oneworld 2014). Kukkonen is currently working on a monograph on al-Ghazālī as well as on a collaborative project examining *Vice in Global Perspective*.

Chafika Ouail (شفيفة وعيل)

is Associate Professor Arabic Language College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Nizwa researcher at the Khalil Ibn Aḥmed al-Farāhīdī Center for Linguistic and Literary Studies in Nizwa, Oman. She obtained her PhD in Arabic and Literature from the American University of Beirut in 2016 with a dissertation on al-Niffarī (d. 354/965). Ouail is pursuing a second PhD in Qurʾānic studies in Algeria, exploring “The Problem of Modernity in Reading the Quranic Text: The Ethical System as a Model.” She has been awarded postdoctoral fellowships by the Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS) and the German Oriental Institute Beirut (OIB). Her scholarly focus includes Arab heritage, philosophy, and literature, covering topics such as ethics, theology, Sufism, and hermeneutics. She has contributed extensively to peer-reviewed journals, presented at numerous international conferences, and engaged in significant projects like “The State and Future of the Arabic Language.” Her publications include “*Qiyāfat al-Maʿnā: Min al-Taʾwīl ilā al-Mītā-Taʾwīl*” (“Prognostication of Meaning: from Hermeneutic to Metahermeneutic,” 2024) and two forthcoming books. Additionally, she has authored two poetry collections.

Arjan Post (أريان پوست)

is Associate Professor in Arabic and Islamic Studies at the KU Leuven, Belgium. He studied Middle Eastern studies in Leiden and completed his PhD at Utrecht University in 2017 under the supervision of Christian Lange. His first monograph on the life and teachings of the Ḥanbalī Sufi ʿImād al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Wāsiṭī (d. 711/1311) was published by Brill in 2020 under the title *The Journeys of a Taymiyyan Sufi*. His fields of interest include Sufism, *kalām* theology, and the intellectual history of the Ḥanbalī school. He has published several articles on Sufism in Ibn Taymiyya’s (d. 728/1328) circle, as well as an Arabic edition and English translation of the unique *Sharḥ al-Qaṣīda al-Rāʾiyya fī Ṭarīq al-Sulūk* (“The Commentary on The Poem Rā’ Concerning the Sufi Way,” Fons Vitae, 2015) by the Moroccan Sufi Ibn ʿAjība (d. 1224/1809). His current research project is on the historical developments of Sufism and theology within the Ḥanbalī school under the Mamlūks in Syria and Egypt.

Jason Welle (جيسون ويلي)

is Assistant Professor of Comparative Theology at Boston College, where has taught since 2023. He previously taught and served as Director of Studies at the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies in Rome. He obtained a doctorate from Georgetown University in 2016, an MTS from the University

of Notre Dame, and an MDiv from the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. His research focuses on Islamic mysticism in the medieval period, on Muslim-Christian relations, and on the Franciscan intellectual tradition. Welle's first monograph is *Companionship and Virtue in Classical Sufism: The Contribution of al-Sulamī* (IB Tauris, 2024). He has also published several articles and book chapters on al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021) in English and Italian and translated a forthcoming collection of al-Sulamī's treatises to be published with the Islamic Texts Society. Welle is currently preparing a monograph that combines a historical survey of interreligious relations with a constructive comparative theological approach: *Inter Saracenos: The Franciscan Family Encountering Islam* (Catholic University of America Press).

Introduction

Mutaz al-Khatib

1 Prelude

Classical bibliographers traditionally classified the science of *akhlāq*—moral character traits—as a branch of “practical wisdom” (*al-ḥikma al-ʿamaliyya*), specifically concerning self-governance (*siyāsāt al-naḥs*). In this framework, *akhlāq* emphasises the acquisition of self-qualities aimed at personal perfection and happiness, engaging deeply with virtues for cultivation and vices for avoidance (see Ḥajjī Khalifa 1941, 1:35; 1:676, 2:1289; al-Qinnawjī 2002, 253, 376, 467). However, this volume adopts a broader conception of ethics than the traditional Greek-originated approach. Here, ethics encompasses both the agent and actions, integrating deontic and virtue ethics. This volume examines Islamic classical works across multiple specialised fields, bridging theoretical and practical dimensions, and extending beyond the Greek model of moral philosophy. It explores varied approaches to ethics, positioning itself as a reference work in the emerging field of Islamic ethics. This interdisciplinary field incorporates various disciplines within Islamic studies as well as external fields such as medicine, offering an extensive and analytical examination of ethical thought in classical times.

In this introduction, I will address three main issues: modern scholarship on ethics in the Islamic tradition, the focus of this volume, and its content and methodology.

2 Modern Scholarship on Ethics

Islamic Ethics, as a discipline, has been extensively developed through the contributions of numerous scholars, such as Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh Drāz (d. 1958), Dwight Donaldson (d. 1976), George Hourani (d. 1984), Aḥmad Maḥmūd Ṣubḥī (d. 2004), Mohammed Arkoun (d. 2010), Muḥammad ʿĀbid al-Jābirī (d. 2010), ʿAbd al-Ḥayy Qābīl (d. 2020), Majid Fakhry (d. 2021), among other contemporary scholars. However, the complexity of this subject has intensified due to the burgeoning nature of the field on one hand, and the broadened access to its classical sources and deepening insights into them on the other. There is a pressing need to systematically classify these sources and to develop conceptual and theoretical frameworks that ensure philosophical rigour and

coherence. Moreover, this rich ethical legacy invites further exploration into the potential of diverse ethical theories within its scope.

Modern scholarship on Islamic ethics has manifested in various forms, encompassing diverse methodologies and focal points. One prevalent approach investigates major ethical theories within the Qurʾān and/or Islamic tradition, such as exploring theories of “good” and “duty,” in the Qurʾān, as well as theories of moral rationalism and spiritual taste (*dhawq*), duty and happiness, natural law, and divine command theory within the Islamic tradition (Drāz 1998; Ṣubḥī 1983; Qābīl 1984; Emon 2010; al-Attar 2019). Another approach addresses a specific thematic issue, such as the connection between *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and ethics, or the obligation within *kalām* (Islamic theology) (see, for example: Rahman 1985; Makdisi 1985; Frank 1983; Farahat 2019). A third approach delves into the ethical thought of seminal figures, including the Muʿtazilī judge ʿAbd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025), Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210), Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) among others (see, for example: Hourani 1971; Shihadeh 2006; Vasalou 2015). The fourth approach provides a general overview of ethics as viewed through various fields of Islamic knowledge (Donaldson 1953; Naṣṣār 2004; Ramadan 2019). The fifth approach focuses on the historical development of ethical thought within Islamic civilisation by reviewing classical sources related to ethics (see, for example: Fakhry 1991; al-Jābirī 2001). However, writing in this latter style has been marred by several shortcomings, which are either related to a lack of theoretical coherence or to the neglect of significant sources and branches, such as jurisprudential ethics, or by limiting their scope to theoretical ethics while excluding practical ethics (see critiques of these attempts: Arkoun 1993; Gutas 1997; al-Bishrī 2002).

It is important to note that there have been some efforts to compile bibliographies on the sources of Islamic ethics. Some of these attempts, however, have been preliminary in nature (Arkoun 1986), while others have suffered from a lack of coherent theoretical underpinnings (Nūr al-Dīn 2006; Bahbahānī Būr 2012). Additionally, a third category of efforts has been limited by both temporal and geographical constraints (ʿAṭiyya 1990; March 2009).

3 This Volume

This volume is predicated on an expansive concept of ethics and provides an analytical study of a list of classic Islamic sources spanning from the third/ninth to the eighth/fourteenth century. It encompasses a wide range of disciplines, such as *ḥadīth*, as exemplified by *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq* (“The Book of Noble Character”) by Ibn Abī l-Dunyā (d. 281/894); *sīra* or the

Prophet's biography, notably in *Kitāb al-Shifā bi-Ta'rif Huqūq al-Muṣṭafā* ("The Cure in Knowing the Rights of the Chosen One") by al-Qāḍī 'Iyād (d. 544/1149); *kalām*, with seminal works like *al-Irshād ilā Qawāṭi' al-Adilla fī Uṣūl al-I'tiqād* ("Guidance to the Essentials of Evidence in the Fundamentals of Belief") by al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085) and *Nihāyat al-Iqdām fī 'Ilm al-Kalām* ("The Ultimate Conclusion in the Science of Theology") by al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153); *fiqh*, represented by *al-Ādāb al-Shar'īyya* ("Divinely Mandated Etiquettes") by Ibn Muflīh (d. 763/1362); Sufism, through texts such as *Nawādir al-Uṣūl* ("The Unusual Principles") by al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Uyūb al-Nafs wa-Mudāwātuhā* ("The Maladies of the Soul and Their Remedies") by al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021), *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* ("Revival of the Religious Sciences") by al-Ghazālī, and *al-Tuḥfa al-ʿIrāqīyya fī l-A'māl al-Qalbiyya* ("The Iraqi Gift on the Works of the Heart") by Ibn Taymiyya; philosophy, highlighted by *al-Ṭibb al-Rūḥānī* ("Spiritual Medicine") by Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d. 313/925) and *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq wa-Taṭhīr al-A'rāq* ("Refinement of Character and the Purification of Natural Dispositions") by Miskawayh (d. 421/1030); and medicine, with *Adab al-Ṭabīb* ("Ethics of the Physician") by Ishāq b. 'Alī al-Ruhāwī (fl. third-fourth/ninth-tenth centuries). Furthermore, the interdisciplinary approach is enriched by three works by al-'Izz Ibn 'Abd al-Salām (d. 660/1262): *Shajarat al-Ma'ārīf wa-l-Aḥwāl wa-Ṣāliḥ al-Aqwāl wa-l-A'māl* ("The Tree of Knowledge, States, Righteous Statements, and Actions"), *al-Imām fī Bayān Adillat al-Aḥkām* ("The Leader in Explaining the Proofs of Rulings"), and *Qawā'id al-Aḥkām fī Iṣlāḥ al-Anām* ("The Principles of Rulings for the Betterment of Humanity").

Building on the expanded conception of ethics outlined earlier, this volume transcends the traditional narrow Greek philosophical model. It elucidates that the field of ethics is inherently multidisciplinary, bringing both theoretical and practical ethics. Historically, the dominance of the theoretical perspective led to the marginalisation of many significant works from the field of Islamic ethics. Looking ahead, in a subsequent volume we aspire to include additional sources that span other fields, such as *adab*, and encompass later historical periods.

Furthermore, this volume illustrates two critical dimensions of Islamic ethics. Firstly, it underscores the richness and diversity of ethical conceptions within the Islamic tradition; showcasing a spectrum of approaches—Greek philosophical, narrative, and analytical—that extend beyond mere philosophical discourse. Secondly, it challenges the prevailing notion of a scarcity of ethical sources within Islamic civilisation by demonstrating the extensive breadth of ethical works that have historically been integral to Islamic scholarly pursuits.

4 Volume Content and Methodology

This volume originates from the proceedings of the eighth international conference convened at the Center for Islamic Legislation and Ethics (CILE), in collaboration with Leuven University, under the title “Key Classical Works on Islamic Ethics.” The conference took place from 6 to 8 December 2020. While contributions to the field have been made by existing studies on some specific classic sources, they often remain limited and are sometimes fraught with issues, as highlighted in various chapters of this volume, particularly the first. Most notably, many classical sources have yet to be thoroughly explored and analysed, thus representing a largely uncharted territory. Considering the challenge of covering all ethical sources in a single volume, we have selected a representative sample that showcases diverse modes of ethical reasoning within the Islamic tradition. These selections demonstrate that practical rationality in the Islamic tradition extends beyond the Greek philosophical framework. They provide scholarly insights crucial for addressing and correcting certain longstanding misconceptions about Islamic ethical philosophy and its historical development misconceptions that have persisted among some scholars since the early twentieth century (for further details, see the first chapter of this volume).

Throughout its chapters, this volume employs a structured methodology that begins with a concise biographical examination of each author, focusing on their ethical contributions and overarching moral projects, followed by a critical analysis of each selected classical work to unearth its unique ethical insights. Additionally, the chapters thoroughly explore the historical and intellectual context of these works, investigating their genealogy, potential sources, and their enduring impact on the field of ethics, spanning both classical and contemporary scholarship.

Chapter 1, titled “Mapping Islamic Ethical Sources: A Critical Review,” authored by Mutaz al-Khatib, comprehensively explores the foundational sources underpinning Islamic ethics within the rich tapestry of Islamic tradition. Its central role lies in laying the intellectual groundwork for the ensuing scholarly dialogues encapsulated within this edited volume. In light of the enduring debates and scholarly deliberations surrounding the contours of this burgeoning academic discipline and its foundational sources, this chapter embarks on a meticulous exploration of several crucial dimensions. The chapter commences by delving into the fundamental rationale behind dissecting the “sources of Islamic ethics,” elucidating the significance of this inquiry within contemporary academic discourse. Subsequently, it engages in

a discerning examination of Islamic ethics as a distinct and evolved discipline within the modern intellectual landscape. It scrutinises the profound influence of the overarching concept of ethics on the definition of the academic identity of this discipline and the nuanced perspectives it engenders concerning the sources from which it derives. Furthermore, this chapter critically deconstructs contemporary approaches aimed at documenting, analysing, and categorising Islamic ethical sources, shedding light on the evolving methodologies employed in this endeavour.

Chapter 2, titled “The Ethics of Certainty: *Makārim al-Akhlāq* by Ibn Abī l-Dunyā,” authored by Paul Heck, engages in an in-depth exploration of the intellectual contributions of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā (d. 281/894) to the field of Islamic ethics. Ibn Abī l-Dunyā is recognised as a seminal figure, notable for his pioneering efforts in articulating a comprehensive framework for Islamic ethics. His approach is deeply rooted in inner spirituality and reflects a nuanced understanding of the ethical discussions prevalent in his historical context. The chapter commences with an examination of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā’s multifaceted persona, with particular attention to his role as a prominent *ḥadīth* scholar, an aspect that continues to be a subject of scholarly debate. Following this examination, the narrative provides a concise and contextually relevant overview of contemporary scholarship concerning Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, specifically focusing on its applicability to *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq* (“The Book of Noble Character”), which is analysed, in detail, in subsequent sections of the chapter. This analysis commences with an exploration of the author’s introductory statements and proceeds to a comprehensive examination of key concepts drawn from Ibn Abī l-Dunyā’s broader literary corpus. These concepts, extrapolated from his various writings, collectively elucidate the breadth of his ethical framework. In the concluding part of the chapter, the author offers thoughtful reflections on the enduring legacy of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā’s contributions to the field of Islamic ethics.

Chapter 3, titled “*Adab al-Ṭabīb* by Ishāq b. ‘Alī al-Ruhāwī: The Continued Relevance of Classical Medical Ethics,” authored by Mohammed Ghaly, explores al-Ruhāwī’s seminal work *Adab al-Ṭabīb* (“Ethics of the Physician”). Being a physician immersed in the Greek medico-philosophical tradition during the third-fourth/ninth-tenth centuries, al-Ruhāwī combines medicine with philosophy and religion in his text, reflecting a holistic view of human nature. The chapter analyses al-Ruhāwī’s approach to medical excellence, which integrates moral dimensions rooted in religious and virtue ethics with professional expertise in health preservation and medical practice reform. It discusses how moral excellence incorporates moderating the psyche’s powers and managing patient and caregiver interactions, while professional excellence focuses on

enhancing medical knowledge and reforming healthcare practices. The concluding remarks emphasise al-Ruhāwī's continuous influence on contemporary Islamic bioethics and the historical evolution of medical ethics, highlighting his work's significance in the broader discourse of ethical healthcare practices.

Chapter 4, titled “al-Ru'ya al-Akhlāqiyya fī *Nawādir al-Uṣūl* lil-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī: Wilā'iyat al-Akhlāq wa-Wilā'iyat al-Sulṭa” (“The Ethical Vision in al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī's *Nawādir al-Uṣūl*: The Sainthood of Ethics and Authority”), authored by Shafīqa Wa'īl (Chafika Ouail), argues that *Nawādir al-Uṣūl* (“The Unusual Principles”) is an exception in that it, on its surface, appears to be a *ḥadīth* book equipped with characteristics of *ḥadīth* scholarship in terms of narration and transmission. However, in terms of insight and analysis, it specialises in a vision that surpasses *ḥadīth* scholarship. It employs concepts and analytical tools with an ethical and Sufi nuance. The chapter provides a scholarly reading of al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī's (d. ca. 265–320/879–932) book, situating it between the general realm of *ḥadīth* scholars and the sphere of Sufi scholars. Subsequently, it sheds light on al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī's ethical vision and its relationship with religious-moral authority and political authority, which he presents within the larger framework of his project, referred to as *wilāya* (sainthood).

Chapter 5, titled “The Cognitive Therapy of Abū Bakr al-Rāzī's *al-Ṭibb al-Rūḥānī*,” authored by Raja Bahlul, embarks on a theoretical exploration of Abū Bakr al-Rāzī's (d. 313/925) work *al-Ṭibb al-Rūḥānī* (“Spiritual Medicine”). This chapter scrutinises the book's central thesis, aiming to illustrate that al-Rāzī's work forms a sustained endeavour to elaborate and defend three inter-related propositions. Firstly, it posits that vices and psychic ailments emanate from epistemic deficiencies, wherein individuals may lack a complete understanding of what is morally good or what the consequences of their actions are. Secondly, it asserts the causal efficacy of reason and understanding, contending that these faculties provide incentives for individuals to believe in what is morally right and act accordingly. Lastly, it contends that possessing the right knowledge, guided by reason, is sufficient to set one on the path of virtue and psychic well-being. The chapter seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of al-Rāzī's noteworthy contributions to the realm of philosophical ethics. It commences with a succinct exploration of al-Rāzī's life, historical context, and body of work, placing him within the broader philosophical tradition. Subsequently, the chapter delves into the key issues that illuminate the book's overarching argument.

Chapter 6, titled “Didactics of Blame and Tactics to Tame: Al-Sulamī's *ʿUyūb al-Nafs wa-Mudāwātuhā*,” authored by Jason Welle, provides an exploration of the life and ethical endeavours of the Nishāpūrian *shaykh* Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān

al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021), with a particular focus on his treatise, *ʿUyūb al-Nafs wa-Mudāwātuhā* (“The Maladies of the Soul and Their Remedies”). In other works, al-Sulamī addresses religious growth through the lenses of proper customs, virtues, and spiritual states. However, in *ʿUyūb al-Nafs*, he employs the metaphor of healing and therapy. In this treatise, al-Sulamī collects a range of strategies to confront defects in a believer’s religio-moral life. The chapter acknowledges the challenges of studying a Sufi master like al-Sulamī, who does not systematically organise his material. Nevertheless, it highlights the significance of *ʿUyūb al-Nafs* within al-Sulamī’s body of work, both for its content and distinctive approach. In responding to the struggles faced by believers burdened with *nafs* (ego) inciting them to evil, al-Sulamī offers a message of hope for healing. He envisions a religious life in which ethical growth and spiritual development are inseparable, providing a profound perspective on the journey of self-improvement.

Chapter 7, titled “Miskawayh’s *Kitāb Ṭahārat al-Nafs* as a Program Leading to Ethicisation of Knowledge,” authored by Hans Daiber, focuses on Miskawayh’s (d. 421/1030) work *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq wa-Ṭaḥhīr al-ʿAṗāq* (“Refinement of Character and the Purification of Natural Dispositions”), also known under the title *Kitāb Ṭahārat al-Nafs* (“Book on the Purity of the Soul”). This chapter highlights how Miskawayh’s ethical handbook serves as a guide for self-education and discipline. Miskawayh’s distinctive ethical system combines practical and “spiritual” virtues, striving for closeness to God and inner contentment. He presents his educational program as a means to comprehend the soul’s journey toward its divine origin, emphasising the individual’s progression toward being more “God-like.” The chapter also explores the influence of Miskawayh’s ethics on subsequent authors, including al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (d. fifth/eleventh century) and al-Ghazālī, who integrated Miskawayh’s philosophical ethics into Islamic ethics. This influence extended well into the thirteenth/nineteenth century, notably in the works of figures like Rifāʿa al-Ṭaḥṭāwī (d. 1290/1873). Miskawayh’s ethics played a pivotal role in integrating ethics into Islamic jurisprudence and its application in politics, as exemplified by al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058) and Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Abī l-Rabīʿ (d. seventh/thirteenth century). This historical development, which traces its roots to Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ in the second/eighth century, found a philosophical foundation in Miskawayh’s ethics, emphasising love, friendship, and justice as foundational principles of human dignity.

Chapter 8, titled “Meta-Ethical Contributions of Ashʿarī Theological Writings: A Reading in Juwaynī’s *al-Irshād* and Shahrastānī’s *Nihāyat al-Iqdām*,” authored by Omar Farahat, asserts that classical Ashʿarī theological works, specifically in *kalām* and *uṣūl al-dīn*, held a significant place in theoretical ethics.

These works aimed to uphold a central Ash'arī claim that knowledge of the moral status of actions and, consequently, legal norms, is epistemologically impossible without divine revelation. To support this claim, the chapter introduces and contextualises two classical Ash'arī theological works: *al-Irshād ilā Qawāṭi' al-Adilla fī Uṣūl al-'Itiqād* ("Guidance to the Essentials of Evidence in the Fundamentals of Belief") by Imām al-Ḥaramayn Abū al-Ma'ālī al-Juwaynī and *Nihāyat al-Iqdām fī 'Ilm al-Kalām* ("The Ultimate Conclusion in the Science of Theology") by Abū l-Faṭḥ al-Shahrastānī. This exploration sheds light on the development of foundational Ash'arī doctrines during a pivotal phase of their evolution. The central focus is on the meta-ethical project advanced by these works, emphasising their reflections on the concepts and general theories that underpin ethical inquiry and judgment. A significant portion of intellectual effort was dedicated to clarifying the distinction between divine and human attributes, with a broader aim of demarcating the divine from the human realm. These discussions encompassed divine states, will, and the absence of accidents. Ultimately, these inquiries aimed to establish the distinctiveness of divine attributes, including revelation. This distinctiveness was foundational to the Ash'arī belief that no other created phenomenon, including human reason and intuition, could be equated with divine revelation in terms of moral authority. This distinction forms the core of the Ash'arī response to their theological adversaries.

Chapter 9, titled "*Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī," authored by Taneli Kukkonen, explores the ethical dimensions of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* ("Revival of the Religious Sciences"). This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section introduces al-Ghazālī as a prominent thinker with a strong ethical focus. It provides insight into his significant contribution to moral philosophy. The second section delves into four recurring ethical themes found within the book, shedding light on the central ethical concepts and discussions presented by al-Ghazālī. Finally, the chapter offers brief insights into the broader context of the *Iḥyā'*, including al-Ghazālī's use of sources, the role of the *Iḥyā'* within al-Ghazālī's body of work, and the lasting impact of the *Iḥyā'* on Islamic thought and ethics.

Chapter 10, titled "Ethical Dimensions of al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's *al-Shifā'*," authored by Matthew Anderson, commences with a concise overview of al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's (d. 544/1149) life and a survey of pertinent theories regarding the historical and thematic origins of *Kitāb al-Shifā' bi-Ta'rīf Ḥuqūq al-Muṣṭafā* ("The Cure in Knowing the Rights of the Chosen One"). This chapter then delves into three key ethical dimensions of the book. Firstly, it examines the ethical perspective of the Prophet Muḥammad as presented in the initial part of *al-Shifā'*. Particular attention is given to the sources that al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ may have drawn

upon while composing this section. Secondly, the chapter briefly introduces the individual and societal ethics embedded within *al-Shifā*. In conclusion, the chapter reflects on the significance of these ethical dimensions in comprehending the work and considers their relationship to the distinct authority accorded to *al-Shifā* within a broader tradition that produced numerous works celebrating the virtues and achievements of the Prophet Muḥammad.

Chapter 11, titled “al-‘Izz Ibn ‘Abd al-Salām wa-l-Ta’sīs lil-Akhlāq al-Islāmiyya Ḥaqlan Muta‘addid al-Takhaṣṣuṣāt: Qirā’a fī *Shajarat al-Ma‘ārif wa-l-Imām wa-Qawā’id al-Aḥkām*” (“al-‘Izz Ibn ‘Abd al-Salām and the Foundation of Islamic Ethics as an Interdisciplinary Field: A Study of *Shajarat al-Ma‘ārif*, *al-Imām*, and *Qawā’id al-Aḥkām*”), authored by Mutaz al-Khatib, argues that *imām* ‘Izz al-Dīn Ibn ‘Abd al-Salām (d. 660/1262) conceptualises “Islamic ethics” as an interdisciplinary field that intertwines theoretical and practical aspects. This approach utilises a variety of domains beginning with Qur’ān and *ḥadīth*, thus laying the foundations of what he alternately refers to as *ādāb al-Qur’ān* and *akhlāq al-Qur’ān*. Al-‘Izz’s ethical framework incorporates elements from *kalām* (Islamic theology), *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), Sufism, and *uṣūl al-fiqh* (Islamic legal theory). The chapter critically examines the scholarly works of al-‘Izz, reflecting on how they mirror his personality and intellectual orientation. It also addresses the challenges faced by contemporary scholars in categorising al-‘Izz’s contribution according to established Islamic sciences. The bulk of the chapter is dedicated to analysing the key aspects of the ethical theory al-‘Izz propounded through his three pivotal works: *Shajarat al-Ma‘ārif wa-l-Aḥwāl wa-Ṣāliḥ al-Aqwāl wa-l-A’māl* (“The Tree of Knowledge, States, Righteous Statements, and Actions”), *Qawā’id al-Aḥkām fī Iṣlāḥ al-Anām* (“The Principles of Rulings for the Betterment of Humanity”), and *al-Imām fī Bayān Adillat al-Aḥkām* (“The Leader in Explaining the Proofs of Rulings”). The conclusion highlights the distinctive characteristics of al-‘Izz’s thought and the significant impact of his contributions to what is now recognised as “Islamic ethics.”

Chapter 12, titled “Ibn Taymiyya’s *al-Tuḥfa al-‘Irāqīyya*: A Framework to Rectify and Legitimise Sufi States and Stations,” authored by Arjan Post, explores Ibn Taymiyya’s work titled *al-Tuḥfa al-‘Irāqīyya fī l-A’māl al-Qalbiyya* (“The Iraqi Gift on the Works of the Heart”). The chapter investigates Ibn Taymiyya’s unique perspective on Sufism within this text. Initially, Ibn Taymiyya appears to align with classical Sufi concepts such as “states” and “stations” as aspects of a believer’s inner spiritual experiences. However, the chapter points out that Ibn Taymiyya’s engagement with Sufism is more nuanced than it initially seems. A deeper examination reveals an ethical approach to spirituality, particularly in the context of Sufism. It highlights how Ibn Taymiyya’s work seeks

to reconcile Sufism with his traditionalist framework. The chapter emphasises that understanding this work necessitates considering Ibn Taymiyya's broader body of work and his endeavour to harmonise Sufism with his traditionalist perspective. Despite limited historical information on the book's reception in earlier centuries, it has gained attention in recent times, especially in reformist and Salafi circles. Ultimately, this chapter aims to provide a scholarly perspective on the book and its place within Ibn Taymiyya's approach to spirituality, shedding light on his project to purify Sufism.

Chapter 13, titled "*al-Ādāb al-Sharʿiyya* by Ibn Muflīḥ: The Ḥanbalī Tradition and Ethical Principles," authored by Ovamir Anjum, delves into *al-Ādāb al-Sharʿiyya* ("Divinely Mandated Etiquettes"), a treatise on ethics and social etiquette within the Ḥanbalī tradition by Ibn Muflīḥ al-Maqdisī (d. 763/1263), a prominent authority of the school and a disciple of Ibn Taymiyya. In contrast to figures like Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350), who integrated Sufi teachings and theological considerations into their works, Ibn Muflīḥ's approach remains firmly rooted in jurisprudence and tradition, devoid of Sufi influences. This chapter highlights two main aspects of his work: his comprehensive examination of white lies and ruses (*maʿārīḍ*) in Islamic tradition and his perspectives on two fundamental Islamic virtues; repentance as a central religious virtue and truthfulness as a universal virtue. By analysing these elements, the chapter illuminates the distinct ethical perspective within the Ḥanbalī tradition and its valuable contributions to the field of Islamic ethics.

5 Conclusion

By analysing selected classical works spanning from the third/ninth century to the eighth/fourteenth century, this volume provides historical depth and adopts an interdisciplinary approach, incorporating disciplines often neglected in studies of Islamic ethics. The chapters offer profound analyses of the ethical dimensions within these works, illuminating the authors' perspectives and fostering comparative insights. This volume effectively traces the enduring influence and legacy of these classical texts, charting the intellectual evolution of Islamic ethics and underscoring its contemporary relevance.

Collectively, these chapters illuminate essential themes in Islamic ethical thought, showcasing the development of structured ethical frameworks that draw from diverse sources. They highlight the complex interplay between inner spirituality and external behaviour, revealing the theological foundations of Islamic ethics rooted in divine attributes and scriptural guidance. The

inclusion of Qur'ānic verses, *ḥadīth*, the prophetic moral model, philosophical discourse, and Sufi insights into one volume emphasises the dynamic and evolving nature of this field.

Throughout the volume, the pursuit of human flourishing and individual well-being emerges as a pivotal theme. These classical works continue to influence subsequent generations of scholars and adapt to changing contexts, highlighting their lasting significance and ongoing relevance. The discussions on virtues and vices, along with the cultivation of virtuous character, are central to addressing various ethical challenges and dilemmas. In summary, this volume demonstrating the interconnectedness of Islamic ethical thought, showcases its multifaceted engagement with moral questions across a broad spectrum of domains, from theology to jurisprudence and beyond.

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bibliography following this introduction, which covers relevant literature published in English on one or more classical ethical works. This curated list aims to provide readers with texts that inform and deepen the discussions presented in this volume.

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Mutaz al-Khatib

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Mapping Islamic Ethical Sources

A Critical Review

Mutaz al-Khatib

1 Introduction

This volume, which explores a curated selection of classical sources in Islamic ethics, requires an analytical introduction that first addresses the general sources of Islamic ethics. This preliminary discussion is crucial before diving into the detailed analysis of the selected sources within the volume. By situating these sources within a broader scholarly context, we recognise their significance, especially given the evolving boundaries and sources of this nascent field. In this chapter, we address three main issues. First, we emphasise the imperative of discussing and exploring the sources of ethics. Second, we examine how the notion of ethics shapes both the perception of this field and its foundational sources within the contemporary scholarly milieu. Third, we explore the methods contemporary scholars use to monitor, chronicle, and categorise the sources of Islamic ethics. Additionally, a fourth issue warrants further investigation: the categorisation of Islamic ethical heritage. Should it fall within a philosophical or non-philosophical framework? This involves considering different fields of knowledge, philosophical analytical concepts, source text formats, author methodologies, and other criteria. A comprehensive exploration of this fourth issue will be the topic of a future separate study, God willing.

2 The Question of Researching Ethical Sources

The investigation into ethical sources within the Islamic tradition emerged in the early twentieth century, unfolding within multiple scholarly frameworks. The first focuses on exploring Greek heritage, preserved primarily through Arabic translations after the loss of the original Greek texts. This historical curiosity spurred scholars to investigate the assimilation and perpetuation of Greek

philosophical ideas in Arab and Islamic cultures. A notable example is the work on Islamic philosophy of scholars like Richard Walzer (d. 1975) (Walzer 1962), who explored the reception and preservation of Greek philosophy.

The second framework arises from efforts to establish an independent discipline of ethics or ethical philosophy within the Islamic tradition, chronicling its origins and interactions with other fields and traditions. This is exemplified by the works of Muḥammad Yūsuf Mūsā (d. 1963) (Mūsā 1945) in mid-twentieth-century Egypt. He particularly focused on debates initiated in the late nineteenth century over the existence of a distinct Islamic ethical philosophy—or more broadly—Islamic philosophy in general.

The third framework relates to the quest for a uniquely Arab or authentically intellectual identity, aiming to refute foreign influences and address political stagnation attributed to external ethical influences. This perspective is represented by scholars like Muḥammad ʿĀbid al-Jābirī (d. 2010) (al-Jābirī 2001), who examined the impact of foreign values on Arab-Islamic culture.

Discussing Islamic ethical sources involves several aspects: historical, theoretical, analytical, and methodological. The historical aspect primarily depends on the historian's perspective on the sources and their categorisation methods—determining what is included in and excluded from the field of ethics. This is particularly relevant as some contributors to the historiography of Islamic ethics have relied fundamentally on either presenting its history by focusing solely on specific authors without a thorough investigation of these figures or fully contextualising them (see, for example, Mūsā 1953, 160–220; 1945). Others have analysed classical sources and offered summaries based on a rushed reading, hence coming up with a biased perspective, as can be observed in the case of al-Jābirī, for example.

Theoretically, the richness or scarcity of ethical sources largely depends on our conceptualisation of ethics. Are we searching for a specific style, such as the Greek tradition in ethical philosophy, or a broader spectrum of ethical writings encompassing various styles, formats, and methodologies? Are we concerned only with theoretical ethics, or are we also including practical ethics, which, although indirectly, imply an underlying theoretical structure that requires elucidation? In this context, the question of whether Islamic ethical sources are abundant or sparse is inevitable.

Analytically, it is essential to examine the ethical content these sources contain. This is particularly the case for comparative studies, regardless of whether it concerns the comparison between different approaches within the Islamic tradition or between the Islamic tradition and other ethical traditions. This involves challenging the premature conclusions of some scholars preoccupied with finding the “origins” of Islamic ethical heritage, either to attribute merit

to these origins or to dismiss the heritage merely because it belongs to a foreign influencer. Some researchers have made such hasty generalisations, either regarding the overall Arab and Islamic contributions to ethical thought or about specific ethical works by judging them as belonging to a foreign heritage (such as Greek or Persian). It is crucial to clarify that the obsession with origins differs from the study of the history of ideas, which undertakes the challenging task of tracing the emergence and evolution of ideas and the modifications they undergo, as well as discovering the common or shared moralities between different moral traditions. Ethical thought, in particular, presupposes the existence of commonalities among nations, which either stem from remnants of prophetic heritages—even if there is no explicit textual source—or from shared human reason, where different individuals may independently think about the same ethical issue in parallel, and a cultural tradition might come up with an idea that later gains acceptance among other cultural traditions. Since ethical thought is based on human reason which transforms into a universally accepted part of human heritage. Such is the case with some Platonic ideas like the powers of the self and the virtues derived from it, which Muslim scholars saw as human intellectual heritage that many of them adopted and built upon.

Methodologically, this volume's scope cannot exhaustively cover all Islamic ethical sources. Therefore, a representative selection is necessary, but it is also essential to provide a preamble that offers a critical analysis of the various perspectives on Islamic ethical sources. This helps to grasp the overall picture of the field of ethics on one hand, and to avoid the reductionism that could occur by limiting ourselves only to the chapters of this book on the other.

3 Islamic Ethics as an Academic Field

Developments in Islamic ethical studies in the modern era highlight two prominent perspectives on the science of ethics: a restrictive perspective and an expansive one. Different conceptions of the field of ethics have emerged through a set of questions related to the history of ethics in Islamic civilisation as an independent discipline, its nature and its characteristics. These questions include: Have ethics been favoured? Are they limited to the Greek philosophical tradition only or do they include other rational patterns? Does focusing on ethics on a religious basis exclude it from being part of philosophy? And are the sources of ethics scarce or numerous? These points will be addressed in the following sections.

3.1 *Two Perspectives on the Science of Ethics*

The first perspective narrows the boundaries of the discipline of ethics, restricting it only to the Greek pattern:

It is a science which is in fact connected with the tradition of Greek philosophy, whether it be with the oral traditions transmitted by the schools and convents of Egypt, Syria and Persia, or with the written traditions handed down and restored by the work of the translators.

CARRA DE VAUX 1927, 1:231

The science of *akhlāq*, in this sense, revolves around self-discipline and self-governance by exploring the self, its powers, virtues, and vices. According to this perspective, *khuluq* means moral character traits, whether commendable or reprehensible. This perspective was adopted by Carra de Vaux (d. 1953) in the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* in 1913, then prevailed in the 1930s and 1940s in Egypt with Aḥmad Amīn (d. 1954) and Muḥammad Yūsuf Mūsā and others who followed them (Amīn 1921, 115–116; Mūsā 1953, 222–225). Although the “*Akhlāk*” entry was developed in the second edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* in 1960 by Richard Walzer and Hamilton Gibb (d. 1971), who monitored the kinds of moralities in Islamic history, and dealt with ethics in *ḥadīth* (Prophetic traditions), Sufism, and *adab* literature, philosophical ethics remained the dominant concept of ethics. Thus, they stated at the beginning of the article: “Islamic ethics took shape gradually, and the tradition of the different elements of which it is composed was not finally established before the 5th/11th century” (Walzer and Gibb 1960, 1:325), which refers to the era of Abū ‘Alī Miskawayh (d. 421/1030) who followed the Greek framework of ethical philosophy, as expressed by Walzer in the second part of the article that he solely authored, considering Miskawayh’s *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* (“The Refinement of Character”) as “the most influential work on philosophical ethics,” which had a significant impact within the Islamic tradition through Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111). The book also found its way into Persian writings through Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274) and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawwānī (d. 918/1512) (see Walzer and Gibb 1960, 1:325–328).

More scholars continued to follow this narrow perspective. For example, Fahmī ‘Alwān¹ agreed with those who preceded him on two main points. First, the claim that ethical thought among Muslims was minimal. He asserts:

1 I was unable to find biographical information about ‘Alwān, but his book was published in 1989.

Ethics as an independent science from other branches of knowledge among Muslims seems minimal compared to other forms of scientific and philosophical thought. Much of what you read from them about aspects of ethical thinking that are characterised by a scientific or philosophical nature was provided to them by foreign thinking that was available to them since they connected with the heritage of ancient nations.

‘ALWĀN 1989, 12

The second point he reiterated is that Muslims did not know ethics except as a practical science, a study of moral character traits in an educational form. He said:

Therefore, we find it abundant in books of *adab* and among historians and narrators of historical reports, and it is no secret that the Qur’ān and the Prophetic tradition contain a great number of testaments (*waṣāyā*) and wisdoms (*ḥikam*), but all these are practical ethics (*akhlāq ‘amaliyya*).² Even the ethics that reached the Muslims from the Greeks were not theoretical, but rather a collection of practical advice, or about establishing rules for a set of virtues correspond to a set of practical advice.

‘ALWĀN 1989, 12

Based on these two points, ‘Alwān concluded that Miskawayh’s book is “the most complete (*akmal*) scientific study in the field of ethics”; despite most of it being derived from Aristotle, and that al-Ghazālī was the greatest Islamic thinker concerned with practical ethics. Thus, we find that the greatest writings in the philosophy of ethics were by Miskawayh on the one hand, and the Muslim Sufis on the other, “and besides that, there is not much scope for the

2 ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī (d. 2002) regarded wisdom as a source of inspiration, motivation for commitment, guiding principles, stating that it will bear fruit only when it becomes dynamic and evolving. Nonetheless, he critiqued the genre of literature comprising proverbs, wisdom, and admonitions in his introduction to Miskawayh’s *al-Ḥikma al-Khālida* (“Eternal Wisdom”). He argued that the benefits of such literature are matched by its detriments. While it can promote virtue, offer moral guidance, and set behavioural standards, it simultaneously restricts the mind with artificial formulations, preconceived notions, and familiar meanings. He further observed that the prevalence of proverbs, wisdom, and admonitions in the East contributed to its weakness and decline, as verbal content often replaces active energy (Miskawayh 1952, 8–10). Conversely, Ṭāhā ‘Abd al-Raḥmān refuted these criticisms, asserting that this type of ethics (wisdom, admonition, and proverbs) is closely aligned with Arabic rhetoric. He maintained that it effectively conveys meanings concisely, refines concepts, and presents them in literary forms that resonate with the familiar context of the audience, thereby enhancing the impact of moral instruction (‘Abd al-Raḥmān 1993, 397–400).

philosophy of ethics among Islamic thinkers" ('Alwān 1989, 12). Nevertheless 'Alwān—as will be discussed later—used the objectives of Sharī'a to link legislation and ethics, but he followed—in the introduction to his book—the traditional conception of the origins of the science of ethics, and it seems that he traced it back to Aḥmad Amīn, who in turn followed the path of Carra de Vaux. 'Alwān did not notice the inconsistency between what he wrote in his introduction and the content of his own book which investigates ethics in legislation—especially “the five necessities”³—through the work of Abū Ishāq al-Shāṭibī (d. 790/1388). The idea of the necessities (*ḍarūriyyāt*) is a cornerstone of the theory of the *maqāṣid al-sharī'a* (the higher objectives of Sharī'a).

The second perspective broadened the boundaries of the science of ethics to include various ethical discussions (*mabāḥiṭh*) that were contained in other related disciplines, such as *kalām* (Islamic theology), Sufism, *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *uṣūl al-fiqh* (principles of Islamic jurisprudence), and *adab* literature. According to this view, the science of ethics focuses on three matters: self-disciplining, the assessment of human actions, and the sources that assist in this, which are broad and belong to diverse fields. Thus, the science of ethics, according to this perspective, was liberated from being restricted to the Greek framework of philosophy. It expanded the scope of “ethical thinking” and “ethical rationality,” and thus the sources of ethical thought multiplied. According to this perspective, ethical thinking encompasses three aspects.

The first aspect consists of the various cultural legacies that contributed to ethical thinking in Islamic civilisation, such as pre-Islamic Arabian, Islamic, Greek, and Persian heritage. Here, multiple questions arose, two of which we mention here. The first deals with the search for these different ethical frameworks, the channels of their transmission and representation in some sources, how they were received, and attempts to synthesise them. For example, the book *Uyūn al-Akḥbār* (“The Book of Chosen Narratives”) by Abū 'Abd Allāh Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889) is presented as an attempt to synthesise these different cultural frameworks. As Walzer and Gibb state:

It is the most comprehensive manual of Islamic ethics, brought together and to a remarkable degree integrated the Qur'ānic, *ḥadīth*, pre-Islamic, and Persians contributions, and by excluding the irreconcilable elements of the two latter, practically defined standardised the component elements of the orthodox morality in its pre-philosophical and pre-sūfistic stage.

WALZER AND GIBB 1960, 1:326

3 They are the preservation of *dīn* (worship), *nafs* (life), *'aql* (intellect), *nasl* (lineage), and *māl* (property).

Likewise, some works of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā (d. 281/894) can be read as synthesising the pre-Islamic and Islamic legacies. The second question dealt with the search for signs of originality and contribution to the Islamic ethical heritage through comparison with other heritages, especially the Greek and Persian. It appears that this emerged as a result of the prominence of Greco-Arabic studies, which found its origins in the nineteenth century.⁴

The second aspect is the ethical discussions that can be found in the various fields of Islamic knowledge, such as the Qurʾān, *ḥadīth*, theology, Islamic jurisprudence, the principles of Islamic jurisprudence, Sufism, and *adab*. The first to explore this is perhaps Dwight M. Donaldson (d. 1976), a Presbyterian missionary. He published a work entitled *Studies in Muslim Ethics* in 1953, which clarified how “Muslim ethical literature ... covers an exceedingly wide field” (Donaldson 1953, ix), and he presented “what is essentially an anthology of quotations by everybody, including major Sufis and the Persian poets” (Gutas 1997, 171). After him others took the same direction, including George Hourani (d. 1984), Jamāl Naṣṣār, Andrew March, and Tariq Ramadan (Hourani 1975; Naṣṣār 2004; March 2009; Ramadan 2019), producing works of varying value.

The third aspect concerns the diverse forms and methodologies. The search for features of ethical thinking and its contents encompassed sources that took different forms and applied different methodologies. These are not only limited to the Greek philosophical framework, nor books of philosophy in the traditional sense; as theoretical and methodical thinking is not only limited to the field of philosophy, and is not only the craft of philosophers.

3.2 *Ethical Sources: Scarcity or Abundance*

Based on the three aforementioned aspects, Islamic ethical sources had to expand with the expanded perspective on ethics, while the restrictive perspective led its proponents to claim that Muslim writings in the field of ethical thought are scarce. The reason is that ethics in this case follows the Greek model and embodies two characteristics: rationality and theoretical inquiry that connects ethics as a branch of philosophy (or practical wisdom).

Carra de Vaux was one of the pioneers of the restrictive perspective on ethics, which adheres to the Greek philosophical pattern, thereby considering only sources that follow that model as ethical sources. He traced Greek ethical books known to or translated by Arabs, irrespective of them being authentic or apocryphal in their attribution to their original authors. He mentioned Aristotle's (d. 322 BCE) three books on ethics, especially the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and referred to some of its commentaries like the one by Abū Naṣr

4 To explore the beginnings and development of the concept of Greek-Arabic studies, refer to the introduction by Dimitri Gutas in his book *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture* (Gutas 2003).

al-Fārābī (d. 339/950) on the introduction to the book, the commentary by Abū l-Walid Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198), and the commentary attributed to the physician Abū l-Faraj ‘Abd Allāh Ibn al-Ṭayyib (d. 435/1043). He also mentioned several other books but did not provide a comprehensive list. He observed that Plato’s (d. 347 BCE) moral writings are more about politics than moral philosophy, and among the Greek ethical writings known to the Arabs, he mentioned the Pythagorean *Golden Verses*, which are poems that fall under the category of wisdom, noting that the Arabs knew the wisdom of the philosopher Secundus (fl. second century BCE), and that Miskawayh preserved an interesting moral treatise, entitled *Lughz Qābis* (“Riddle of Gabes”) which seems to be a work of the Stoic school. When Carra de Vaux came to Muslim writings on ethics, he reached two conclusions that would be problematic for subsequent researchers. First, “we must conclude that moral philosophy, considered as a pure and independent science, has not been cultivated with great predilection in the Muslims world.” Second, Muslim authors “who have written in a methodical manner about moral philosophy are comparatively few,” and “those amongst them who are famous have nearly all of them earned their fame by other writings” (Carra de Vaux 1927, 1:233).⁵

Based on this perception, Carra de Vaux concluded that ‘Abd Allāh Ibn al-Muqaffa’ (d. 142/759) was “the first moralist who wrote in the Arabic language,” and that “after him, the principal writers on ethics are the Brethren of Purity (Ikhwān al-Ṣafā), Ibn Miskawayh, al-Ghazālī, and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī.” He added to these sources Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawwānī’s *Akhlāq-i Jalālī* (“Jalālī’s Ethics”), Ḥusayn Ibn ‘Alī al-Kāshifī’s *Akhlāq-i Kāshifī* (“Kāshifī’s Ethics”), made a reference in passing to Abū al-Fatḥ al-Abshihī (d. 852/1448), and mentioned in his list of sources Abū al-Ḥasan al-Māwardī’s (d. 450/1058) *Adab al-Dunyā wa-l-Dīn*⁶ (“The Etiquettes of Worldly Life and Religion”), but did not discuss it in the body of the article. However, the mention of Ibn al-Muqaffa’ here, for example, does not align with the criterion that Carra de Vaux imposed on himself, because Ibn al-Muqaffa’ did not follow a philosophical approach in the two books attributed to him, *Al-Adab al-Kabīr* (“The Comprehensive Book of Rules of Conduct”) and *Al-Adab al-Ṣaghīr* (“The Lesser Book of Rules of Conduct”). Walzer and Gibb saw that

5 Ṭahā ‘Abd al-Raḥmān was preoccupied with refuting the claim that Islamic scholars and thinkers paid less attention to the study of ethics compared to other philosophical disciplines (‘Abd al-Raḥmān 1993, 384 ff.).

6 The title of al-Māwardī’s book appears in manuscript copies and several classical biographical works as *Adab al-Dīn wa-l-Dunyā*, and it has been published under this title as well (see al-Māwardī 2013).

these two works are not based on any philosophical principle, but rather remind the reader of Greek rhetoric, giving the rulers, ‘civil servants’, and persons who wish to advance in life advice on how to be successful. The Islamic allusions contained in this literature are at first scanty and formal, but the connection of this tradition with religion is steadily emphasized.

WALZER AND GIBB 1960, 1:326

The conception of Carra de Vaux appears to have had an impact on subsequent Arab researchers. Aḥmad Amīn, Muḥammad Yūsuf Mūsā, and others concluded that the sources of Islamic ethical philosophy are scarce and that writing on ethics deteriorated due to two factors. The first is the reliance on religion in ethical studies, and the second factor is the overall decline of philosophy, from which ethical philosophy deducted. Regarding the first factor, Aḥmad Amīn says:

Few of the Arabs—even after they became civilised—studied ethics scientifically because they were satisfied to take ethics from religion and did not feel the need for scientific research into the basis of good and evil. Hence, religion was the pillar for many who wrote about ethics, as seen in the works of al-Ghazālī and al-Māwardī. The most famous who researched ethics scientifically were Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (d. 339/950), Ikhwān al-Ṣafā in one of their epistles, and Abū ‘Alī Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037). These had studied Greek philosophy, thus their studies included Greek views on ethics. Perhaps the greatest Arab scholar of ethics is Ibn Miskawayh, who passed away in the year 421/1030.

AMĪN 1921, 115

Regarding the second factor, Muḥammad Yūsuf Mūsā concluded that the science of ethics, as a branch of philosophy, declined after the demise of philosophy in al-Andalus, and that “as time passed, the philosophical character gradually faded from ethical studies—as we have seen—until they became purely religious with no trace of novelty and philosophical thinking. This remained throughout those times until the era we live in” (Mūsā 1953, 225). According to this conception, initiated by Carra de Vaux, ethics is a purely philosophical science and must be distinguished—in itself—from Sufism, asceticism, and other practical branches that do not fall within the scope of philosophy. The inclusion of the religious factor corrupts philosophical thinking!

The rational inclination, theoretical inquiry, and methodical construction are conditions of what is called ethical philosophy or what deserves to be a source of it, leading to two consequences. The first, restricts these

characteristics to Greek philosophical thinking only, as ethics is a branch of practical wisdom and should not be sought outside the field of philosophy. The second consequence excludes many sources from the field of ethics, such as books of testaments (*waṣāyā*), books of proverbs and wisdoms, books of advice to kings and princes, treatises on asceticism and piety, and books of *ḥadīth* and literature, despite all of them containing ethical material or embodying ethical principles, because they do not meet the required characteristics of ethics either in form or content.

The development of ethical studies, whether by those engaged in philosophy or researchers from other fields, has led to the expansion of the concept of ethics and the emergence of what I have termed “the expanded perspective on ethics.” Thus, ethics ceased to be merely a branch of philosophy according to the old Greek model, and two new aspects emerged. Firstly, it has become a field that interacts with multiple other disciplines, hence the boundaries of the science of ethics expanded, in search of an ethical philosophy or ethical theory (or theories) in Islam, without being confined to the Greek philosophical pattern. The second novel aspect is that rationality and theoretical thinking are not limited to philosophy. Thus the search for this rationality in a certain or multiple branches of Islamic knowledge ensued. The multiple ethical studies that emerged since the mid-twentieth century and beyond serve as evidence to support these two points. In the 1940s, for instance, Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh Drāz (d. 1958) attempted to explore an ethical theory in the Qur’ān (Drāz 1998), while others failed to identify any theoretical ethical dimensions in the Qur’ān.⁷

In the late 1960s, Aḥmad Maḥmūd Ṣubḥī (d. 2004) argued that there is an Islamic ethical philosophy in the fields of Sufism and Islamic theology, criticising the adherence to the Aristotelian ethical model (Ṣubḥī 1983). In the early 1970s, George Hourani explored Islamic ethical rationality through Islamic theology, in particular the Mu‘tazilī school and the ethics of the judge ‘Abd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025).⁸

In the 1980s, ‘Abd al-Ḥayy Qābīl (d. 2020) concluded that there are two major ethical theories in the Islamic tradition: *wājib* (duty) and *sa‘āda*

7 Muḥammad Yūsuf Mūsā, Majid Fakhry, and others have pointed out, for instance, that it is not possible to assert the existence of a theoretical ethical framework within the Qur’ānic text.

8 The study of theological ethics (or ethical discussions within Islamic theology) began with the works of Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh Drāz, Muḥammad Yūsuf Mūsā, and others, without being an independent field at the time. It then continued with Aḥmad Maḥmūd Ṣubḥī, and theological ethics became a distinct field with George Hourani and his successors (Ṣubḥī 1983; Hourani 1971; Frank 1983; Makdisi 1985).

(happiness). He derived these from the rich ethical discussions in the texts of the Qurʾān, *ḥadīth*, Islamic theology, Islamic philosophy, jurisprudence, and Sufism (Qābīl 1984). In the late 1980s and early 1990s, others turned to the study of *uṣūl al-fiqh* (principles of Islamic jurisprudence) as a form of philosophical thought. Fahmī ‘Alwān used Abū Ishāq al-Shāṭibī’s *al-Muwāfaqāt* (“The Reconciliation of the Fundamentals of Islamic Law”) to establish the idea of *al-qiyam al-ḍarūriyya* (necessary values) and to link between Islamic legislation and ethics in the context of discussing the application of Shariʿa in Egypt in the 1980s. Moreover, ‘Alwān attributed the scarcity of sources in ethical philosophy—according to his narrow perspective—to the idea that

the science of the principles of Islamic jurisprudence has obscured thinking in ethics as an independent science. Islamic thinkers did not feel that there was a deficiency that needed to be filled in the branches of knowledge, because the science of the principles of Islamic jurisprudence was sufficient to substitute for the science of ethics. The science of Islamic jurisprudence was akin to the practical application of the principles of Islamic jurisprudence.

‘ALWĀN 1989, 13

Ṭāhā ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (b. 1944) regarded the science of the principles of Islamic jurisprudence as the science of ethics (‘Abd al-Raḥmān 1993), and later developed an Islamic ethical philosophy distinct from Greek philosophy, connected with the Islamic heritage and its rationality, prominently featuring Sufi and purposive (*maqāṣidī*) components. In all of these theories, various Islamic disciplines were involved, notably the Qurʾān, Sufism, theological works, and the principles of Islamic jurisprudence. Simultaneously, the search for the theoretical nature of ethics was retained, to prove that there is ethical rationality outside the Greek philosophical system, to be found in the aforementioned fields.

Based on the preceding discussions, George Hourani’s later work exemplifies a significant advancement in the classification of ethical writings. He used two primary criteria: methodology and sources. Hourani identified two types of ethical thinking based on methodology: “normative,” shaped by higher authorities, and “analytical,” a result of rational deliberation. He opted for “analytical” rather than “philosophical” due to the presence of theological theories that explicitly oppose philosophical approaches. Regarding the sources of ethical knowledge, he delineated two traditions: “secular ethics,” derived from worldly sources, and “religious ethics,” rooted in religious foundations. This framework led to a fourfold categorisation: (a) normative religious ethics,

(b) normative secular ethics, (c) ethical analysis within the religious tradition, and (d) ethical analysis by philosophers (Hourani 1975, 128–135; 1985, 15–22). Mohammed Arkoun, following Hourani's methodology, divided ethical writings into on the one hand narrative normative discourse, including religious texts like Prophetic traditions and secular texts like *adab* (literature), and on the other hand analytical normative discourse, which encompasses theological and philosophical currents (Arkoun 1990, 89).

This rich trajectory of ethical research allows us to identify the key shortcomings present in the work of Muḥammad ʿĀbid al-Jābirī which was published in 2001. In his work, he challenged the traditional adherence to the Greek model and “judging ethical thought in Arab culture by the standards of European culture (whether Greco-Roman or modern European).” He then provided summaries of a variety of classical ethical sources, going beyond the philosophical ethics to include Sufi ethics, some books on Islamic political theory, and works by figures such as ʿIzz al-Dīn Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām (al-Jābirī 2001). At the same time, he ignored entire fields such as the Qurʾān, *ḥadīth*, *fiqh*, *uṣūl al-fiqh*, and previous studies addressing the ethical dimensions within these fields. Consequently, his work lacked theoretical coherence and fell short by disregarding earlier developments in the field of ethics. I will address some of the shortcomings in his work later.

The expanded perspective on ethics can trace its roots to early-twentieth-century debates initiated by Orientalists and Muslim scholars concerning the existence of an Islamic philosophy. Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Rāziq, in his *Tamhīd li-Tārīkh al-Falsafa al-Islāmiyya* (“Introduction to the History of Islamic Philosophy”), made a significant contribution to this debate through his and his students' works, advocating for a philosophical exploration beyond traditional boundaries. Aḥmad Maḥmūd Ṣubḥī, particularly influenced by his mentor, ʿAlī Sāmī al-Nashshār, a direct disciple of ʿAbd al-Rāziq, explored whether an Islamic ethical philosophy exists, continuing the ongoing discussions.⁹ ʿAlwān's acknowledgement of ʿAbd al-Rāziq's influence highlights the philosophical depth considered within the principles of Islamic jurisprudence (ʿAlwān 1989, 5).

4 Ethical Sources from a Contemporary Perspective

With ethics moving beyond the traditionally narrow confines of philosophy, and the reconceptualisation of ethics beyond merely being a branch of

⁹ Ṣubḥī dedicated his book to ʿAlī Sāmī al-Nashshār (Ṣubḥī 1983, 7).

philosophy, a fundamental challenge concerning its sources has arisen. This section identifies the sources of ethics as depicted in pivotal works that have aimed to encapsulate ethical thought or aspects thereof. This is done to provide a general assessment of ethical sources in the Islamic library, introduce Islamic ethics, compile and publish some ethical texts to help understand them, and present a history of ethics. The focus here is on Islamic ethical sources as interpreted, defined, and evaluated in the works of contemporary researchers.

In the 1940s, Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh Drāz presented a critical assessment of ethical sources in the Islamic library from the angle of searching for theoretical ethics in Islam. He distinguished two levels: individual writings and ethical discussions. At the level of individual writings, he noted that:

We can only find two kinds of moral teaching. Either it is practical advice meant to train young people by inspiring them with the love of virtue, or it is a description of the nature of the soul and its faculties, followed by a definition and division of virtue which mostly imitates the Platonic or Peripatetic models. It is not rare to see both methods succeeding one another in the same text.

DRĀZ 1998, 4; 2008, 2

At the level of ethical discussions, he identified discussions in the writings of theologians and scholars of *uṣūl al-fiqh* on the criterion of good and evil (or in their own terminology: the beautiful and the ugly); in the writings of jurists he identified discussions on the capacity and conditions for responsibility; and in the works of “moralists and Sufis” he identified discussions on the value of effort and the purity of intention and purpose.

Drāz was primarily focused on theoretical ethics, so he overlooked what he termed “practical advice” and criticised individual writings in theoretical ethics for two main reasons. First, they are confined to the Greek model, and second, the Qur’ān is marginalised or absent in some of them. The ethical discussions across various fields of Islamic studies remained fragmented and did not coalesce into a clear doctrine in Drāz’s view, as they “did not always strictly concern themselves with a specifically moral point of view” (Drāz 1998, 4–5; 2008, 3). In his view, they were not approached from the perspective of philosophical ethical research and did not formulate an ethical theory, which was Drāz’s concern in his book. Drāz aspired to transcend the Greek model that dominated theoretical ethics texts at the expense of revelational texts, thus aiming to establish a Qur’ānic ethical theory. However, he still confined ethics to a philosophical type that resembles or parallels the European model in its form or structure at least, albeit differing in details. Therefore, he did not engage with practical ethics texts, reducing ethical sources to only two types:

books of practical advice and books on the description of the nature of the soul and its faculties in the Greek manner, although ethical sources in the Islamic library are much more diverse. Al-Jābirī considered that Drāz's book "adopts the same issues discussed in European thought under the title of ethics and tries to read them in the Qur'ān, the Sunna, and the Islamic religious heritage" (al-Jābirī 2001, 14). However, what al-Jābirī did not realise is that Drāz expanded the boundaries of ethical rationality beyond the realm of philosophy by pursuing a Qur'ānic ethical theory rooted in the Qur'ānic text and Islamic heritage, particularly its theological and jurisprudential dimensions. This pursuit laid the foundation for further research in theological and jurisprudential ethics. Additionally, Drāz critically engaged with the dominant moral theories of his time, notably Kant's (d. 1804) deontology, which was prevalent among his contemporaries.

In the early 1950s, Dwight M. Donaldson followed a similar path to Drāz in distinguishing between philosophical ethical writings and writings with different ethical contents, but he referred to the former as "the narrower sense of systematic moral philosophy," and to the latter as "Muslim ethical literature." According to Donaldson, the sources of the narrower sense of systematic moral philosophy revolve around one distinctive book, Miskawayh's *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, and subsequent works built upon it, such as those by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawwānī. In contrast, ethical literature covers a vast area and addresses many ethical topics, including the general ethics of pre-Islamic Arabs, prominent ethical teachings in the Qur'ān, the exemplary character of the Prophet, theological discussions on fate and responsibility, the influence of Greek thought in the Islamic world, the Neo-Platonic reconciliation between religion and philosophy, the Stoic illuminating conception of a universal law of nature, and contributions by Christian ascetics and mystics, as well as individual efforts by Sufis to reform the inner self and care for the rights of God (Donaldson 1953, ix–xi). It is evident that "ethical literature" for Donaldson is broader than "ethical discussions" (*mabāḥith akhlāqīyya*) for Drāz, a distinction reflected in the chapters of Donaldson's book. This stands in stark contrast to Muḥammad 'Abid al-Jābirī's later work, which completely separated the four heritages—Greek, Persian, Arabian, and Islamic—searching for the question of authenticity in what he called "the value systems (*nuḥum al-qiyam*) in Arabic culture" (al-Jābirī 2001).

In 1960, Walzer and Gibb followed Donaldson's approach, attempting to transcend Carra de Vaux's restrictive conception while preserving the specificity of "ethics" as influenced by Greek philosophy. They divided the section on "*Akhlāq*" in the second edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* into two parts: a survey of ethics in Islam and philosophical ethics, thus distinguishing—following

Donaldson—between ethical thought and ethical philosophy. They noted that ethics in Islam

appear in their matured state as an interesting and, on the whole, successful amalgamation of a pre-Islamic Arabian tradition and Qurʾānic teaching with non-Arabic elements, mainly of Persian and Greek origins, embedded in or integrated with a general-Islamic structure.

WALZER AND GIBB 1960, 1:325

The subsequent sections of the article detailed this comprehensive vision, referring to new virtues introduced by “the preaching of Muḥammad,” which replaced tribal morality, and noted that “the whole corpus of *ḥadīth* constitutes a handbook of Islamic ethics.”

They referenced compilations on *makārim al-akhlāq* (noble character) by Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, Muḥammad Ibn Jaʿfar al-Kharāʾīṭī (d. 327/939), and Raḍī al-Dīn al-Ṭabarsī (d. 548/1153). Walzer and Gibb also discussed the disagreement between the Muʿtazilis and Ahl al-Sunna regarding the moral judgment of actions and personal responsibility, and how Sufism produced a divergent type of Islamic ethics, which eventually became more influential and almost dominated the Islamic world. They mentioned al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857), who had a decisive influence on al-Ghazālī in making Sufism a part of Islamic ethics in his *Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn* (“Revival of the Religious Sciences”). They noted that “the introduction of Persian moral thought into the Islamic tradition preceded the acquaintance with Greek ethics,” referring to the writings of Ibn al-Muqaffaʾ and Ibn Qutayba’s *ʿUyūn al-Akḥbār*, which “defined and standardised the component elements of the orthodox morality in its pre-philosophical and pre-Sufistic stage,” and integrated elements in ethics from the Qurʾān, *ḥadīth*, pre-Islamic Arabic tradition, and Persian heritage.

Walzer and Gibb briefly mentioned other genres of literature such as *marāyā al-umarāʾ* (mirrors for princes) and popular wisdom in apophthegmatic form, before concisely discussing philosophical ethics derived from the Greeks. They mentioned in this context the books of Miskawayh and the works of al-Ṭūsī and al-Dawwānī, which built on Miskawayh’s work. Walzer, in the second part of the article, reviewed the development of the study of philosophy among Muslim philosophers and expanded on the Greek ethical sources known to the Arabs, such as the works of Plato and Aristotle, the commentaries on the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the three treatises by Galen (d. 216) translated into Arabic, and some writings of Abū Yūsuf al-Kindī (d. 256/873) such as his treatise on warding off sorrows, his lost book on ethics which Miskawayh may have known and al-Ghazālī recognised, and al-Kindī’s lost *al-Ṭibb al-Rūḥānī*

("Spiritual Medicine"). They also mentioned Abū Bakr al-Rāzī's (d. 313/925) *al-Ṭibb al-Rūḥānī*, Yaḥyā Ibn 'Adī's (d. 364/975) *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* ("Refinement of Character"), Miskawayh's *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, and al-Māwardī's book *Adab al-Dunyā wa-l-Dīn*, which illustrate the influence of philosophical ethics on *adab*. Walzer stated that al-Māwardī presented the traditional ethical materials "refreshed and modernised by the inclusion of materials from the later centuries, including both philosophical and ascetic ideas; these are combined with the older materials somewhat unsystematically, but in a direction not dissimilar from that taken later by al-Ghazālī." Walzer concluded that al-Ghazālī followed this path of synthesis to a much further extent and more substantively connected to the essence, and again mentioned the works of al-Ṭūsī and al-Dawwānī (Walzer and Gibb 1960, 1:329–325). This development highlighted the distinction between ethical thought, which spans several knowledge branches with a complex historical trajectory, and ethical philosophy, which matured in the fifth/eleventh century according to Walzer and Gibb, following the Greek path.

In 1978, Majid Fakhry (d. 2021) wrote that the Arab output in the field of ethics is substantial, but has not been sufficiently explored by scholars. He collected classical texts on ethics under the title *al-Fikr al-Akhlāqī al-'Arabī* ("Arab Ethical Thought"), published in two volumes. The first volume was subtitled *al-Fuqahā' wa-l-Mutakallimūn* ("Muslim Jurists and Theologians"), and the second *al-Falāsifa al-Khuluqīyyūn* ("Ethical Philosophers") (Fakhri 1978), thus going beyond what Drāz and Donaldson wrote about philosophical ethical writings. He broadened the meaning of ethical thought and merged some theological ethical discussions with individual ethical texts.

The texts of Muslim jurists and theologians that Fakhry selected included al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's (d. 110/728) treatise on *qadar* (fate), discussions from al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Mu'tazilī's *al-Mughnī fī Abwāb al-Tawḥīd wa-l-'Adl* ("The Sufficient Book on the Sections of Divine Unity and Justice"), *Adab al-Dunyā wa-l-Dīn* by al-Qāḍī Abū l-Ḥasan al-Māwardī, *al-Akhlāq wa-l-Siyar* ("Morals and Behaviour") by Abū Muḥammad Ibn Ḥazm al-Andalusī (d. 456/1064), and *Kitāb al-Nafs wa-l-Rūḥ wa-Sharḥ Quwāhumā* ("Book of the Psyche and the Soul and Their Faculties Explained") by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210). A detailed look at Fakhry's classification reveals that some of these works explicitly belong to the field of Islamic theology, while others do not fit strictly within the Islamic jurisprudential field as conventionally understood, such as al-Māwardī's and Ibn Ḥazm's treatises as well as al-Rāzī's book. Consequently, Fakhry's labelling them "Muslim jurists and theologians" is not entirely accurate. While the label might apply to the authors, it does not do justice to the content of these sources. The fact that some Muslim jurists wrote

ethical texts does not necessarily mean that what they wrote is jurisprudential in the conventional sense. Yet, al-Māwardī, Ibn Ḥazm, and al-Rāzī are encyclopaedic figures with contributions to various sciences. Hence describing them primarily as Muslim jurists in this specific context does not imply that their ethical content belongs to the field of jurisprudence. For instance, al-Rāzī's book on the psyche and soul is fundamentally a work of ethical philosophy, even though it combines rational and scriptural arguments, it diverges from the methods typically followed by ethical philosophers who generally adhered to the Greek tradition.

The works of ethical philosophers, according to Fakhry, included *al-Ḥila li-Dafʿ al-Aḥzān* ("The Art of Dispelling Sorrows") by Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb Ibn Ishāq al-Kindī, *al-Ṭibb al-Rūḥānī* by Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, *Fuṣūl Muntazaʿa* ("Selected Chapters") by Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* by Yaḥyā Ibn ʿAdī, *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq wa-Taḥrīr al-Aʿrāq* by Miskawayh, and *Risāla fī ʿIlm al-Akhlāq* ("Treatise on the Science of Ethics") by Abū ʿAlī Ibn Sīnā (d. 427/1037), along with *Mīzān al-ʿAmal* ("The Criterion for Action") by Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī. Clearly, these texts are philosophical works that followed the Greek tradition in ethical philosophy, varying in their adherence to Greek methods and the depth of their integration of Islamic components.

It appears that these texts, which Fakhry gathered in his book *al-Fikr al-Akhlāqī al-ʿArabī*, laid the groundwork for his subsequent work published in the early 1990s titled *Ethical Theories in Islam*, which will be discussed shortly. In this later book, Fakhry followed-up on the texts he published in the first book, building on the conclusions he reached in his introduction, with some additional modifications evident in the structure of his second book. It seems that Muḥammad ʿAbid al-Jābirī did not recognise this when he critically reviewed Fakhry's first book—a review not without its complexities regarding the idea of "stages" (*marāḥil*) of ethical history.¹⁰ Al-Jābirī overlooked Fakhry's second book *Ethical Theories in Islam*, which was published in English a decade before al-Jābirī's book *al-Aql al-Akhlāqī al-ʿArabī*. It might have been a language barrier that prevented him from accessing the work.

In the mid-1980s, Mohammed Arkoun observed that the Islamic intellectual output in the ethical field was rich and varied, thereby expanding the concept of ethics as is apparent from the preliminary bibliography he compiled, which included 51 books from "classical sources for the study of ethics and politics,"

10 Al-Jābirī understood from Fakhry's concept of the *marāḥil al-fikr al-akhlāqī al-ʿArabī* (stages of Arab ethical thought) that it referred to chronological stages. However, it is evident that Fakhry did not intend a chronological meaning, as he included figures from different time periods within a single stage.

in Arkoun's words. He stated, "It is impossible to review all the works written at that time representing various styles of ethical expression (*al-ta'bīr al-akhlāqī*) and manifestations" (Arkoun 2007, 83, 88). Arkoun's list included books from various disciplines, such as *adab* (literature), *al-aḥkām al-sultāniyya* (the ordinances of government), ethical philosophy, Sufism, practical advice, history, *ḥadīth*, *kalām*, *uṣūl al-fiqh*, *fatāwā* (legal opinions), *aqdiyya* (judicial rulings), and biographies.

Clearly, Arkoun was interested in expanding the resources that aid the study of different moral values contained within Islamic tradition. Whether implicit or explicit, textual or lived. He included social, political, and cultural dimensions, thereby focusing on writings that "avoid technical analyses specific to a particular science" (Arkoun 2007, 83–126),¹¹ thus significantly broadening the scope of ethical sources. Arkoun also called for the exploration of all written works in the field of worldly knowledge (commonly called *adab*) and all written works in the field of religious and rational sciences, to identify all moral values embedded in classical Islamic discourse (see Arkoun 2007, 88). It is curious that al-Jābirī overlooked Arkoun's works, especially his latest book, despite sharing—at least partially—a focus on expanding ethical sources and incorporating literary sources, and discussing the reading of values and ethical discourse in Islamic tradition, as well as speaking of "ethical communities (*jamā'at akhlāqiyya*)." Arkoun published several studies on ethical sources and authors that al-Jābirī later addressed, notably Miskawayh, yet al-Jābirī did not mention them.¹²

In 1991, Majid Fakhry, in his previously mentioned book *Ethical Theories in Islam*, chose to reclassify ethical sources into four categories: scriptural morality, religious ethics, theological ethics, and philosophical ethics. In scriptural morality, Fakhry apparently found no individual sources to discuss, so he analysed certain Qur'ānic verses and *ḥadīth* texts addressing ethical issues. These

11 Arkoun also mentioned in his other book, *Naz'at al-Ansana fi al-Fikr al-Islāmī* ("Humanism in Islamic Thought"), a list of works under the title *Nūṣuṣ 'Arabīyya wa-Dirāsāt Ḥadītha fi 'Ilm al-Islāmīyyāt* ("Arabic Texts and Modern Studies in Islamic Studies") (Arkoun 1997, 74–93). He referred to this list in *al-Islām, al-Akhlāq wa-l-Sīyāsa* ("Islam, Ethics and Politics") as "secular ethical literature" (Arkoun 2007, 125), although the list does not appear to be exclusively dedicated to ethical sources.

12 Arkoun also wrote articles on some ethical works such as "Ethics According to al-Māwardī," "Ethics and History According to Miskawayh's *Tajārib al-Umam* (Experiences of Nations)," and "Contribution to a Dictionary of Islamic Ethics." He later compiled these articles into a book titled *Essais sur la pensée islamique*, published in 1984. He referred to this edition in his book *Islam, Ethics, and Politics* published in 1986. Some databases indicate the existence of an earlier edition of *Essays in Islamic Thought* dating back to 1973 (Arkoun 1984; 1986; 2007, 125).

issues include the deontological grounds of right and wrong, divine justice, and human capacity and responsibility. The theological ethics section discussed the ethical doctrines of the Mu'tazilis and Ash'arīs concerning the same three ethical issues mentioned under scriptural morality. In philosophical ethics, Fakhry began with a historical introduction to Greek ethics, its sources, and the method of their transmission to the Arabs. He then discussed the works of ethical philosophers al-Kindī, Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Rushd, the Brethren of Purity, Yaḥyā Ibn 'Adī, Miskawayh, Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawwānī. In the religious ethics section, he revisited al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's treatise on fate mentioned earlier, briefly touched upon Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's *Makārim al-Akhlāq*, discussed al-Māwardī's *Adab al-Dunyā wa-l-Dīn*, Ibn Ḥazm's *al-Akhlāq wa-l-Siyar*, al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī's *al-Dharī'a ilā Makārim al-Sharī'a* ("The Means to the Noble Qualities of the Sharī'a"), Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's *Kitāb al-Nafs wa-l-Rūḥ wa-Sharḥ Quwāhumā*, and al-Ghazālī's works, particularly focusing on *Mīzān al-'Amal* and *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* with emphasis on the former (Fakhry 1991). For this reason, Dimitri Gutas considered Fakhry's book *Ethical Theories in Islam* essentially a series of summaries of ethical writings (Gutas 1997, 172–173).

In his second book, Fakhry addressed new sources not covered in the texts he selected for his first book, moving from discussing "stages" (*marāḥil*) of ethical thought mentioned in the introduction of his first book to discussing various ethical "theories" in his second book, which itself was not free from criticism as I will later explain. Fakhry's perspective on ethics, as apparent in his second book, is narrower than Donaldson's. Donaldson dedicated chapters to the ethics of early ascetics, important Persian writers, Persian Sufi poets, and contemporary ethical interpretations of Islam, which Fakhry omitted in his book. It appears he limited his book to texts he described in his first book as "ethical thought" (*al-fikr al-khuluqī*), distinguishing it from "ethical literature" (*al-adab al-khuluqī*). This distinction is not recognised by some who commented on his book, such as Dimitri Gutas who sharply criticised it, as I will clarify later. Fakhry, who grouped Muslim jurists with Muslim theologians in the first volume of *Arab Ethical Thought*, remarkably omitted them in his second book, as did Donaldson before him and al-Jābirī and others subsequently. This happened despite the fact that the works of Muslim jurists undeniably meet the criteria "ethical thought" as defined by Fakhry.

Moreover, studies prior to Fakhry's second book by about a decade had already discussed the relationship between Islamic jurisprudence and ethics (Hovannisian 1985; Reinhart 1983). The last book Fakhry addressed chronologically was Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawwānī's, meaning he stopped at the turn of the tenth/sixteenth century. He neglected other works such as those by Abū 'Amr

al-Jāhiz (d. 255/868) and Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 414/1023), which mix both ethical thought and ethical literature. He also overlooked books on the advice to princes or mirrors for princes, the ordinances of government, and overall political ethics writings, areas partially explored by Mohammed Arkoun in a work published in French in 1986 and translated into Arabic in Beirut in 1990 (Arkoun 1986). Arkoun himself pointed out this oversight in his comments on Fakhry's work (Arkoun 1993).

Overall, Fakhry's work did not achieve theoretical coherence in understanding ethics, nor did he encompass all classical ethical sources, despite the existence of earlier works from which he could have benefitted to develop his own work.

In 2001, Muḥammad 'Ābid al-Jābirī published what he subtitled *Dirāsa Naqdiyya Taḥlīliyya li-Nuẓum al-Qiyam fī al-Thaqāfa al-'Arabiyya* ("A Critical Analytical Study of Value Systems in Arab Culture"), in which he attempted to chronicle what he termed *al-'Aql al-Akhlāqī al-'Arabī* ("The Arab Ethical Mind") by reviewing various ethical writings. This was to substantiate the framework he pre-established for this "mind," positing that multiple value systems exist within the Arab and Islamic heritage that interact and influence each other. Each system revolves around a central value, which he identifies as *sa'āda* (happiness), *tā'ā* (obedience), *murū'a* (manliness), and *maṣlaḥa* (interest or benefit). From these systems or sources reviewed by al-Jābirī, what he called "the Arab ethical mind" is formed. Al-Jābirī's historical approach in his book should not obscure the fact that it provides summaries and analytical outlines of numerous sources from the Arab and Islamic ethical tradition, placing them within a historical context. Hence, al-Jābirī's book relates to our discussion on the sources of Islamic ethics, as previously seen in Majid Fakhry's works. Therefore, I will extract the list of sources al-Jābirī discussed in his book to examine the developments in the study of ethical sources as evidenced by his work.

Al-Jābirī begins his book with a methodological and historical introduction in which he addresses theological ethics centred around two main issues: freedom and responsibility, and classifying an action as good or bad (or reason and tradition). Here, he cites from limited theological sources, including some works of al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Mu'tazilī, 'Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153), and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī al-Ash'arī. He then reviews the sources of ethics in the Arab and Islamic heritage, categorising them into groups that fall under one of the four ethical heritages he bases his book on: *al-mawrūth al-Fārisī* (Persian heritage), *al-mawrūth al-Yūnānī* (Greek heritage), *al-mawrūth al-'Arabī al-khālīṣ* (pure Arabian heritage), and *al-mawrūth al-Islāmī al-khālīṣ*

(pure Islamic heritage), in addition to a type he calls *al-nazʿa al-tawfiqiyya* (syncretic tendency) which is a category that falls in-between different heritages.

Under the category “Persian ethical heritage,” al-Jābirī broadly covers some works of ‘Abd Allāh Ibn al-Muqaffāʿ, then goes into detail about the following books: *Uyūn al-Akhbār* by Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Qutayba, *al-Iqd al-Farid* (“The Unique Necklace”) by Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih (d. 246/860), *al-Mustaṭraf fī Kull Fann Mustazraf* (“The Delightful in Every Fine Art”) by Abū al-Faṭḥ al-Abshihī, *Ṣubḥ al-Aʿshā fī Ṣināʿat al-Inshā* (“The Dawn of the Blind in the Craft of Composition”) by Abū al-Abbās al-Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418), and *Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk* (“Advice for Kings”) by al-Māwardī, noting that his other works that fall under ethics and politics, and *Mukhtār al-Ḥikam wa-Maḥāsīn al-Kalim* (“A Selection of Maxims and Excellent Sayings”) by al-Mubashshir Ibn Fātik (d. fifth/eleventh century).

Under the “Greek ethical heritage” category, after providing a historical background on Greek philosophy, al-Jābirī classifies the philosophical ethical heritage into two main tendencies: scientific and philosophical. Within the scientific tendency in ethics, he addresses the following sources: *al-Ḥila li-Dafʿ al-Aḥzān* by Abū Yūsuf al-Kindī, *al-Ṭibb al-Rūḥānī* by Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* (“Refinement of Character”) by Thābit Ibn Qurra (d. 283/896), and *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* by Yaḥyā Ibn ‘Adī. Al-Jābirī wrote extensively to prove that the author of the last book is Abū ‘Alī Ibn al-Haytham (d. ca. 430/1040) not Ibn ‘Adī, considering that attributing the book to the encyclopaedist Ibn al-Haytham would help classify it under “the scientific tendency in ethics.” Also, under “the scientific tendency in ethics,” he addresses *al-Akhlāq wa-l-Siyar* by Ibn Ḥazm al-Andalusī. As for the philosophical tendency in ethics, al-Jābirī includes the following sources: five works by Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, which al-Jābirī sees as combining ethics (happiness) and politics (the virtuous city): *al-Tanbīh ‘alā Sabīl al-Saʿāda*¹³ (“Guidance to the Way of Happiness”), *Tahṣīl al-Saʿāda* (“Attainment of Happiness”), *Ārāʾ Ahl al-Madīna al-Fāḍila* (“Opinions of the People of the Virtuous City”), *Kitāb al-Siyāsa al-Madaniyya* (“The Book of Civil Politics”), and *Kitāb al-Milla* (“The Book of Religion”). He also discusses, *Tadbīr al-Mutawaḥḥid* (“Governance of the Solitary”) by Ibn Bājja al-Andalusī (d. 533/1138) and *Kitāb al-Ḍarūrī fī al-Siyāsa* (“The Necessary Book on Politics”) by Ibn Rushd, continuing the discussion on the relationship between ethics and politics according to the Greek conception.

13 Al-Jābirī (2001, 346) listed the title as *al-Tanbīh ‘alā Sabīl Tahṣīl al-Saʿāda* and referred to the edition by Saḥbān Khalifāt. However, Khalifāt’s edition does not include the word “*Tahṣīl*” in the book’s title. For the different titles of the book, see Khalifāt’s introduction to al-Fārābī’s book (al-Fārābī 1987, 11–14).

Under the “syncretic tendency” category, al-Jābirī addresses the following sources: *al-Sa‘āda wa-l-Is‘ād fī al-Sīra al-Insāniyya* (“Happiness and Benefaction in Human Conduct”) by Abū al-Ḥasan al-‘Āmirī (d. 381/992) and *Tahdhīb al-Akhhlāq* by Abū ‘Alī Miskawayh, noting his other works as well.

Under the “Sufi heritage” category, al-Jābirī covers parts of the following sources, focusing on specific concepts or discussions: *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* (“Unveiling the Veiled”) by al-Hujwīrī (d. 465/1072), *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya* (“The Qushayrī Epistle”) by Abū al-Qāsim ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072), *al-Shaykh al-Akbar wa-l-Kibrīt al-Aḥmar* (“The Greatest Master and the Red Sulphur”) by Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ‘Arabī (d. 638/1240), to illustrate some traits of the Sufis and their ethics related to the concepts of manners, companionship etiquette, and the relationship between the *shaykh* and disciple, *wilāyā* (sainthood), and *maqāmāt* (stations). Then he covers *Qūt al-Qulūb fī Mu‘āmalat al-Maḥbūb wa-Waṣf Ṭarīq al-Murīd ilā Maqām al-Tawḥīd* (“The Nourishment of Hearts in Dealing with the Beloved and the Description of the Seeker’s Path to the Station of Divine Unity”) by Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 386/996) and *al-Luma’* (“The Flashes”) by Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj al-Ṭūsī (d. 378/988). In passing he also quotes from other Sufi works.

Under the “pure Arabian heritage” category, he limits himself to quoting from the literature books he previously discussed, such as *Uyūn al-Akḥbār* by Ibn Qutayba and *al-Iqd al-Farīd* by Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, then covers *Adab al-Dunyā wa-l-Dīn*.

Under the “pure Islamic heritage” category, he addresses the works of al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857), considered to be the earliest texts belonging to this category. Here, he discusses the book *al-Waṣāyā aw al-Naṣā’ih* (“The Admonitions or the Advices”), *al-Ri‘āya li-Ḥuqūq Allāh* (“Observance of the Rights of God”), *Kitāb al-‘Ilm* (“Book of Knowledge”), and the treatise *Mā‘iyyat al-Aql* (“Essence of the Intellect”) among other books by al-Muḥāsibī, particularly expanding on *al-Ri‘āya li-Ḥuqūq Allāh*. Then he returns to discuss *Adab al-Dunyā wa-l-Dīn* by al-Māwardī, then covers *al-Dharī‘a ilā Makārim al-Sharī‘a* by al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Mizān al-‘Amal* and *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn* by Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī, focusing primarily on the former. He also discusses *Qawā‘id al-Aḥkām fī Maṣāliḥ al-Anām*¹⁴ (“The Legal Maxims for the People’s Interests”) and *Shajarat al-Ma‘ārif wa-l-Aḥwāl wa-Ṣāliḥ al-Aqwāl wa-l-A’māl* (“The Tree of Knowledge, States, Virtuous Sayings, and Deeds”) by ‘Izz al-Dīn Ibn ‘Abd al-Salām (d. 660/1262), and *al-Siyāsa al-Shar‘iyya fī Iṣlāḥ al-Rā’i wa-l-Ra’iyya* (“Sharī‘a-Based Governance in the Reform of the Ruler and the Subjects”) by Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328).

14 The book was published under the title *Qawā‘id al-Aḥkām fī Iṣlāḥ al-Anām*, and this title appears in several manuscript copies as well (Ibn ‘Abd al-Salām 2000).

In my analysis of the list of sources al-Jābirī discussed in his book and his method of categorisation, I briefly focus on three aspects: the vision that governed his readings of these sources and the conclusions he reached, his concept of ethics, and the sources of ethics. His conception of ethics impacted the sources he selected.

Regarding the vision, al-Jābirī posits the existence of parallel value systems, each coherent and forming a structure in itself, revolving around a “central value.” These systems sometimes competed, were sometimes synthesised, and at other times Islamised. However, according to al-Jābirī, there remained purely Arabian and purely Islamic ethical heritages. Although al-Jābirī theoretically acknowledges the influence and intermingling between these heritages or systems in his introduction, he does not thoroughly and accurately historicise these values and is inconsistent in classifying ethical sources under a single heritage from among those he confines himself to. This led him to squeeze every group of ethical sources into a particular value system by seeking partial quotations that support his classification. For example, al-Jābirī sees the Persian ethical heritage as Persian in content and orientation, revolving around the ethics of obedience. Despite *ʿUyūn al-Akhbār* by Ibn Qutayba and *al-Iqd al-Farīd* by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih being composed in eloquent Arabic and considered gems of “Arabic literature” due to their content and the quotations they gathered, al-Jābirī finds no issue in classifying them under the Persian heritage! Moreover, al-Jābirī applies this judgment to subsequent literature books. In his view, they remain dominated by these two books in terms of content, the method of their presentation, and the intended purpose of the literature, which addresses the ethics of the self and language. To maintain his idea of parallel ethical heritages, al-Jābirī considers *al-Mustaṭraf* by al-Abshihī, for example, a move toward the Islamisation of the Persian heritage (al-Jābirī 2001, 217–218), though previous books could be read as intersecting ethical heritages that are not parallel and not entirely separate, or as an attempt to find common values. In the case of *Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk* by al-Māwardī, for instance, al-Jābirī classifies it under both the Persian and Greek heritages simultaneously: it is Persian in terms of its ethical content and Greek in structure (al-Jābirī 2001, 233). He distinguishes between the book’s content and structure, thus dividing the book itself and its author’s contribution between these two contending heritages in content and structure, leaving no trace of Arab influence except in the language it was written in. Similarly, al-Jābirī treats *Mukhtār al-Ḥikam wa-Maḥāsīn al-Kalīm* by al-Mubashshir Ibn Fātik as falling within “the framework of competition between the proponents of the Greek heritage and those of the Persian heritage” (al-Jābirī 2001, 244). As for *Adab al-Dunyā wa-l-Dīn* by al-Māwardī himself, the author of the previously mentioned *Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk*, al-Jābirī uses it in the context of discussing three ethical heritages: Persian,

pure Arabian, and pure Islamic (see al-Jābirī 2001, 561), without hesitating to fragment the writings of one author who seems inclined to one ethical heritage in one book and to another in a different book. Al-Jābirī also does not hesitate to fragment a single book and subsume each part under a different heritage, merely so that his pre-established framework remains intact at the expense of the sources he discusses and their prominent authors who enjoyed an encyclopaedic culture and a coherent scientific structure, making some of them—at least—authorities in their fields.

This vision or framework that governed al-Jābirī's perceptions and coloured his reading of ethical sources made him selective in choosing the sources themselves, and in his quotations that support only his idea, thus deviating from the method of historiography of the ethical heritage and its sources, and preventing a comprehensive understanding of ethical sources. His framework also came at the expense of the sources he discussed. He did not consider each book as a coherent structure but fragmented them to align with the parallel value systems he assumed, thus falling short in analysing the sources he addressed and not considering their reception by the scholarly community, particularly in the field of ethics, whether in classical times or in modern studies that addressed some of the previous books, resulting in a book that is a mixture of historiography and ideology.

Regarding the concept of ethics, while Fakhry confined his analysis solely to what is conventionally termed as ethical thought, al-Jābirī broadened the scope to include what Fakhry identified as ethical literature. In doing so, al-Jābirī incorporated three types of sources in his examination of ethics. The first type consists of books on *tarassul* (the art of prose composition), which relate to the ethics of language. The second type consists of literary books that explore the wisdom of the Persians, some narrated through the voices of animals and others in the form of collections of refined aphorisms or phrases attributed to kings, sages, and eloquent speakers. The third type is general literary books that merge the ethics of language with the ethics of the self, featuring an array of curiosities, proverbs, reports, tales, rarities, and eloquent phrases (see al-Jābirī 2001, 226–227). Although al-Jābirī incorporated these three types of sources, he categorised them under the Persian heritage, viewing them as proponents of a specific value system centred around the sultan and emphasising the value of obedience. From this perspective, he has previously analysed the works of Ibn al-Muqaffa', Ibn Qutayba, and Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, which are recognised as part of ethical literature.

The value systems al-Jābirī explored through these sources treat ethical values as directives for community behaviour, i.e., as "ethical values for politics,

politics in the sense of managing the community.” Arab society throughout its long history “formed ethical communities, if the term is appropriate, such as religious sects and Sufi groups” (al-Jābirī 2001, 24). Al-Jābirī focused on values that pertain to civic life, recalling the idea of linking politics and ethics as found in ancient thought, particularly Greek. However, values, in this sense, should not be sought solely in written texts without considering the lived and actual realities that appear through other types of historical sources, such as books on history, biographical works, and others (see al-Bishrī 2002).

Regarding sources, both Fakhry and al-Jābirī confined their discussions to sources of ethics in Arab and Islamic heritage. Fakhry did not go beyond the ninth/fifteenth century, while al-Jābirī stated in his book *Al-Aql al-Akhlāqī al-ʿArabī* that “we will continue to operate within our tradition as heritage” (al-Jābirī 2001, 28), but the period he covered was even shorter.

In theological ethics—which appears in a historical context—al-Jābirī did not offer anything notably new. He did not address individual sources nor does he benefit from previous studies that developed theological ethics and began to be systematically organised starting in the 1970s, although the inclusion of some theological discussions within the field of ethics dates back to the mid-twentieth century with Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh Drāz and Muḥammad Yūsuf Mūsā (Drāz 1998; Mūsā 1953, 162–163; 1945, 46–56). In the philosophical heritage, al-Jābirī does not discuss *Fuṣūl Muntazaʿa fī al-Akhlāq* by al-Fārābī and neglects to discuss Ibn Sīnā, justifying it by stating that “the Sīnāwian system is the same as the Fārābīan system with some modifications,” and that Ibn Sīnā “did not write on ethics and politics enough to warrant a specific place in this book” (al-Jābirī 2001, 365). Generally, al-Jābirī also overlooks the works of al-Jāhīz, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā, Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawwānī, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, and others. However, he includes *Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk* by al-Māwardī and *al-Siyāsa al-Sharʿiyya* by Ibn Taymiyya but fails to encompass the literary genres to which these two books belong, namely the books on the advice of kings, the ordinances of government, and Sharīʿa politics. Regarding Sufi heritage, al-Jābirī does not maintain an organised presentation of sources as he does with other ethical heritages but limits his discussion to issues through specific Sufi sources, despite the existence of earlier studies specifically on Sufi ethics (Ṣubḥī 1983; ʿAwn 1983). He also overlooks Sharīʿa ethics books and Islamic jurisprudential ethics, even though he discusses some works by ʿIzz al-Dīn Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām but removes them from the jurisprudential context.

Al-Jābirī’s exaggerations in historicising ethics through its sources do not only concern evaluating sources or selective reading but also extend to his

appreciation of these works. For instance, the inclusion of literary books in the field of ethics history has been undertaken by others before. Muhammad Yūsuf Mūsā had clarified the Persian influence in *ʿUyūn al-Akhhbār* and *al-ʿIqd al-Farīd* more than half a century before al-Jābirī's work (Mūsā 1953, 166–167). Al-Jābirī ignored earlier attempts that included Ibn Ḥazm's *al-Akhlāq wa-l-Sīyar* within the history of ethics, claiming that it was “previously in a state of neglect, and now—only now—does it enter the class to take its place in the history of Arabic ethical thought” (al-Jābirī 2001, 338). This is despite the fact that this text of Ibn Ḥazm had been one of the selected texts published by Fakhry in his *al-Fikr al-Akhlāqī al-ʿArabī*, and Fakhry had dedicated a full chapter to Ibn Ḥazm's book in his second book published a decade before al-Jābirī's publication.

5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have observed some of the historical developments in the study of ethics through its sources in the Arab and Islamic heritage. These developments have revealed clear complexities and gaps in our knowledge of the ethical heritage written in Arabic within the Islamic civilisation. Although our understanding has expanded compared to early studies on Islamic ethics, thanks to the transformation of Islamic ethics into an independent field still evolving, this has helped overcome the narrow perspective that confined ethics solely to philosophical or Greek ethics, moving towards a broader perspective that encompasses various fields and areas, including ethical discussions and individual books alike.

This transformation of ethics into an independent field has enabled overcoming the narrow goal that—for a time—dominated the academic output in English, which was to explore the Islamic ethical heritage from the angle of investigating the imprints of Greek legacy in Islamic civilisation through translation, transmission, and influence while analysing the Islamic ethical heritage itself was considered incidental collateral.

The previous discussions on the sources of ethics have led to the distinction between different forms and formulations of ethical discussions. At the methodological level, we can distinguish between ethical thought, which has an explicit theoretical framework, and ethical literature, which is closer to narrative and normative discourse and lacks an explicit or declared theoretical structure. At the structural level, there were two prominent formulations. On the one hand, there are scattered ethical discussions, which were part of other Islamic knowledge fields (such as Islamic theology and the principles

of Islamic jurisprudence), and for this reason, they were subsumed under the field they belonged to, causing their ethical aspect to fade, considered to be only subordinate or auxiliary to that particular field. Examples of this are the issues of *tahsīn* and *taqbiḥ*, divine justice, and human capacity and responsibility, which appeared—in books of Islamic theology—as purely theological discussions, but modern ethical studies have extracted them and made them into a subsidiary ethical field, namely theological ethics. On the other hand, there are the individual books, which were the focus of most studies discussed here and are further explored in this volume, which this chapter serves as an introduction to and part of. However, classifying these dense sources according to clear and coherent criteria remains something that merits an in-depth study of its own, which I hope to undertake at a later stage.

Still, there are two main challenges here. The first one is to study this rich ethical heritage rigorously for its own merit, away from ideological orientations or the obsession with searching for heritages and questioning authenticity and creativity, which tends to fragment the structure of classical ethical works in favour of an assumed purist thought fixating on sharply dividing ethical systems that are believed to be parallel and not intersecting. This does not mean we can do without the history of ideas, provided that the idea of historicising does not dominate ethical research, causing the ethical content itself to recede. Studying ethical content itself helps us build a coherent theoretical ethical thought or develop ethical theories, and, from another perspective, apply them in contemporary ethical discussions and create a field of applied ethics. Hence, we do not deal with the classical sources of ethics as “classical ethics” but rather integrate them into scholarly research where historical and philosophical, theoretical and practical aspects come together, and we distinguish between the absolute and the temporal linked to historical customs. This means that we use ethical sources in various directions so that they do not remain merely heritage or part of a historical study unrelated to the field of ethics as studied and taught today.

The second challenge relates to preserving the identity of ethics as an independent field, so that not all sources of Islamic heritage are transformed into sources of ethics. There are still traits that distinguish sources from various fields from what we call sources of ethics. If these boundaries disappear, the field of ethics loses its identity or we risk that all other sciences become part of ethics. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that ethical discussions are connected to various sciences because ethics is an interdisciplinary field, a dilemma we must address in the upcoming study on classifying the sources of ethics, God willing.

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The Ethics of Certainty

Makārim al-Akhlāq by Ibn Abī l-Dunyā

Paul L. Heck

1 Introduction

This chapter explores *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq* (“The Book of Noble Character”) by Ibn Abī l-Dunyā (d. 281/894), a pious figure who was one of the first to formulate a comprehensive vision of ethics in Islam—a vision that is based on a distinct understanding of the inner life and that also shows awareness of the debates of the day on diverse approaches to the ethics of Islam. I begin by examining Ibn Abī l-Dunyā’s identity, particularly issues around his status as a *ḥadīth* scholar that continue to be a source of controversy. I then offer a brief overview of the modern scholarship on him, focusing especially on studies that treat *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq* in some measure. From there, I proceed to analyse the work itself, which follows not only from Ibn Abī l-Dunyā’s own explanatory statement in the work but also from core concepts that shape its outlook, whose meanings can be more fully understood only by considering them as they feature in other works of his. Finally, I end with a brief note on Ibn Abī l-Dunyā’s legacy.

To anticipate my conclusions: Like other scholars of the day who were troubled by a perceived decline in the religious integrity of society as a whole, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā composed *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq* as a paradigm of pietistic ethics, not only as a tool for the cultivation of religious excellence but also as a means for identifying the real leaders of the community apart from pretenders. As others have noted, the work has a humanistic side, drawing on concepts of ethics from a classical past, that is, the culture of pre-Islamic Arabia. However, by reading *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq* alongside other pietistic compilations of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, it becomes clear that the humanistic element should not be overstated. In short, *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq* does not look to the classical past as a model of ethics or use it to develop a humanistic vision of ethics for Islam. The work is shaped by the pietistic sentiments of its own day. In referencing the virtues of the classical past, it reconceives them in light of the religion, which offers the pietistic approach that is needed to cultivate them

in a way such that they might have the effect of orienting the soul to the other world as the purpose of one's piety.

Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, whose life stretched across the third/ninth century, is presumed to be the first to have compiled a work on ethics under a title that would subsequently become fairly common, *Makārim al-Akhlāq*.¹ However, he was not the first to write on the theme or the only one to do so, apparently, in response to the crisis of the day.² Other scholars of the period were also troubled by what they saw as signs of spiritual and ethical decline in the *umma*, the community of believers. In response, they fashioned a higher vision of ethics that was open to all even if only few might realise it. Thus, like other pious figures of the day, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's writings seek to capture a vision of ethics by which the pious exemplars of the community were to be known. We see a similar interest, for example, in the writings of al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857), who speaks of the religious elite as "the indicants of piety" (*dalā'il al-taqwā*) (al-Muḥāsibī 2003, 40). In that regard, they were understood not only to model the ethics of Islam for the rest of the community but also to demonstrate by their own character that the community's piety had not become entirely corrupt, thereby risking the loss of divine favour. Indeed, during this period, we see the emergence of distinct conceptions of religious excellence expressed in the language of sainthood (*wilāya/walāya*) (Karamustafa 2005, 64–70; Sviri 2020, 217–236; Palmer 2019). We are more familiar with the names of al-Junayd (d. 298/910) and al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī (d. 320/932), who flourished during this period and who articulated notions of religious excellence in markedly mystical categories, including the disclosure (*kashf*) of a special knowledge that was not necessarily at odds with the message communicated by the Prophet Muḥammad but that the vast majority of believers did not receive. However, articulations of piety at this time (or in any period) did not follow a single method. Ibn Abī l-Dunyā described religious excellence in terms of a kind of otherworldly devotion that fell short of mystical disclosure. It would thus be wrong to classify him among the proto-architects of Sufism. Rather than mystical disclosure, he looked to a heritage of virtue as embodied in literary reports of eminent figures from both the pre-Islamic and Islamic periods,

1 For a discussion on the title, *Makārim al-Akhlāq*, during the classical period, see Orfali and Baalbaki (2015, 3ff.).

2 The description of the Prophet's ethics in a section of his biography in *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* ("The Book of Great Generations"), compiled by Ibn Sa'd (d. 230/844), seems to prefigure the genre of *makārim al-akhlāq* (see Ibn Sa'd 2001, 1:313–321).

weaving them together to construct a vision of noble character as the mark of the *umma*'s spiritual and ethical paragons.

Ibn Abī l-Dunyā compiled many collections of reports on a variety of pious themes. While exhibiting a particular reverence for the Prophet, his companions, and their followers, he did not hesitate to include the stories of figures from subsequent generations. His primary goal was therefore not to fix in writing the age of the righteous forebears, specifically, but, rather, to create a body of literature to define a special class, the *awliyā'*, the moral exemplars of the *umma*. In this way, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā was responding to a crisis of ethics within the ranks of scholars, who, as he perceived them, had actually become hypocrites in their ways and speech.

In contrast to other scholars of his time, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā aimed—through his literary production—to describe the *awliyā'* not as recipients of mystical disclosure (*kashf*) but as models of pious excellence. Their piety, as he conceived it, was marked by two general characteristics. First, while Ibn Abī l-Dunyā did not reject the possibility of receiving a divine light (*nūr*) and thereby undergoing a kind of illumination, he saw piety first and foremost as something one cultivated by imitating and identifying with pious virtuosi of the past; his compilations aimed to facilitate the process. Second, because he saw life in this world as a constant threat to one's religious integrity, the piety that he set forth in his compilations was distinctly otherworldly.³ Still, despite the emphasis on detachment from this world, it would be wrong to think of this piety simply as a kind of asceticism. Even if apparently wary of mystical disclosure, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā was interested in the inner life, describing it with such terms as *sarīra*.⁴ Thus, as much as he calls for detachment from this world, no less does he underscore the importance of orienting the inner life towards the other world. This idea is seen in his interest in a nascent culture of grave-visiting.⁵ In sum, the piety shaping his ethical outlook, neither simply ascetical nor mystical, was, on the one hand, traditional (i.e., embodied in

3 The prominence of this otherworldly outlook is all too clear from his interest in death and the need to account for one's sins in preparation for it, as illustrated in many of his works, notably his work *Muḥāsabat al-Nafs* ("Introspection").

4 One report (no. 6) in *Muḥāsabat al-Nafs* speaks of the goodness that comes when one is self-admonishing (*wā'iz min nafsih*). The idea suggests a level of moral self-awareness akin to what we would call the conscience.

5 Leah Kinberg has studied Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's compilations on the dead in their graves and their ability to communicate with the living (see Kinberg 1986, 285–306). Kinberg also reconstructed *Kitāb al-Mawt* ("The Book of Death") and *Kitāb al-Qubūr* ("The Book of Graves") (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 1983); and edited another work that indicates interest in the inner life, *Kitāb al-Manām* ("The Book of Sleep") (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 1994).

traditions of virtuous ancestors), and, on the other, spiritual, given his interest in the inner life for the formation of character as suggested above. In this regard, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā is presenting the *awliyā*, exemplars of noble character, as the real leaders of the *umma* at a time when the apparent sphere (the public order that the rulings of the Shari'a as adjudicated by its scholars were to establish) no longer in his view served to guarantee the religious integrity of the *umma*.

2 Ibn Abī l-Dunyā: A *Ḥadīth* Scholar?

Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, born in Baghdad, was a descendant of a client of the Umayyads and served in the court of the 'Abbāsids as a tutor (*mu'addib*) to future caliphs, al-Mu'taḍid (r. 279–289/892–902) and al-Muktafi (r. 289–295/902–908). It is difficult to classify Ibn Abī l-Dunyā. As a member of the court, he likely had dealings with society's most influential figures, but the compilations of his that have reached us suggest a scholar with pietistic rather than courtly interests. He is also remembered as having a close association with *ḥadīth* circles. He appears as a transmitter in the major *ḥadīth* collections, and biographical works of *ḥadīth* scholars include entries on him. Indeed, the star of the *ḥadīth* people (*ahl al-ḥadīth*), Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), was likely one of his teachers. The complex nature of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's scholarly identity can be seen in the entry on him in the biographical work of Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348), *Siyar A'lām al-Nubāla* ("Biographies of Leading Noblemen"). On the one hand, the entry provides lengthy lists of his teachers (*shuyūkh*) and those who narrated traditions from him. It also quotes a statement by Ibn Abī Ḥātim (d. 327/938) who says that he and his father, the renowned *ḥadīth* scholar, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 277/890), transmitted material from Ibn Abī l-Dunyā in writing (*katabtu 'anhu ma'a abī*). In this regard, it is worth noting Ibn Abī Ḥātim's remark that his father considered Ibn Abī l-Dunyā as very trustworthy (*ṣadūq*), that is, in transmitting reports. On the other hand, the entry notes that Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's compositions were many and contained arcane matters and wonders (*mukhabba'āt wa-'ajā'ib*), terms the meaning of which are difficult to ascertain. They could speak to his interest in the inner life or, alternatively, to topics that would have been discussed in the literary culture (*adab*) of the day, especially in courtly circles, beyond the concerns of *ḥadīth* scholars in the transmission of pious reports. In support of this latter possibility, the entry mentions his ability to make others laugh and weep on account of his vast command of "knowledge and reports." This ability is illustrated by a story from the caliphal court that depicts him narrating, at one moment, moral

lessons (*mawā'iz*) from the history of caliphs to make his audience cry and, at the next, anecdotes from pre-Islamic Arabia (*nawādir al-a'rāb*) to make them laugh. Clearly, then, it would be wrong to identify Ibn Abī l-Dunyā only as a *ḥadīth* scholar.⁶ Indeed, more generally, it would be wrong to assume that a scholar of third/ninth-century Baghdad could not be known for both piety and literary expertise.

Nevertheless, a question that remains a source of concern for scholars today is Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's reliability as a *ḥadīth* transmitter and, in turn, the nature of his relation to the *ḥadīth* people.⁷ Such concerns, I suggest, are based upon assumptions of *ḥadīth* criteria that only fully crystallised in later periods of the history of the *ḥadīth* science. I am not suggesting that such criteria were entirely absent in his day but that they were not so fixed that he would have been bound to follow them even as a scholar whose compilations are made up of pious reports that also include chains of transmission.⁸ In short, his primary concern was in collecting reports in a way that could be used for the cultivation of otherworldly devotion in the sense noted above. Indeed, the material he transmitted shows his receptivity even to stories that originated in the culture of eastern monasticism (see Bowman 2021). To be sure, he ties his reports to chains of transmission (*asānīd*, sing. *isnād*) but readily combines Prophetic reports with sayings and anecdotes from companions and followers as well as bits of poetry and even biblical material.

Ibn Abī l-Dunyā displays a broad understanding of the Sunna as extending from the Prophet to subsequent generations of pious figures even beyond the first three generations of Muslims. His compilations focus on the Prophet as

6 To be sure, he was also a *ḥadīth* scholar. For a study of *ḥadīth* in Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's writings, see Yūsūf (1994).

7 It is worth noting the study by Fāḍil Ibn Khalaf al-Ḥummāda al-Raqqī (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012). This study, which began as a 2009 master's thesis at the Islamic University of Beirut, has much useful data analysis but is overly concerned to defend Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's reliability as a credible *ḥadīth* transmitter. The first volume is a study of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā as both *ḥadīth* scholar and reformer. The following six volumes contain editions of over fifty of his compilations. In referring to those compilations, I use this collection for two reasons. First, in view of the manuscripts it uses, its editions are sound (I have checked its edition of *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq* against the edition of Bellamy, which was published in 1973). Second, it allows for uniform citation of all of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's works. The entire collection is organised by a dual numbering system. The first number refers to the place of the report in the specific work, the second to its place in the entire collection. For example, the report in *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq* in which 'Ā'isha (d. 58/678) mentions the ten traits of noble character is numbered 36/11163. It is, then, the 36th report of *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq* and the 11163rd report of the entire collection.

8 Criteria for determining *ḥadīth* authenticity were never clear-cut even to specialists (see Hallaq 1999, 75–90).

the lodestar of the *umma*, but he was not preoccupied with criteria for sound *ḥadīth* transmission that, again, fully crystallised only at a later period, criteria such as whether the transmission of a report reaches the Prophet (*marfūʿ*) or stops at a companion or follower (*mawqūf*). For example, his work that is the focus of this chapter, *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq*, relates 484 reports of which 196 are *marfūʿ* and 288 *mawqūf* with no evidence that gradations of soundness (*siḥḥa*) were a central concern of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā. Moreover, while the chain of transmission (*isnād*) is part and parcel of his compilations, it serves more generally to ground the reports in a specifically Arabo-Islamic heritage and not, more specifically, to meet criteria of the *ḥadīth* science as standardised at a later period. In sum, while Ibn Abī l-Dunyā was likely aware of emergent standards of *ḥadīth* criticism in his day,⁹ he does not share the *ḥadīth* concerns of later scholars, such as Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr (d. 463/1071) or Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (d. 643/1245), who had a much greater interest in the science of determining the reliability of transmitters (*ʿilm al-jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*) than Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, whose view of the Sunna and also of the history of the *umma* was broader than theirs.

It is best to see Ibn Abī l-Dunyā above all as a compiler/classifier of pietistic literature of varied origin.¹⁰ His works, collections of reports compiled/classified by theme, which have been numbered at more than two hundred (Librande 2018),¹¹ take up largely ethical matters of import for the inner life with emphasis on both otherworldly devotion (*zuhd*) and the spiritual refinement of the soul (*raqāʿiq*).¹² It is thus not at all strange that al-Nadīm (d. 380/990), in his catalogue of books, locates Ibn Abī l-Dunyā in the section on compilers (*muṣannifūn*) who were ascetics (*zuhhād*) or had mystical inclinations (*mutaṣawwifa*).¹³ In this regard, it is worth noting that later generations

9 As noted above, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā had scholarly interactions with Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī and Ibn Abī Ḥātim, father-and-son pioneers in the *ḥadīth* science, the latter being among the first to compose a work on *ʿilm al-jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*. Nevertheless, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's writings offer no clear evidence that he shared their particular concerns.

10 Ibn al-Athīr (1997, 6:482) describes him as "the author of many famous collections" (*ṣāḥib al-taṣānīf al-kathīra al-mashhūra*).

11 For a detailed list of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's confirmed works, see Weipert 2009.

12 Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's (d. 463/1071) entry on Ibn Abī l-Dunyā in *Taʾrīkh Baghdād* ("The History of Baghdad") confirms the prominence of *zuhd* and *raqāʿiq* in his compositions. Ibn Kathīr's entry in *al-Bidāya wa-l-Nihāya* ("The Beginning and the End") also suggests that matters of spiritual refinement (*riqāq*) were the most prominent theme in his compositions but also points to the suspicions that came to be attached to Ibn Abī l-Dunyā for transmitting reports from a figure known as a total liar (*kadhḥāb*).

13 For the development of (*zuhd*) and its ambiguous relation to Sufism during this period, see Melchert 2020.

of *ḥadīth* scholars would draw a distinction when it came to evaluating the soundness of reports. One was to be more stringent in evaluating the transmission of reports upon which legal rulings might be based (*aḥādīth al-aḥkām*) but lenient with reports that speak to the ethical life more generally, such as those that predominate in the compilations of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā.¹⁴ Indeed, he is quite aware that Islam has different aspects. He surely accepted the Shari'a in the sense of legal rulings (*aḥkām*) that were meant to regulate the apparent realm, the public order of Islam, but he also speaks of what he calls the Shari'a of wisdoms (*sharī'at al-ḥikām*) that applied to the inner life of faith and ensured the health of hearts (*salāmat al-ṣudūr*).

In sum, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā did not have the norms of the *ḥadīth* science foremost in mind when compiling his works. He was likely aware of debates over the reliable transmission of religious knowledge, but his main focus was to bring into being a body of literature, a set of compilations, categorised by theme, which were meant to inculcate pious dispositions in the soul, that is, the inner life where character is formed. Taken as a whole, his oeuvre is akin to the *muṣannafāt* of the period as composed by the likes of Ibn Abī Shayba (d. 235/849) and 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī (d. 211/827), whose compilations contain material that does not always meet the transmission standards of later *ḥadīth* circles. To judge from these works, the goal of their compilers, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā included, was, rather, to organise the literary heritage of Islam for pietistic purposes. These compilers, understanding the Sunna more broadly than *ḥadīth* scholars would, sought to produce a body of literature that was meant to enable growth in piety. To be sure, the *ḥadīth* people shared this goal but also had a more specific purpose, namely, the delineation of the communal tradition in a way that made it coterminous with Prophetic reports.

Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, it can be concluded, compiled his works for the education of souls, not only those of future caliphs but also of piety-minded believers more generally, scholars especially. It was his perception of decline in the *umma* as a whole that most inspired him. He responded to the crisis by

14 In this regard, it is worth noting the statement of 'Abd al-Rahmān Ibn Mahdī (d. 198/814), a prominent *ḥadīth* scholar from Baṣra, as recorded (no. 1844) in *al-Mustadrak 'alā al-Sahīḥayn* ("Supplement on the Two Authentic Works"), compiled by al-Ḥākim al-Nishāpurī (d. 405/1014): "When we narrate reports from the Prophet, God's blessing and peace on him, on the allowed, the forbidden, and Shari'a rulings (*al-ḥalāl wa-l-ḥarām wa-l-aḥkām*), we are strict in [evaluating] the chains of transmissions (*asānīd*) and critically review (*intaqadnā*) the men (*rījāl*, i.e., the transmitters), but when we narrate reports on virtuous actions (*faḍā'il al-a'māl*), otherworldly reward and punishment, areas where the law has no position (*mubāḥ*), and invocations, we are lenient in [evaluating] the chains of transmissions."

producing a body of literature, ethical in nature, which did not offer analysis of the workings of the soul but, rather, literary material to inspire growth in piety. His compilations were, then, a kind of *adab*: a means for souls to identify with past figures, now in literary form, who embodied the ethics of the *umma*. In this respect, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā aligns with a development of the period where one learns from books as well as from masters.¹⁵ In contrast to other writers on ethics from Islam's classical period, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā is not systematic. Even if he has a vision of the inner life, he does not treat the ethical life as a well-ordered course of states (*aḥwāl*) and stations (*maqāmāt*), nor does he analyse the spiritual movements of the soul (*khawāṭir*). Rather, his compilations amount to literature that is meant to awaken people from neglect of the works of the heart (*a'māl al-qulūb*). As far as I know, this specific phrase does not occur in his works, and yet, overall, they display a concern for inner no less than outer action—and a desire for readers to cultivate otherworldly devotion, which, as Ibn Abī l-Dunyā sees it, would counter the religious decline of the *umma*. He is not so much calling believers to undertake ritual duties. Indeed, he takes a critical view of those who pray but fall short in their ethical obligations towards others. At the same time, the workings of the inner life are not so complex that only a spiritual elite can comprehend them. (It is perhaps for this reason that he doesn't speak of mystical disclosure even if he assumes the existence of a religious elite, *awlīyā'*, who fully embody the idea of noble character.) Rather, it is a matter of identifying with the ethical heritage of Islam, embodied concretely in particular figures, now literary exemplars, who model the inner dispositions that should guide the ethics of believers.¹⁶

To illustrate, let us consider *Kitāb al-Hamm wa-l-Ḥuzn* ("The Book of Grief and Sorrow") (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:343–383). Nowhere in this work does Ibn Abī l-Dunyā state his purpose explicitly. At first glance, the work is but a compilation of disconnected reports on eminent persons of the past, beginning with the Prophet, who cultivated the disposition of sorrow. However, closer scrutiny offers some indication of intention. Ibn Abī l-Dunyā is not simply calling people to be sad. Rather, he views sorrow, when cultivated after the example of pious models, as a preeminent sign of religious sincerity. Sorrow in the heart, the work suggests, is more effective than joy and laughter in clarifying the

15 On the cultural shift to books as authoritative source of knowledge, see Toorawa (2005).

16 Majid Fakhry speaks of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's approach as "ethical traditionalism" (Fakhry 1994, 151–157). Librande describes this approach as "restrained or evenhanded because it encourages moral behaviour without resorting to extremes in practice or falling into casual regard." He continues, "It is also so termed because, once the way is explained, it appears not overly complicated and relatively easy to follow" (see Librande 2005, 5–42).

realities of life and softening one's soul. Sorrow in the pietistic sense that Ibn Abī l-Dunyā conveys is, specifically, sorrow at the possibility of losing paradise and ending up in hell. It is not sorrow over worldly loss but over the possible loss of the good of the otherworld (*ḥuzn 'alā khayr al-ākhirā*). Such pietistic sorrow, the compilation suggests, has consequences for one's character in this world. Sorrow, the mark of humility (*khushū*), is the disposition to cultivate—with the help of a pietistic heritage on sorrow now in literary form—not only in prayer before God but in all human interaction. Something is amiss when a believer is arrogant; otherworldly sorrow is the antidote.

3 Modern Scholarship on Ibn Abī l-Dunyā

Despite the range of topics that Ibn Abī l-Dunyā treats in his compilations, there is strikingly little modern scholarship that examines his place in and relation to the religious culture of Islam during the third/ninth century; or that undertakes analysis of the religious concepts and meanings that he sought to convey in his various works. The short article by Arberry on Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's *Kitāb al-Tawba* ("The Book of Penitence") (2012, 2:159–209) is largely taken up with consideration of the work's transmission (Arberry 1951, 48–63). For the purposes of this chapter, it is worth noting three related features of *Kitāb al-Tawba*. First, as we saw above in the case of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's compilation on sorrow, this work is not simply a record of disconnected reports on a particular topic. The reports aim to move the reader to repent in a way that applies to both inner and outer activity. For example, a good act, one report tells us, is a light in the heart that strengthens one's physical constitution, whereas a bad act is a darkness in the heart that weakens it (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, *Kitāb al-Tawba*, 2:207, no. 194/2823). Second, more than one report chides scholars who engage in religious debate, for example, over freewill (*qadar*), while neglecting their own sins.¹⁷ The point that Ibn Abī l-Dunyā is making is that those praised in the courts of caliphs for their expertise in religious debate will have ethically ambiguous inner lives because they are bound to be influenced by a desire for courtly praise rather than divine favour. In short, he is not just narrating reports on a single theme. More fundamentally, he is deploying them in service of a vision of religious excellence, doing so in full awareness of the ethical disorientation of the *umma*, especially the way by which it afflicts those supposed to be its religious guides. Third, several reports are introduced with the phrase, "one of the sages said" (*qāla ba'ḍ al-ḥukamā*). We are accustomed to seeing this

17 For example, see Ibn Abī l-Dunyā (2012, 2:171, no. 38/2667). Also see in *Kitāb al-Awliyā'* (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 1:613–614, no. 48/2037).

phrase introducing reports or, more specifically, wise sayings (*ḥikam*) of Greek or Persian origin, but no Greek or Persian personages are mentioned in this work. Nevertheless, this silence should not be taken to indicate that Ibn Abī l-Dunyā is simply including such sayings without noting their origins—as if wishing to co-opt literary aspects of the courtly culture of his day for a religious tradition that he envisioned in distinctly Arabo-Islamic terms.

Just as the lingering controversy over Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's identity as a *ḥadīth* scholar stems from later concerns, so too do questions about his cultural priorities. What we can say is that he was aware of expressions of religious excellence that were cast in terms of wisdom yet did not originate in the Arabo-Islamic heritage. By including reports narrated on the authority of sages ("those with wisdom"), Ibn Abī l-Dunyā is, as it were, deploying such wisdom to broaden a particular understanding of piety, one envisioned in terms of the Arabo-Islamic heritage, doing so, perhaps, in response to other scholars of the day who were happy to set the heritage of the Greeks and Persians on the same footing as that of the Arabs in the civilisation of Islam. Indeed, the reports that he narrates on the authority of "those with wisdom" suggest awareness of other expressions of religious excellence in Islam. For example, one such report speaks of God's grace (*minna*) (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 2:173, no. 44/2673), a core concept in the thought of al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, as the means by which one is protected from sin. Another such report is quasi-psychological in its analysis of the cause of sin, attributing it to a mental activity that festers until it begets sinful action (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 2:189, no. 120/2749). Many of the terms in this particular report do not seem to fit with the language of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's compilations overall, including the term for "begetting" (*tawlīd*) and the term for the inner life (*bāṭin*). Indeed, the report as a whole recalls the writings of al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī. Still, it would be wrong to conclude that Ibn Abī l-Dunyā is cutting and pasting. Another report in *Kitāb al-Tawba* draws upon a strand of ancient wisdom traditions that is strikingly different from the one that al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī sought to reformulate for Islam. In this particular report, Mālik Ibn Dīnār (d. 130/748), a piety-minded figure of the second/eighth century, narrates a proverb he had read in *al-Ḥikma* ("The Wisdom"), which seems to be a book of wise sayings of Jewish provenance (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, *Kitāb al-Tawba*, 2:85 no. 101/2730). One finds similar narrations on the authority of *al-Ḥikma* in the literature of the period composed in *ḥadīth* circles, for example in, *Kitāb al-Zuhd* ("The Book of Renunciation") of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal.¹⁸ In sum, *Kitāb al-Tawba* gives us a sense of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā as more than a recorder

18 I thank Christopher Melchert for bringing this point to my attention. For the conception of *al-Ḥikma* as a kind of scripture beyond the works of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, see, for example, Ibn Ḥanbal (1981, 153–154).

of reports. We see him crafting a particular vision of piety, doing so by engaging other conceptions of ethics taking shape at the time, some quite different from his own, all, however, positioning themselves as heirs to traditional wisdom in some sense.

The article by Librande on *Kitāb al-Yaqīn* (“The Book of Certainty”) helpfully prods us to see Ibn Abī l-Dunyā as a crafter rather than a mere recorder. Specifically, by Librande’s telling, it is the inner disposition of certainty, which Ibn Abī l-Dunyā ranks above faith, that is the core concept informing his overall vision of the ethics of Islam. In this sense, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā’s vision of ethics takes on a coherency by which all character traits flow from a complete trust in God. In this vision, it is certainty of faith that preserves the soul from being tempted to sinfulness and wrongdoing (Librande 2005, 14; Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:545–557).¹⁹ Given the significance of religious certainty for Ibn Abī l-Dunyā’s overall view of ethics, it will be important to keep the concept closely in mind when analysing his *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq*.

Finally, Bellamy wrote a short article on *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq* with several insightful points (Bellamy 1963). First, he notes that many reports in the work overlap with material from the *Musnad* of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal. Second, he notes that the work includes anecdotes of later figures as well as *ḥadīths*. Taken together, these two points confirm Ibn Abī l-Dunyā’s broad understanding of the Sunna as discussed above. Bellamy also notes the pre-Islamic material that gives the work a cultural breadth but also defines its character as Arabo-Islamic with no clear evidence of Greek or Persian material. However, the fact that Ibn Abī l-Dunyā recognises the concept of noble character among the Arabs prior to Islam does not necessarily imply cultural breadth, that is, a vision that is inclusive of other cultures on their own terms, at least not as one of his goals in compiling the work. Rather, the highly pietistic character of the work, one that clearly breaks with the clan-oriented ethics of pre-Islamic Arabia, suggests that Ibn Abī l-Dunyā saw the cultural past as having been completed or fulfilled with the coming of Islam. In other words, with the revelation of the Prophetic message, God gave preexisting ethical traits their properly otherworldly orientation. For this reason, prominence is given to a report in which the Prophet speaks of being sent to fulfil noble character. In other words, with the revelation, the ethical traits of the Arabs can now fulfil their true purpose. Bellamy is right to note that Ibn Abī l-Dunyā saw himself “as a preacher whose duty it was to urge his co-religionists to follow the pristine Muslim virtues in

19 Librande (2005, 14) notes “the primary importance of *yaqīn* for the pursuit of a moral lifestyle, in that it provides a basis for the confidence and trust in God which are requisite for all the other virtues and works.”

areas that tend to be neglected” (Bellamy 1963, 118). Reading this work alongside Ibn Abī l-Dunyā’s overall oeuvre, one can only reach the conclusion that those “areas that tend to be neglected” are the inner dispositions. His works seek to call attention to them for the sake of the *umma*’s renewal.²⁰

4 *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq*: The Author’s Explanation and Core Concepts

Let us now turn to *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq*. Like Ibn Abī l-Dunyā’s other works, it is a compilation of reports, which are arranged in ten sections: a lengthy introductory section followed by nine sections, each treating a particular character trait: (1) modesty (*ḥayāʾ*), (2) truthfulness (*ṣidq*), (3) devotion in battle (*ṣidq al-baʾs*), (4) honouring parents, one’s mother above all (*ṣilat al-raḥim*), (5) dutifulness (*amāna*), (6) devotion to companions (*al-tadhammum lil-ṣāhib*), (7) devotion to neighbours (*al-tadhammum lil-jār*), (8) gift-giving (*al-mukāfaʾa bi-l-ṣanāʾi*), and (9) generosity (*al-jūd wa-īṭāʾ al-sāʾil*). In echo of Librande (2005), who speaks of certainty as the key to Ibn Abī l-Dunyā’s overall ethical vision, these traits are described as indicants of conviction in the soul. The point, then, is that Islam is not just a matter of performing physical rituals. One can pray or perform *jihād* and still be unrighteous (*fājir*) rather than righteous (*bārr*) (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, *Kitāb al-Waraʾ*, 6:496 no. 18/12408). For this reason, modesty is placed at the head of noble character. Indeed, modesty is considered the preeminent character trait in Islam (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:93, no. 97/11224). To judge from the reports, modesty connotes inner moral discretion. One could call it moral instinct or even conscience, that is, the soul’s capacity to sense when something is morally wrong. It is said to be the

20 A recent study of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā’s *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq*, appearing only after I had completed this chapter, offers useful insight. Graiguer (2022) sees in the work a cosmopolitan ethics, one that is expressed through material from the Arabo-Islamic heritage yet aligned with the philosophical heritage of the Greeks, which by Ibn Abī l-Dunyā’s day had been translated into the language of the Arabs. To demonstrate the cosmopolitan nature of the work, Graiguer emphasises the role of the intellect (*ʿaql*) as an agent of the virtuous (religious) life and the centrality of nobility/generosity (*karam*). I agree with Graiguer that the work can play a role in renewing the place of ethics in Arabo-Islamic society today and also as a point of common ground in interreligious dialogue, but I wonder if this interest leads him to overlook the pietism of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā’s oeuvre, which is both quasi-ascetical and quasi-mystical in outlook as noted above. In this sense, the emphasis Ibn Abī l-Dunyā places on the intellect is at the service not of a scholastic outlook (philosophical or theological) but of a project that seeks to advance a distinctly otherworldly and inner-oriented understanding of Islam’s piety.

entirety of religion (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:90, no. 86/11213). It is the ethical attire of the believer (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:94, nos. 101/11228 and 102/11229). One report relates that if something does not cause feelings of immodesty, one is not to worry whether it is morally objectionable (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:89, no. 82/11209). The idea implies that moral disorder lies not just in what is apparently immoral. More fundamentally, it should trouble one's interiority. Lack of modesty is equated with infidelity (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:89, no. 83/11210). Modesty prevents one from committing acts of disobedience (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:92, no. 95/11222). Significantly, the reports make it clear that modesty is strengthened by cultivating otherworldly orientation. It is, then, not simply a matter of moral discretion. Rather, it involves devotion to the otherworld and detachment from this one, making it the mark of a religiously healthy heart (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:91, no. 89/11216, see also no. 90/11217).

In sum, possession of the trait of modesty indicates that one has put otherworldly concerns above worldly ones.²¹ One report is explicit in describing modesty as making one less worldly and more otherworldly (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:90, no. 86/11213). One could say the same for the other eight traits of noble character. For example, truthfulness is not just a matter of not lying. It is about being oriented towards paradise (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:97, no. 114/11241). It is a sign of not being attached to this world (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:98, no. 118/11245). In other words, being truthful means you are willing to sacrifice your worldly interests to preserve your otherworldly ones (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:102, no. 136/11263). Indeed, it indicates that one is a member of the special class of moral exemplars who have been preserved from sin on account of their certainty (*yaqīn*), which shows in their harmonious interactions with fellow believers (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:96, no. 109/11236). In contrast, lying is the mark of the hypocrite who has no inner conviction (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:106, no. 151/11278). Similarly, devotion in battle is a kind of truthfulness. In contrast, half-hearted fighting, a lack of devotion, would be a kind of lying. Fighting is not simply a matter of military courage but, rather, of having complete trust in God such that one would willingly fight all the polytheists singlehandedly, especially to avenge the honour of the Prophet (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:113, no. 180/11307). Again, in echo of Librande (2005), all traits are understood in terms of inner moral conviction, which is wholly religious in its meaning, that is, as certainty of one's otherworldly end: paradise as one's hope, hellfire as one's fear. For example, failure to honour one's parents results

21 For one study on modesty in Islam, which treats it from a rather different angle, see Katz (2014, 139–169).

in a loss of paradise, yet it is not enough simply to go through the motions of honouring one's parents in order to avoid the loss of paradise. The importance of inner conviction is the fundamental message that Ibn Abī l-Dunyā seeks to convey in this "treatise" on ethics. For example, as one report states, people who pray actually have no religion if they do not also fulfil their ethical obligations, including financial ones (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:139, no. 264/11391). Those loved by God speak truthfully, fulfil obligations, and do not harm neighbours (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:140, no. 270/11397). Of course, in this context, to speak of those loved by God is to speak of the *awliyā'*. As always, detachment is fundamental. One report puts it plainly: Dutifulness (*amāna*) is richness (*ghinā*, i.e., not needing this world) (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:142, no. 277/11404). Similarly, devotion to one's companions and neighbours implies detachment from one's own possessions such that one would care for companions and neighbours even in bad times and even at personal loss. Incidentally, "companions" in this work implies religious brethren in a broad sense and does not carry the specific meaning that it later assumed in Sufism.²² Finally, one report lists good neighbourliness along with honouring parents and comely character (*khuluq ḥasan*) as the things that build up the lands and increase prosperity (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:152–153, no. 326/11453). Did Ibn Abī l-Dunyā understand ethics to have socio-economic import? Other works of his, such as *Kitāb Iṣlāḥ al-Māl* ("The Book on Financial Reform") (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 1:309–420), offer tantalizing evidence that his ethical vision was part of a more general understanding of the common good. Needless to say, treating such a question lies beyond the scope of this study.

In contrast to almost all his other works, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā actually informs us of his purpose in compiling *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlaq*. At one point in the introductory section, he narrates a report in which 'Ā'isha (d. 58/678) states that the traits of noble character are ten. She then goes on to list them (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:78–79, no. 36/11163). Interestingly, in this report, she does not connect the idea of noble character to the Prophet specifically.²³ In the very next report, 'Ā'isha explains that traits of noble character are not transmitted from father to son or from master to slave. In other words, the transmission of ethics is not a function of any worldly relation but is a matter of a religious formation as modelled especially by people of noble character. Then, at the end of this report, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, quite uncharacteristically, interjects to explain

22 On the concept of companionship within circles of Sufism, see Welle (2024).

23 Indeed, *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlaq* does not include the well-known *ḥadīth* in which 'Ā'isha states that the Prophet's ethics amounts to the Qur'ān. Of course, there are different views on the meaning of her statement.

his purpose in compiling reports that illustrate the traits of noble character as listed by ʿĀʾisha (she had included the virtue of hospitality in her list, but Ibn Abī l-Dunyā does not treat it in a separate section). He will elaborate on the meanings of the traits of noble character, he says, with material that comes from his broad conception of the Sunna, as earlier discussed, inclusive of reports of the Prophet, his companions, their followers, and esteemed and reputable scholars. He then notes that it is his goal to help those with insight grow in insight and those who fall short to awaken from their negligence, to desire noble character, and to aspire for the high ethics that God has made the adornment of religion and the ornamentation of the *awliyāʾ* (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:79, no. 37/11164). In short, his aim is the ethical edification of his readers.

It is worth commenting on three points in relation to Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's explanatory statement. Firstly, he speaks of high ethics as the adornment of religion.²⁴ The statement is not rhetorical flourish. In another report, immediately prior to the one in which ʿĀʾisha lists the traits of noble character, she states that when Islam came, the Arabs were known for sixty or so qualities of noble character, all of which Islam greatly reinforced, especially hospitality, good neighbourliness, and fidelity to contracts (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:78, no. 35/11162). In other words, religion adorns (that is, reinvigorates) the clan-based and thus worldly ethics of pre-Islamic Arabia with the pietistic orientation of Islam. It is clear from the work overall that the religion is seen as ennobling the ethics of the Arabs with otherworldly purpose. One is to be modest, trustworthy, generous, and so on, because one now stands before God, not only in prayer but in all aspects of life. Ethics, then, is not just about living virtuously in society. It is the mark of a soul that is oriented to the otherworld, and the evidence that one is oriented to the otherworld is detachment (*zuhd*) from this world. The sentiment of *zuhd* pervades the work (in this and other works, *ghinā* is occasionally used as its equivalent). As noted above, each of the nine traits that are elaborated in the body of the work is presented as increasing one's otherworldly orientation while decreasing one's worldly orientation. In other words, with this work, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā shows that the traits of noble character have a purpose specific to religion. They orient the soul to God. For

24 In this particular report (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:78–79, no. 36/11163), the specific terms are noble ethics (*akhlāq karīma*) and beautiful actions (*aḥḥāl jamīla*), which amount to what a previous report described as high ethics (*maʿālī al-akhlāq*) as opposed to low ethics (*safasāf al-akhlāq*). In that report (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:70–71, no. 8/11135) it is stated that God loves high ethics because they are his own. The ethics of Islam are thus noble because they orient the soul to God as their origin.

this reason, he needs to attribute them to God. They are not simply cultural attributes as in the case of the pre-Islamic Arabs. He makes this point clear in several reports in the introductory section that speak of God granting (*m-n-h*) traits of noble character to certain believers. Noble character as envisioned by Ibn Abī l-Dunyā is not the product of mystical disclosure, as noted above, but it is nevertheless attributed to God's activity in the soul. In this regard, while one is to aspire to attain otherworldly character as modelled by the virtuous exemplars of the *umma*, the possession of such character, as envisioned by Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, orients one's soul to God. Those who have noble character are thus described as *ahl al-mu'āfāt*, that is, people whom God has preserved from temptation to sinfulness and wrongdoing. For this reason, noble character is called the work of the people of the garden (paradise), where disobedience has no place (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:71–72, no. 12/11139). We can now better understand the Prophet's statement, narrated in several reports, that he was sent to fulfil noble character. Such character, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā wants to make clear, while not unlike the characteristics of past peoples, is obtainable not by any worldly wisdom but only by wisdom as a special endowment from God and that Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's writings, among them this one on noble character, are meant to help one possess.

Secondly, noble character, as the high ethics that God has made the adornment of religion, is not something all believers actually attain. One can aspire to it by reflecting on the reports of the ethical paragons of Islam's past, but it is, in principle, extraordinary ethics. The fact that noble character as Ibn Abī l-Dunyā envisions it is not ordinary is confirmed by several reports that connect it to three traits: maintaining relations with those who have broken off with you, giving to those who have deprived you, and pardoning those who have wronged you (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:76, nos. 19/11146 through 26/11153). These three traits require both complete disregard for one's worldly reputation and the ability to bear offenses patiently and even contentedly. In short, one has to be otherworldly in outlook to possess noble character as envisioned here. At first glance, there seems to be a tension between the work's call to cultivate noble character and the fact that it is ultimately a divine initiative. It would be wrong to make too much of this tension. Ibn Abī l-Dunyā recognises ranks among the believers. However, ultimately, it is a mystery why some have noble character, and others do not. A report suggests this point by narrating a story of the Prophet who is refused hospitality by a wealthy man. However, when he requests hospitality from a poor woman, it is granted to him. The report concludes, "Such character is in the hands of God who grants a fine trait to whom He wishes" (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:77–78, no. 31/11158).

Thirdly, in his explanatory statement, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā calls noble character the adornment of the *awliyā'*. This work on ethics is, then, presenting the *umma* with a set of standards by which to recognise those who possess religious excellence and perhaps even religious authority. In other words, the work is meant in part as a help to distinguish the *awliyā'* from pretenders and charlatans, hypocrites and sophists, who claim to be religiously superior. Here, too, we are faced with what at first glance seems to be a tension. *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq* invites believers at large to adorn themselves in noble character. In other words, it is not limited to a religious elite, yet the *awliyā'* referred to in Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's explanatory statement are generally considered to be a religious class set apart by God from the commoners among the believers. Ibn Abī l-Dunyā actually compiled a work on the *awliyā'* that depicts them as a special class: "substitutes" (*abdāl*) who are able to intercede on behalf of the *umma*. In other words, God responds to them when they pray, for example, for rain or victory in battle. They do not stand out in society; they are generally unkempt—as a sign of their otherworldliness. They are honoured with extraordinary feats, such as walking on water, and are known to keep company with Khidr. Even if unnoticed in worldly society, they are "the rulers of the next world" (*mulūk al-ākhirā*). Their spiritual light will illuminate and intercede for worldly-oriented believers on the day of resurrection (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 1:602, no. 9/1998). There seems, then, to be a disjuncture between this wonder-working class as portrayed in *Kitāb al-Awliyā'* ("The Book of the Friends of God") (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 1:597–649) and the noble but still human ethics as described in *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq*, yet there are several points that connect the two works. One report in *Kitāb al-Awliyā'* describes the *awliyā'* as being preserved from temptation (*ahl al-mu'āfāt*) (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 1:600, nos. 24/2013 and 2/1991). It will be recalled that this trait features in *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq* as one of the qualities of those with noble character. Another report speaks of three qualities that merit the status of sainthood (*wilāyat Allāh*): forbearance to dispel fools, honest piety that preserves one from disobedience, and comely character (*khuluq ḥasan*) by which to know how to deal with people (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 1:603, no. 10/1999). These qualities, the mark of the *awliyā'*, are also the mark of those with noble character who, as depicted in *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq*, are unaffected by worldly attractions and anxieties. Thus, while Ibn Abī l-Dunyā cannot discard a scripture-based idea (the *awliyā'* as a higher rank of believers), he hopes to limit its misuse by foregrounding claims to *wilāya* in noble character as the mark par excellence of a soul that is otherworldly oriented.

Several reports in *Kitāb al-Awliyā'* suggest that Ibn Abī l-Dunyā was cognisant of debates in his day over the meaning of *wilāya*. As noted above, one report speaks of *minna* (grace) as bestowed upon the *awliyā'* (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012,

1:604, no. 14/2003), language recalling the depiction of the *awliyā'* in the writings of al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī. Here, in contrast to the writings of al-Tirmidhī, *minna* does not imply the reception of special knowledge. Still, it is a special grace that enables its recipients to be wholly oriented to God (*al-inshighāl bi-Llāh wa-l-inqītā' ilā-Llāh*). Further support for Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's awareness of debates about *wilāya* comes from a report in *Kitāb al-Awliyā'* in which he recounts having read a book that includes a record of a debate on the meaning of *wilāya* (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 1:630, no. 88/2077). Some of the participants in the debate say that those with *wilāya* are granted what they want without having to request it. Others say that the *awliyā'* are not granted what they want but that they are preserved from disobeying God. Still others say that the *awliyā'* are granted what they want but that they have to request it. A final group says that the *awliyā'* are guaranteed a share of paradise that never decreases. In the end, the varied parties decide to go to a wise lady to settle the disagreement. She says, "The hours of the *walī* are hours of detachment from the world. The *walī* deserving of the name has no need in this world." Such, of course, are the key ingredients of noble character. Reading the two works together, *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq* and *Kitāb al-Awliyā'*, shows that Ibn Abī l-Dunyā sees the *awliyā'* as a special class of believers, divinely endowed by God. Nevertheless, they are to be identified not so much by extraordinary feats but above all by their high ethics, which stand out for their noticeably otherworldly character. It is this otherworldly character that shows that they are recipients of *minna*. The idea that religious excellence can be identified by a person's otherworldly character accords with the notion, expressed in several reports, that you can know the *awliyā'* because, when you see them, they remind you of God. Further confirmation that *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq* means to capture high ethics as "the adornment of the *awliyā'*" comes from a report in *Kitāb al-Awliyā'* (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 1:648, nos. 122/2111) that lists comely character (*khuluq ḥasan*), a parallel to noble character, as one of the marks of those who are worthy of sainthood (*wilāya*). The idea can be read together with the report in *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq* that God loves noble character because its traits are God's traits (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:70–71, no. 8/11135). In other words, comely character is one of the marks of those who are worthy of sainthood because it is beloved by God. Indeed, noble character traits are stored up with God who doles them out to pious servants. These latter, beloved by God for their piety, are endowed by God with such traits (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:78, no. 34/11161). As a result of being endowed with "heavenly" character, these chosen ones become, in turn, beloved to people in society. In sum, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's work shows his own engagement with the debates of his day on religious excellence and his own position—that the distinguishing

mark of the *awliyā'* is the high ethics that the Prophet fulfilled. In this sense, *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq* is a resource for identifying the *awliyā'*, offering criteria for meriting the rank of *awliyā'*, namely, display of otherworldly character that make them objects of divine love and society's affection. In the end, they model the ethics needed by the *umma* if it is to be secure from the hypocrisy and sophistry of those who are supposed to guard its moral order but fail to do so because of their worldliness.

In addition to what can be gleaned about the nature of *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq* from a close reading of the explanatory statement, insight is also to be had from considering core concepts that recur across Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's compilations. In other words, the usage of these concepts across his oeuvre offer us perspective for understanding his overall vision of Islam's ethics, with implications for our reading of his work on noble character. In what follows, I note four concepts that I see as significant in that regard. First is noble character itself. It is not a stand-alone concept that Ibn Abī l-Dunyā treats in a single work. For example, *Kitāb Mudārāt al-Nās* ("The Book on Dealing with People") (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 5:417–460) contains a section on noble character where it is depicted as having both societal and eschatological significance (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 5:436–439, nos. 75/10464–90/10479). On the one hand, it preserves harmony between people in this world. On the other, it earns one entry to paradise in the next. It also allows one to interact with people with discretion and even caution, the implication being that society is a place where one's character will be tried and may become corrupted. One report in the section that treats noble character calls for sincerity, that is, candour, in dealing with believers, but comely character (*khuluq ḥasan*) in dealing with sinners (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 5:424, no. 23/10412). The report suggests a concern for moral decline; one cannot successfully deal with all people by trusting their goodwill. Such ideas imply that for Ibn Abī l-Dunyā the public order of Islam is not enough to preserve the *umma's* religion. Something more than the law and rule is needed to preserve society from corruption, namely, the inner formation of the soul that for Ibn Abī l-Dunyā involves its alignment with the ethics of the Sunna in the sense described above. Only then will people come to engage one another with a harmony that befits the *umma*.

A second core concept in Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's overall vision of Islam's ethics is the idea of being preserved from temptation to sinfulness and wrongdoing. Again, the term is *mu'āfāt*. We have already seen how this concept connects Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's view of the *awliyā'* to his view of noble character. Those whom God has endowed with grace to preserves them from temptation are, like the Prophet, capable of fulfilling noble character. As such, they are both models for the rest of the *umma* and objects of divine love. As a result, they

serve to ward off, as it were, God's wrath from a "fallen" *umma*. The concept of being preserved from temptation is closely connected to a third core concept, namely, certainty. We have seen the importance of certainty for noble character in light of Librande's study. Now, in addition, it is possible to see that the core concept of being preserved from temptation, which occurs in both the work on certainty and the one on noble character, reinforces the link between those two core concepts (certainty and noble character).²⁵ In other words, those who are preserved from temptation are the people of certainty—and also the people of noble character. A certain causality between the three concepts is implied: Preservation from temptation is the fruit of certainty, which is what makes high ethics (noble character) possible, and certainty makes high ethics possible because certainty is higher than faith. In other words, certainty is not the result of scholastic argumentation but of otherworldly orientation whereby one "sees" the revelation. A report in *Kitāb al-Yaqīn* defines faith as hearing the revelation and believing it whereas certainty comes from seeing it (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, *Kitāb al-Yaqīn*, 6:557 no. 41/12662). The idea of "seeing" the message does not imply mystical disclosure (as far as I can tell, *kashf* is nowhere to be found in the works of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā). Rather, it is likely meant to imply otherworldly orientation as discussed above. Thus, certainty means certainty of the otherworld, and with certainty of the otherworld, one can act for it and so live out of a high rather than a low ethics.

The fourth core concept to be considered is wisdom. *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq* could be called a book of wisdom and wise sayings even if the term (*ḥikma*) does not occur in the book.²⁶ Wisdom, as it features across Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's compilations, suggests the capacity to endure the world's afflictions and thereby preserve one's religious character. It will be recalled that Ibn Abī l-Dunyā understood Islam to consist of two "laws," one of rulings for the outer order and one of wisdoms for the inner. The capacity to endure the world's afflictions, at least according to Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, comes with otherworldly character. As noted above, one message that he is trying to convey is the idea that the *umma*, if it is to counter its moral decline, needs—in addition to experts who determine the rulings for the public order—figures who can model high ethics for society to be inspired and edified by them. We see this in two reports in *Kitāb al-Yaqīn*. The first hints at a moral crisis, noting that the

25 For its occurrence in *Kitāb al-Yaqīn*, see Ibn Abī l-Dunyā (2012, 6:547, nos. 1/12622, 6/12627, and 13/12634).

26 One report in *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq* does speak of poetry as a source of wise sayings (*ḥikam*) by which one is guided to noble character (see Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:85, no. 67/11194).

umma is now dominated by miserliness (*bukhl*) and covetousness (*amal*), no longer by certainty (*yaqīn*) and otherworldliness (*zuhd*) (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:548, no. 3/12624). For this reason, the religious integrity of the *umma* needs to be reformed by “the laws” of wise sayings (*sharāʿiʿ al-ḥikam*) in addition to legal rulings for the public order of the *umma* (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:548, no. 4/12625). Indeed, as we see from periodic reports in *Kitāb al-Yaqīn*, it seems to be Ibn Abī l-Dunyā’s view that ritual action alone does not guarantee the health of the soul,²⁷ reinforcing the idea that training in wise sayings is also needed beyond the performance of prescribed bodily actions. All this resonates closely with the emphasis of *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq* on the formation of the inner life in wise sayings as embodied in the book’s reports. For example, a key aspect of noble character, as noted above, is the capacity to endure the world’s afflictions (*maṣāʾib*).²⁸ However, one can only do so when one has certainty (i.e., of the otherworld), which, according to a report in *Kitāb al-Yaqīn*, fills one’s innards (*jawf*) with a wisdom (*ḥikma*) that enables one to acknowledge and accept with equanimity every affliction that God has preordained (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6: 553, no. 29/12650). While the specific term for certainty does not occur in *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq*, the concept is still present. One report in *Kitāb al-Yaqīn* speaks of certainty as being more confident in what is in the hand of God than what is in your own hand (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:555, no. 34/12655). The very same report occurs in *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq* (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 6:70, no. 5/11132).

The concepts of wisdom (*ḥikma*) and wise sayings (*ḥikam*) offer perspective for understanding the overall ethical vision of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā. The varied ways in which scholars of this period understood these concepts reflect their varied understanding of the religion in general. Some identified the wisdom mentioned in the Qurʾān alongside scripture (Q 2:129) with the Prophetic tradition. Others saw it in relation to a Persian heritage of proverbs or a Greek heritage of philosophy, both of which were part of the civilisation of Islam (see Yaman 2011). Still others connected it to the reception of special knowledge as acquired by mystical disclosure (see Palmer 2019, 145–165). For the purposes of this study, it is enough to note that Ibn Abī l-Dunyā associates wisdom with a kind of otherworldly orientation short of mystical disclosure. Recall the above two reports from *Kitāb al-Yaqīn* that explain the meaning of certainty. One describes certainty as a kind of “seeing,” that is, as a palpable orientation to God beyond mere faith in the message; and the other speaks of certainty

27 One sees such thinking in *Kitāb al-Awliyāʾ* (see Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 1:602, nos. 8/1997 and 59/2048).

28 For example, in *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq*, see Ibn Abī l-Dunyā (2012, 6:83, no. 60/11187).

as filling one's innards with a wisdom that accepts afflictions as God's will. In other words, the wisdom that is born of certainty allows one to comprehend that afflictions are not punishment from God but occasions for greater trust in God. Another report, this one from *Kitāb al-Awliyā'*, states that by pursuing ascetical practices, one will be inspired with wisdom, which is explained as not taking delight in this world (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 2012, 1:617, no. 56/2045). In sum, for Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, wisdom, the by-product of inner conviction, is associated with an otherworldly character.

It is worth exploring one last point in relation to the concept of wisdom, namely, its causality. As we have seen, according to Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, wisdom comes with otherworldly certainty. It is thus obtained by the cultivation of ethics that result in a detachment from this world and orientation to the other one. Once obtained, otherworldly certainty enables one to act with noble character in dealing with others. The idea of wisdom in the way people deal with one another features in another treatise on ethics from the period, *Kitāb al-Ma'āsh wa-l-Ma'ād* ("The Book of This Life and The Next Life") by al-Jāhīz (d. 255/868) (on this work, see Heck 2020), a somewhat older contemporary to Ibn Abī l-Dunyā who also had courtly associations. The concern of this work for wisdom is clear from its first paragraphs, which speak of "those with wisdom" as having knowledge of the consequences of actions. In this regard, in the introductory section to this work, al-Jāhīz criticises those who collect reports of ethical import into compilations without, however, explaining the cause-and-effect of the ethical life. In other words, wisdom comes not so much with certainty of the otherworld but more so with knowledge of efficient causation as applied to ethics. For example, al-Jāhīz says that benefiting someone causes them to love you, opposing them causes them to hate you, being honest causes people to have confidence in you, and lying causes them to make accusations against you. The fact that this vision of ethics is informed by efficient causation is indicated by the term used for the relation between the action and resulting attitude: *yūjib*. Ibn Abī l-Dunyā would have looked askance at a vision of ethics that operated by efficient causation, since it renders divine endowment—God's initiative—a distant cause at best, that is, secondary to human agency. Also, the idea that certainty comes by scholastic argumentation stands at odds with Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's idea of certainty as the fruit of otherworldliness. While the writings of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā show no clear awareness of the thought of al-Jāhīz, they do seem to be cognizant of the criticism of compilations of reports on the ethical life that are not accompanied by explanation of the causal workings of ethics, such as the criticism of al-Jāhīz. However, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā does not respond to such criticism by abandoning his tradition-based approach and its understanding of the ethics of Islam not

as a system of efficient causality but as a divine endowment. As already seen, according to Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, wisdom that allows one to deal nobly with others is the product of otherworldly orientation. As such, it is a divine endowment. However, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā occasionally cites reports that envision noble character in causal terms, but he does not use the verb (*yūjib*) that al-Jāḥiẓ uses. Thus, even if he does not see ethics in terms of efficient causation, such reports show that he understands that character is not random and that ethics only makes sense if seen as a single interconnected whole. In other words, such reports indicate his own awareness that he is not simply collecting reports into compilations without a sense for the cause-and-effect of the ethical life. The two reports below seem to be responding to the criticism, as advanced in scholastic circles by the likes of al-Jāḥiẓ, that traditionalists, like Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, do not understanding causality, by proposing a causality that is true to traditionalist ways of knowing.

Concern for action (*ʿamal*) bequeaths (*yūrith*) reflection (*fikra*), and reflection bequeaths insight (*ʿibra*), and insight bequeaths resolve (*ḥazm*), and resolve bequeaths determination (*ʿazm*), and determination bequeaths certainty, and certainty bequeaths detachment (*ghinā*), and detachment bequeaths love (*ḥubb*, where one is object of divine love), and love bequeaths encounter (with God).

IBN ABĪ L-DUNYĀ 2012, 6:550, no. 12/12633

Truthfulness guides (*yahdī*) to righteousness (*birr*), and righteousness guides to the garden ... lying guides to profligacy (*fujūr*), and profligacy guides to hell.

IBN ABĪ L-DUNYĀ 2012, 6:97, no. 114/11241

While the causality at play in these two passages is not the efficient causation of al-Jāḥiẓ, it is clear that Ibn Abī l-Dunyā is trying to render his vision of ethics comprehensible in causal terms of a kind, underscoring his sensitivity to the various currents at play in the scholarly discourse of the day. Mention was earlier made of his awareness of debates over *wilāya*, including formulations that made use of the concept of wisdom. Similarly, his acknowledgement that ethics operates according to a kind of causality (one of bequeathing and guiding rather than necessitating as with al-Jāḥiẓ) points to his awareness and reformulation of conceptions of wisdom of a scholastic type as exemplified in the writings of al-Jāḥiẓ. The author of *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq* was, then, familiar with the varied ethical discourse of his day.

5 Concluding Remarks: Seminal but Forgotten?

As earlier noted, it is in *ḥadīth* circles that the name of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā has chiefly been remembered, despite the concerns over his reliability. Scholars from other circles are known to have made use of his compilations in service of their own projects. For example, al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), while drawing from Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's works, diverges in essential ways from the latter's ethical outlook. In the end, what can be said is that Ibn Abī l-Dunyā set a template for reflection on the meanings of noble character that other scholars adopted even when the content of their works shows little overlap with *Kitāb Makārim al-Akhlāq*. For example, al-Ṭabarānī (d. 360/971), who shared Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's scholarly milieu even if living well after him, compiled a work on noble character that, like the work of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, presents the religious heritage in literary form as a means for growth in ethics, yet it shares little in content with the latter's work. In the same vein, it is worth recalling a scholar who was influenced by al-Ṭabarānī, namely, Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī (d. 430/1038), whose *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* ("Adornment of the Friends of God") presents the saintly heritage in traditional rather than mystical terms, recalling the approach of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā. It is right to conclude that Ibn Abī l-Dunyā was the first to establish a literary framework for religious excellence, as embodied by a special class and conceived in terms of otherworldly character short of mystical disclosure: a high ethics one could aspire to attain by identifying with the Sunna broadly conceived. While he introduced this framework in his work on noble character, later works superseded his. As a result, he would be remembered as a compiler, a notable yet questionable *ḥadīth* transmitter, rather than as a pioneer in setting forth a coherent vision of the ethics of Islam, inspired by his concern for the inner life as well as his awareness of the wide-ranging debates of his day on the nature of ethics.

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Adab al-Ṭabīb by Ishāq b. ‘Alī al-Ruhāwī

The Continued Relevance of Classical Medical Ethics

Mohammed Ghaly

1 Introduction

This chapter offers a comprehensive analysis of *Adab al-Ṭabīb* (“Ethics of the Physician”), a seminal work on medical ethics authored by Ishāq b. ‘Alī al-Ruhāwī, a practicing physician who was well-versed in Greek medico-philosophical tradition and lived during the third-fourth/ninth-tenth centuries. The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section, “The Author,” delves into al-Ruhāwī’s life, scholarly background, and his conceptualisation of medicine as intricately linked to philosophy and religion, based on a holistic understanding of human nature. The second section, “The Book,” examines al-Ruhāwī’s framework for physician excellence, which encompasses both moral and professional dimensions. Moral excellence is grounded in religious ethics, virtue ethics focused on moderating the powers of the psyche, and relational ethics governing interactions with patients and caregivers. Professional excellence involves mastering the skills of health preservation and administration of medicines, alongside al-Ruhāwī’s proposals for reforming the medical profession. In the concluding remarks, the chapter addresses the enduring relevance of al-Ruhāwī’s work within contemporary Islamic bioethics and its importance in understanding the historical development of medical professional ethics. It also raises questions for further exploration in future research regarding the scope and nature of Islamic bioethics in relation to both secular and religious ethical discourses.

2 The Author

Available biographical information about Ishāq ibn ‘Alī al-Ruhāwī is quite scant. Besides providing his full name and the main works he wrote, historical sources hardly provide further personal information, not even his date of birth or death. There are, however, sufficient indications that he lived during the third-fourth/ninth-tenth centuries.

2.1 *Personal Background*

Based on examining information extracted from al-Ruhāwī's own work and other biographical works, some researchers hold that he should have lived between the years 240/854 and 319/931 (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 6–8). Others estimate that al-Ruhāwī finished writing this book around the year 261/875 (Ḥamārna 1995, 1287).

From his last name, al-Ruhāwī—which indicates an affiliation (in Arabic, *nisba*) to a place—we know that the author was likely related to the town of al-Ruhā, sometimes pronounced as al-Ruhā', possibly as his birthplace or where he lived for an extended period. Before the Islamic conquest in 18/639, the town was known under the name of Edessa, and its current name is Urfa, located in present-day Türkiye. In ancient history, the town accommodated different religious groups, including Jewish and Christian communities. During the author's lifetime, the Muslim-ruled al-Ruhā had a Christian-majority population, mostly Syrian Orthodox, but with significant Melkite and Jewish minorities, in addition to the Muslims living there (al-Ḥamawī 1995, 3:106–108; Sinclair 1990, vol. 4; Ball 2016).

In absence of conclusive evidence, the author's religious affiliation has been much debated among both early historians and contemporary researchers. Reflecting the religious diversity in al-Ruhā, al-Ruhāwī has been identified by some as a Christian, by others as a Jew, and by a third group as either a born Muslim or a convert to Islam from Judaism or Christianity (Bürgel 1966, 341–342; Levey 1967, 8; Leiser 1983, 62; al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 19; 1992b, 7; Aksoy 2004; Barakat 2016). This controversy is evident on the title page of manuscript no. 1685, preserved in the Turkish Süleymaniye Library. Under the book's title, the author's name was written, seemingly by someone other than the manuscript's copyist, as Iṣḥāq ibn ‘Alī al-Yahūdī al-Khaybarī al-Ruhāwī, where the adjectives “al-Yahūdī al-Khaybarī” indicate that the author originally descended from the Jews of Khaybar, an old Jewish settlement in the Arabian Peninsula. However, this line was later crossed out, seemingly by another person who disagreed with the perspective that the author was Jewish, and the author's name was rewritten without the adjectives “al-Yahūdī al-Khaybarī” (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 19; 1992b, 12).

Despite the disagreement over the author's exact religion, he was undoubtedly a religious person with solid and elaborate theological convictions, including belief in a perfect, spotless, and one God, His Messengers, and His Reward and Punishment in the hereafter. Al-Ruhāwī further argued that this faith-based moral framework was the mainstream conviction among prominent physicians in Greek and Islamic traditions, and he heavily criticised those

who claimed otherwise, accusing them of deep-seated ignorance (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 39–54).

2.2 Scholarly Background

As for the author's professional and scholarly identity, sufficient evidence provided by his own work and other historical sources shows that al-Ruhāwī was a practising physician with empirical knowledge, a recognised medical author with theoretical insights and a particular interest in medical textbooks, and someone with reformist ideas to improve the administration, governance, and organisation of the medical profession in his time.

The well-known medical biographer Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a (d. 668/1270) described him as a distinguished physician well-versed in the teachings of the renowned classical physician Galen (d. 216 CE), and noted his excellent works on the art of medicine. In addition to *Adab al-Ṭabīb*, Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a attributed two other works to al-Ruhāwī. One is the *Kunnāsh* ("Compendium"), which he compiled from the ten treatises of Galen known as the *Mayāmīr*¹ on compound remedies arranged according to diseases of bodily parts from head to foot. The other book is the *Jawāmi'* ("Summaries"), compiled from four books of Galen arranged by Alexandrian scholars as the first, and thus most accessible, category of his books.² Al-Ruhāwī organised these summaries in an aphoristic style and arranged them alphabetically, likely aiming to make them more accessible for medical students and beginners.³

This expertise in the works of Galen establishes al-Ruhāwī as a well-informed physician, especially in Galenic medicine. Galen, frequently quoted by

1 *Mayāmīr* is a Syriac word which refers to a treatise or discourse. It was used by classical Muslim physicians to refer to Galen's *Peri Syntheseōs Farmakōn tōn Kata Topous* ("On the Composition of Medicaments According to Places [in the Body]," *De Compositione Medicamentorum Secundum Locos*) (see Savage-Smith et al. 2019, 3–2:1210).

2 Like other scholarly disciplines, the arrangement of the physiological books in the medical canon followed a logical order from the simplest to the most complex. In Alexandria, the first four books were intended for beginners, followed by twelve books tailored for advanced students. Alexandrian scholars undertook the massive task of selecting these texts and compiling them into a syllabus (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 255–256; Garofalo 2019, 64–65).

3 The genre of medical aphorisms, consistently adopting the style of providing the finest possible thoughts in the fewest possible words, was quite famous in medical literature. In his work, al-Ruhāwī frequently quoted the well-known *Aphorisms* of Hippocrates (d. 370 BC). This genre also closely aligns with the religious concept of *jawāmi'* *al-kalīm* (all-encompassing words) in Islamic scholarship, which was sometimes employed to cultivate ethics (see Frank 1984). In the genre of Prophetic medicine (*al-tibb al-nabawī*), some statements attributed to the Prophet of Islam, especially in works authored by Muslim physicians, could also be read as a religious version of medical aphorisms (see, for instance, Ibn Ṭarkhān al-Ḥamawī 2010).

al-Ruhāwī and referred to as “our master” (*mu‘allimūnā*) or “our noble master” (*mu‘allimūnā al-fāḍil*), is often recognised as a towering medical authority. Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a portrayed Galen as “the seal of the great teaching physicians (*khātam al-aṭibbā’ al-mu‘allimīn*) ... and that no one in the field of medicine comes close to him, let alone equals him” (al-Ruhāwī 1992, 69, 82, 98–99, 255, 285; Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a n.d., 109). Also, al-Ruhāwī appears well-versed in the broader extensive medical corpus available in his time. This is demonstrated by the numerous extended quotations from renowned medical figures of the Graeco-Arabic medical tradition, dispersed throughout *Adab al-Ṭabīb* (al-Ruhāwī 1992, 293–341; 1992b, 206–208; Moseley 2018).

2.2.1 Interplay of Medicine, Philosophy, and Religion

An important point to elaborate on regarding al-Ruhāwī’s medical knowledge and broader scholarly mindset is his vision of medicine and how it ideally relates to other scholarly domains. Highlighting this point about al-Ruhāwī is crucial to understanding the remaining part of this chapter, including the analysis of the content of *Adab al-Ṭabīb*. The key characteristics of medicine outlined by al-Ruhāwī, and defended as an integral part of the mainstream Graeco-Arabic medical tradition of his time, include a comprehensive perception of human nature as a closely interrelated composite of psyche and body, interacting with the surrounding environment. Additionally, he underscores the harmonious relationship between medicine on the one hand and religion and philosophy on the other.

As a reflection of God’s wisdom and omnipotence in crafting a marvellous creation, al-Ruhāwī explains that creatures are not homogenous but rather diverse and ranked in a hierarchical order. Within the category of living and growing beings (*nāmiyāt*), which is higher than the category of inanimate objects (*jamādāt*), man occupies the highest and most noble position. This distinctively noble position assigned to humans is because they possess not only a living body (*jism*) but also a psyche (*naḥs*)⁴ that has the rational (*nāṭiqa*)

4 Whenever al-Ruhāwī refers to these three powers, he consistently uses the Arabic term *naḥs* rather than *rūḥ*. My reading of al-Ruhāwī’s work indicates that he uses *naḥs* in the context of how one’s psychological state affects or gets affected by the health and sickness of the human body (see al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 340). Conversely, he primarily uses the term *rūḥ* and its relationship with the human body in the context of life, when they co-exist, and death, when the soul departs the body (see al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 146, 317). In alignment with al-Ruhāwī’s systematic use of these two terms, *naḥs* shall be translated in this chapter as “psyche” and *rūḥ* as “soul.” It is important to note that the English translation of *Adab al-Ṭabīb* by Martin Levey causes much confusion on this point, as Levey often translates *naḥs* as soul and, at other times, confusingly uses the terms psyche and soul interchangeably (Levey 1967).

power, which is exclusive to human beings. Additionally, humans share two other powers or faculties of the psyche (*quwā al-nafs*) with non-human animals: the irascible or animal (*ghaḍabiyya* or *ḥayawāniyya*) and concupiscent or vegetative (*shahwāniyya* or *nabātiyya*) powers. According to al-Ruhāwī, there is an organic relationship between the psyche and body, as each of the faculties of the psyche has a specific locus or site in the human body. Specifically, rational power is housed in the brain, irascible power in the heart, and concupiscent power in the liver. When these powers are not in balance and deviate from the level of moderation (*i'tidāl*), it not only results in behaviour that is judged as morally wrong but also indicates a state of sickness (*marāḍ*) that must be treated (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 55, 60, 124, 135, 140). In general, al-Ruhāwī holds that taking care of one's *nafs* should be of paramount significance as its nobility surpasses that of the body (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 213). Elsewhere, he explains that the nobility of psyche and body undoubtedly surpasses wealth and property (*amwāl*) (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 40).

Additionally, one's overall well-being is closely related to having both the psyche and body in good condition. Al-Ruhāwī explains that God, the Creator, determined a specific measure of these powers and their actions to bring forth benefit to the human body. This specific measure represents what is natural and, by extension, what constitutes health for the respective power of the psyche and the body. Anything less or more than this specific measure is unnatural and thus constitutes disease for both psyche and body (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 55, 121).

After elaborating on the relationship between the psyche and body, al-Ruhāwī stressed that his position is premised on mainstream medical knowledge, as particularly outlined in the authoritative works written by Galen, including *Fī al-Quwā al-Ṭabīʿiyya* (*Peri Fysikon Dynameōn*, "On the Natural Faculties"), *Fī Ārā' Buqrāṭ wa-Filāṭun* (*Peri tōn Hippokratous kai Platōnos Dogmatōn*, "On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato"), *Akhlāq al-Nafs* (*Peri Ethōn*, "On Ethics of the Psyche"), and *Akhlāq al-Nafs Tābi'a li-Mizāj al-Badan* (*Oti Tais tou Sōματος Krasesin hai tēs Psychēs Dynameis Eponetai*, "Faculties of the Psyche Follow the Mixtures of the Body") (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 124).⁵

It is to be noted that the relationship between the psyche and body, made part of a broader vision, which approached one's health condition and overall well-being within the context of a complex network of influencing factors, including the air that one breathes, one's housing, clothing, nutrition,

5 For more examples of Arabic medico-philosophical literature demonstrating the influence of Galen on the concept of maintaining both "psychological" and "bodily" health, and the relationship between the two, see Adamson (2019).

profession, habits, etc. For more detailed insights into how habits are formed among inhabitants of different regions due to variations in air, water, and geographical locations, al-Ruhāwī recommended Hippocrates's (d. ca. 370 BC) book titled *al-Buldān wa-l-Miyāh wa-l-Ahwiya* ("Places, Waters, and Airs") (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 47–75, 126–134).

How do moral philosophy and religion relate to the above-sketched medical vision? As far as religion is concerned, al-Ruhāwī holds that understanding the very origins of both medicine and philosophy starts with religion. According to him, religious *weltanschauung* is indispensable to understanding how medicine came into existence. By quoting from Galen's commentary on Hippocrates' *al-Aymān wa-l-Uhūd* (*Orkos*, "Book of Oaths and Covenants"),⁶ al-Ruhāwī introduces Galen as a defender of a specific position regarding the controversies around the origin of medicine.⁷ The crux of Galen's position is that the most accurate and preferable opinion is to say that God is the One who created the art of medicine and inspired it in humans. As for the arguments defending this position, Galen is further quoted to explain that the human mind can't comprehend such a grand science on its own. Rather, the origin of this knowledge should be God, the true Creator who grasps the subtleties of His creation. Another argument is that philosophy, perceived by some as more noble than medicine, is also believed to have originated from God's inspiration to humans. To substantiate this position, al-Ruhāwī also relates anecdotes showing that Galen was sometimes hesitant to author some books, but it was God's inspiration, manifested in visionary dreams and communications with angels, that made him write these books (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 50–51). In other places in the book, apart from quoting Galen, al-Ruhāwī provided a more nuanced position where he attempted to harmonise the roles of divine inspiration and human intellectual effort. He explained that God inspired the art of medicine to human intellect (*ʿaql*) and then guided humans to the two main methods through which they can identify the foundations of medicine and extract its detailed branches, namely reasoning or analogy (*qiyās*) and experience (*tajriba*) (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 64, 209–210).

6 The commentary attributed to Galen is titled in Arabic *Tafsīr li-Kitāb al-Aymān li-Abuqrāt* ("Explanation of Hippocrates' Book of Oaths"). For more information about this commentary and the question of its (pseudo) attribution to Galen, see Rosenthal (1956); Savage-Smith et al. (2019, 3–2:4). At the time of publishing his article, it seems that Rosenthal was unaware of the quotations from this book in al-Ruhāwī's *Adab al-Ṭabīb* (Rosenthal 1956, 52).

7 The origin of the art of medicine (*aṣl or ibtidāʾ šināʿat al-ṭibb*) is one of the frequently discussed topics in the works on medical history (see Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa n.d., 11–27; Rosenthal 1954) and also those on Prophetic medicine (*al-ṭibb al-nabawī*) as well (see Ibn Ṭarkhān al-Ḥamawī 2010, 145–147).

If religion can explain the very origin of medicine and philosophy, both philosophy and medicine can also serve religion. Al-Ruhāwī dedicated a substantial part of the first chapter of *Adab al-Ṭabīb* to this point. He explained that the knowledge of, and belief in, God, the Creator, can be attained through different paths. One of these paths is reading religious books, especially those focusing on cultivating ethics. Unlike the other paths, where he gave many details, al-Ruhāwī did not elaborate much on the religious books nor recommended any specific titles (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 43–44).

Another path is contemplating the universe and the various types of beings therein, such as the wonders found in the earth with its minerals, stones, plants, and trees, and the various kinds of creatures on its surface, such as those that walk, swim in the water or fly in the air. Within this path, associated with philosophers, an extra aid would be reading the works written by ancient rational thinkers (*al-ʿuqalāʾ min al-mutaqaddimīn*). These works amassed clear—and eloquently written—proofs on the necessity of acknowledging the existence of God, the Creator, His oneness, power, and wisdom, as well as the acknowledgement of His messengers, His revealed laws (*sharāʾiʿ*), and the concepts of reward and punishment. As examples of these philosophical works, al-Ruhāwī provided quotations from Aristotle’s *Kitāb Mā baʿd al-Ṭabīʿa* (*Ta Meta ta Physika*, “Book of Metaphysics”) and Plato’s (d. 348 BCE) statements included in a book on the psyche attributed to Fādun (Phaedo) (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 44–49; Moseley 2018).

Medicine was identified by al-Ruhāwī as a path toward the knowledge of, and belief in, God. Al-Ruhāwī explains that one of the major benefits of medicine is providing demonstrative and conclusive evidence not only about the existence of God but also about His Oneness and perfect attributes. He holds that contemplating the anatomy of the human body greatly aids in this regard. For instance, the ability of a person to survive and continue living despite the contradictions in his constituents and the antagonism among his humours throughout his lifespan, along with the precision of his limbs and the perfection of his shape, all reflect divine wisdom and power. As examples of relevant medical works in this regard, al-Ruhāwī provided quotations from Hippocrates’ *Kawn al-Janīn* (*Peri Gonis*, “On the Generation of the Embryos”), *Habal ʿalā Habal* (*Peri Epikyseōs*, “On Superfetation”), *al-Mawlūdūn fī Sabʿat Ashur* (*Peri Eptaminou*, “On Seven-Month Children”), *al-Waṣāyā* (*Paraggelliai*, “Precepts”), and *al-Aymān wa-l-ʿUhūd* (*Orkos*, “Book of Oaths and Covenants”). Additionally, he included more extensive quotations from Galen’s works, including his aforementioned commentary on Hippocrates’ *al-Aymān* and Galen’s book titled *Manāfiʿ al-Aḍāʾ* (*Peri Chreias Moriōn*, “The Uses of the

Parts”). The list of prominent ancient figures who used the marvels of creation in general, and humans in particular, to prove the existence of God includes Pythagoras (d. ca. 500 BCE), Epicurus (d. 270 BCE), Democritus (d. ca. 356 BCE), and Zeno (d. ca. 262 BCE). Al-Ruhāwī also acknowledged the significant contributions of his contemporaries, referred to as modern figures (*muḥdathūn*), such as al-Kindī (d. 260/873), especially his *Al-Radd ‘alā al-Thanawīyya* (“On Refutation of the Dualists”), Ḥunayn ibn Iṣḥāq (d. 260/873), and his son Iṣḥāq (d. ca. 298/910). Al-Ruhāwī noted that although Ḥunayn was not a monotheist, he wrote a book on monotheism, implicitly suggesting that a belief in one God is a natural outcome of studying medicine (Ruhāwī 1992a, 43, 49–54). Besides its theological benefit, al-Ruhāwī also mentioned that the art of medicine could have practical benefits for performing religious rituals. By maintaining bodies in a healthy condition, he explained, one would be able to perform religious rituals that require physical exertion, such as prayer and fasting (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 211).

Besides underscoring the idea that religion is necessary to understand the origin of medicine and philosophy and that medicine and philosophy are essential to cultivate and strengthen one’s faith and belief in a perfect God, al-Ruhāwī also highlighted the idea that philosophy and religion are important for achieving the core goals of medicine, namely preserving health, treating diseases and, broadly speaking, maintaining overall wellbeing. To understand this specific aspect of the relationship between medicine on the one hand and philosophy and religion on the other hand, al-Ruhāwī outlined the standard perception of human nature that permeated almost all scholarly disciplines in his time.

Out of God’s wisdom, al-Ruhāwī explains, the survival of human and non-human animals, at the individual level (*al-baqā’ bi-l-shakḥ*) and further at the species level (*al-baqā’ bi-l-naw’*), is dependent on the capacity to eat and drink, or get sufficient nutrition (*ghidhā’*), and to procreate, or get offspring (*nasl*). At the level of individual survival, nutrition (*ghidhā’*) is essential because human and non-human animals are embodied beings. These bodies are composed of conflicting elements and opposing qualities, leading to continually losing parts, and thus would gradually deteriorate and eventually run the risk of rapid destruction had they not been provided with sufficient nutrition to replace the lost parts. At the level of species survival, animals, by their nature as embodied beings, can only live for a limited period, after which individual animals die. To avoid the risk of species extinction, they need to procreate and get offspring to preserve their species. To ensure the continuity of *al-ghidhā’* (nutrition) and *tanānsul* (reproduction), God tied these two elements, which are necessary

for survival, with pleasure (*ladhdha*) so that both human and non-human animals will remain attracted to attaining them, by the power of nature (*tab*) (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 61–63).

Against this background, al-Ruhāwī explains the difference between human and non-human animals in dealing with their nature (*tab*), which is necessarily attracted to the pleasures tied to nutrition and procreation. One of the golden rules in medicine to maintain one's health is to deal with these pleasures by sticking to moderation (*i'tidāl*) and avoiding excessive use. As for non-human animals, their nature is hardwired to the moderate use of both nutrition and procreation. That is why animals naturally make use of pleasurable things up to the extent that is sufficient for their needs and beneficial for their wellbeing. That is why, al-Ruhāwī explains, most animals are devoid of many diseases that afflict humans (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 62).

What is distinctive about humans is that their nature differs from that of animals in the sense that the latter is fixed or deterministic, whereas the former is not. Thus, humans are more prone to excessive use of pleasurable things (*ladhdhāt*) up to the extent of causing physical diseases (*amrād*), psychological conditions (*a'rād*), and even running the risk of causing death (*halāk*). As an example of excessive, harmful behaviour, al-Ruhāwī spoke about those who partake in electuaries to strengthen themselves for excessive sexual intercourse, stressing that such behaviour can be life-threatening. Moral philosophy, as outlined in the books of ancient philosophers, and religious norms, as expounded in the revealed laws (*sharā'i*), serve as essential tools to guide humans on how to tame and curb human nature in this regard. As explained above about the human psyche and its three powers, al-Ruhāwī mentioned that the rational power, exclusive to humans, must be activated to deter and fight against the concupiscent power, which is responsible for one's attraction to pleasurable things, by empowering the irascible power, which should serve as the warrior's sword that will grant him victory in a battlefield. This disciplining of the human psyche, especially deterring the concupiscent power and limiting the use of pleasurable things to only what is necessary and beneficial, is called rational education (*al-ta'līm al-'aqlī*). Through habituation, this type of education would refine one's character in a sustainable and deeply seated way and thus elevate man from the rank of beastly (*bahūmiyya*) ethics to that of noble (*sharīfa*) human ethics (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 62–63). To put the harmonious relationship between medicine, philosophy, and religion in simple terms, al-Ruhāwī holds that what is medically harmful shall concurrently be judged as morally wrong and religiously prohibited, and vice versa (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 90).

Al-Ruhāwī also explained that adopting theological misconceptions, such as fatalism and determinism, can harm the art of medicine. Expressing his

concerns about the deteriorating state of medicine at his time due to the prevalence of unqualified, self-proclaimed physicians, he argued that the primary reason for this decline was the widely spread belief that all actions, whether praiseworthy or blameworthy, are attributed to God and not humans. When evildoers and cunning individuals came to know that many people believe stealing, killing, adultery, or any other act is caused by God, they felt emboldened. Consequently, everyone dared to practice medicine, believing that if someone died at the hands of a physician, people would attribute it to divine decree rather than to the physician's ignorance or malpractice (Ruhāwī 1992a, 241).

3 The Book

From the outset of *Adab al-Ṭabīb*,⁸ al-Ruhāwī underscores that his motivation for writing the book was driven by ethical concerns regarding the medical profession to which he belongs. Following the tradition of many Arabic works, the book begins with a dialogue with an unnamed friend. In this conversation, al-Ruhāwī refers to a group of self-proclaimed but pseudo-physicians who, due to their ignorance of the principles, branches, and methodologies of the medical profession, resort to unethical practices such as deceit and trickery. This unethical conduct has led to the degradation of the profession's merits and has tarnished the reputation of its practitioners. To address this issue, al-Ruhāwī aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of the etiquettes (*ādāb*), ethics (*akhlāq*), measures and procedures (*tadābīr*), acts and practices (*afʿāl*), and recommendations (*waṣāyā*) that would assist the physician in improving his psyche (*naḥs*), nature (*ṭabʿ*), and body (*jism*). Furthermore, he emphasised enhancing the physician's relationship with the patient, the patient's servants, and other caregivers. Additionally, to improve the physician-patient interaction, al-Ruhāwī elaborated on what patients should do to refine their character, enhance their relationship with their servants and treating physicians,

8 For the analysis of the content of the book, I consulted two Arabic editions, both published in 1992. To avoid confusion, I have consistently referred to one of these editions (al-Ruhāwī 1992a) and have only cited the other (al-Ruhāwī 1992b) when necessary. While the English translation by Martin Levey (1967) may be useful for those without access to the original Arabic text, it has been criticised by researchers (Pormann 2005, 198, 200). In my view, it presents various issues that render it unreliable for an academic study of al-Ruhāwī's work. Although a detailed critique of Levey's translation is beyond the scope of this study, I have highlighted specific problems with the translation where relevant.

and thereby take better care of their own physical condition (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 35–36).

In his introduction, al-Ruhāwī explained that he divided the book into twenty chapters and provided relatively long titles for each chapter. For the sake of convenience, I have added a suggested short title in brackets before each long title provided by the author, as follows:

- 1) [Religious Ethics] On the Trust and Faith that a Physician Must Uphold, and On the Etiquettes Through Which He Can Refine His Psyche and Character.
- 2) [Self-care] On the Measures That a Physician Should Employ to Care for His Own Body and Organs.
- 3) [Precautions] On the Precautions a Physician Must Take.
- 4) [Instructions] On the Instructions a Physician Must Give to the Patient's Servants.
- 5) [Visitors' Behaviour] On the Behaviour of the Patient's Visitors.
- 6) [Drugs and Therapeutics] On the Simple and Compound Drugs a Physician Must Consider, and On His Therapeutic Directions, Which the Pharmacist and Others May Corrupt, Intentionally or Unintentionally.
- 7) [Questioning] On the Questions a Physician Must Ask the Patient or Others.
- 8) [Trust in Physicians] On the Necessity for Both Ill and Healthy People to Have Trust in the Physician During Times of Illness and Health.
- 9) [Patient's Commitment] On the Patient's Obligation to Follow the Physician's Directions and the Consequences of Not Doing So.
- 10) [Patient's Behaviour at Home] On the Patient's Behaviour towards His Family and Servants.
- 11) [Patient's Behaviour with Visitors] On the Patient's Behaviour towards His Visitors.
- 12) [Nobility of Medicine] On the Dignity of the Medical Profession.
- 13) [Respect for Physicians] On the Respect That Should Be Accorded to a Physician Based on His Skill, With an Emphasis on the Higher Respect Due from Kings and Other Honourable Men, Who Should Pay Him Greater Tribute.
- 14) [Entertaining Anecdotes] On Unusual Incidents Concerning Physicians, Some of Which Relate to the Physician's Predictive Capacity, Thus Encouraging the Physician to Learn the Methods of Prognosis. Some Incidents Are Humorous and May Help Him Identify Uncooperative Individuals before Consultation to Avoid Being Held Responsible for Any Harm.
- 15) [Eligibility for the Profession of Medicine] In Accordance With the Principle That Not Everyone Who Aspires to Practice Medicine May Do So, But Only Those Possessing a Suitable Nature and Moral Character.

- 16) [Qualifying Examination of Physicians] On the Examination of Physicians.
- 17) [Eliminating Corruption] On Ways for Kings to Eliminate Corruption among Physicians and Guide People Regarding the Art of Medicine, and How It Was Managed in Ancient Times.
- 18) [Warning against Quacks] On the Necessity of Warning against Quacks Who Call Themselves Physicians and the Differences between Their Deceit and the Ingenious Medical Approaches.
- 19) [Harmful Habits] On Harmful Habits to Which People Are Accustomed That May Cause Harm to Both the Sick and the Healthy, Leading to Physicians Being Blamed.
- 20) [Preparation for Illness and Aging] On Matters a Physician Should Attend to and Observe During Times of Health to Prepare for Periods of Illness, and During His Youth to Prepare for Old Age.

For a consistent and coherent analysis of al-Ruhāwī's book, aligning with the nature of a volume focusing on key classical works on Islamic ethics, we will integrate the material dispersed throughout these twenty chapters under two main themes: (a) moral excellence and (b) professional excellence that physicians should cultivate to eventually rise to the level of what al-Ruhāwī calls the noble, virtuous, or simply good physician (*al-ṭabīb al-fāḍil*).

3.1 *Moral Excellence*

The infamous group of physicians criticised in the introduction of *Adab al-Ṭabīb* were faulted not only for their lack of proper training as practising physicians but primarily for their poor manners and lack of ethical commitment. Their ignorance of medicine became particularly harmful when combined with their bad intentions of deceiving people and falsely presenting themselves as physicians. Thus, a good physician begins first and foremost with developing good character and a sense of moral commitment. For a coherent and systematic presentation, al-Ruhāwī's views will be analysed under three main headings: (a) religious ethics, which explains the minimum theological tenets that a physician should abide by; (b) virtue ethics, which outlines how understanding the nature of the human psyche can help in cultivating cardinal virtues; and (c) relational ethics, which details how the physician's religious and virtue ethics should be translated into his interactions with patients and healthcare providers.

3.1.1 Religious Ethics

The moral excellence of a good physician starts with developing the right religious creed, which, according to al-Ruhāwī, comprises three key elements, which he called obligations or trusts (*amānāt*):

The first trust or obligation is the physician's belief in one, omnipotent, and wise Creator who made all creatures and caused all acts, who gives life and causes death, and who brings illness and heals. This Creator has blessed His creatures from the beginning of their creation by making known to them what benefits them so that they may use it and by revealing to them what harms them so that they may avoid it, as they were previously ignorant of these things. The second trust is that the physician must cultivate true love for God, voluntarily and completely devoting his intellect and psyche to Him. Al-Ruhāwī further explains that the status of one who loves God out of free will is nobler than the status of one who obeys Him out of fear or because of compulsion. The third trust is that the physician must believe that God has sent Messengers, who are His prophets. These prophets were sent to guide humanity with what would benefit them, as intellect alone is insufficient to encompass all that is good for them. God chose to send these messengers as He willed, in the most suitable times, and selected from among His creation those who were the purest to be His messengers (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 41).

Throughout the first chapter, and sporadically mentioned in other parts of the book, al-Ruhāwī keeps defending the thesis that these key elements of belief are common among all prominent and widely recognised physicians, in both ancient and contemporary times. In this regard, he heavily criticised a group of atheistic physicians, a problem which seems to have been common among the premature young ones (*aḥdāth*) in particular, who denied the above-sketched three trusts or obligations and instead indulged in mocking revealed religions. According to al-Ruhāwī, this denial is premised on ignorance, sometimes manifested in blind imitation (*taqlīd*) for someone they used to associate with, espoused with leaning towards permissiveness and a strong desire to attain pleasures, which has eventually overpowered their rational thinking (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 41–42, 49). As a remedial for those who face difficulties in cultivating these religious beliefs or trusts, al-Ruhāwī proposed contemplating the marvels of God's creation in general and humans in particular, which conclusively demonstrate not only God's existence but also His oneness, omnipotence, and wisdom. As for sources and books that can be of help in this regard, he suggested reading the scriptures of revealed religions, which are indispensable for everyone seeking to refine his character. Additionally, he recommended reading the philosophical and medical works, examples of which were already provided in a previous section (2.2.1 Interplay of Medicine, Philosophy, and Religion), where al-Ruhāwī amassed extensive quotations from the authoritative medico-philosophical literature to defend this thesis and to anatomise the organic relationship between medicine and religion (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 43–54).

Building upon the idea that the art of medicine originates from God’s teachings, al-Ruhāwī further argues that there is a striking similarity between the virtuous acts of the physician and those of the Almighty. He asserts that anyone who masters medicine or strives to master it can be regarded as following a divine path, emulating the actions of the Almighty, who is known to be generous, kind, compassionate, and merciful. The Creator bestows health upon the healthy, preserves it, heals the sick, and through His grace, satisfies their needs. Similarly, it is known that physicians’ intention is to seek health, and their ultimate goal is to preserve it, which is achievable only through the practice of medicine—a gift from Allāh (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 210).⁹

3.1.2 Virtue Ethics

The above-sketched religious morality, al-Ruhāwī explained, should be coupled with developing a purified and morally elevated psyche (*naḥs ṭāhira zakīyya*), which is essential for refining one’s character, improving behaviour, and cultivating virtues. According to al-Ruhāwī, developing a purified psyche that generates a virtuous character and morally committed behaviour should be premised on a good understanding of the psyche’s nature and its three main powers. As outlined in a previous section (1.2 Scholarly Background), mainstream medico-philosophical knowledge at the time of al-Ruhāwī held that human psyche has three main powers, the first two of which are common with non-human animals whereas the third power is exclusive to humans: the irascible or animal (*ghaḍabīyya* or *ḥayawānīyya*), the concupiscent or vegetative (*shahwānīyya* or *nabātīyya*) and the rational (*nāṭīqa*) power, which is exclusive to human beings (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 54–55).

By keeping each of these powers in the state of moderation (*i’tidāl*), one’s psyche becomes pure and refined, and one’s character becomes virtuous and praiseworthy. When these powers depart from moderation, one’s character

9 The idea that God’s names, and by extension His attributes and character traits such as generosity, kindness, compassion, and mercy, serve as a prototype for human ethical conduct has been extensively discussed in the Islamic tradition. Some scholars frowned upon this idea, maintaining that it aligns with unorthodox, heretical, or nontheistic doctrines taught by philosophers and non-believers, maintaining that God’s attributes should not be analogous to anything human. Other scholars contended that human ethics have divine roots. Much later than al-Ruhāwī, al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) sought to reconcile these disagreements and provide a synthesised mainstream position. He accepted the divine roots of human ethics while concurrently emphasising the incomparability (*tanzīh*) of God’s Essence and the meanings residing therein, thus negating any comparability (*tashbīh*) between God and His creatures, including humans (Casewit 2020). It is unclear to what extent al-Ruhāwī was aware of, or influenced by, these discussions in the Islamic tradition or parallel discussions in other religious or philosophical traditions.

becomes blameworthy. The moderation of the rational power grants man intelligence (*lubb*), reason (*ʿaql*), the acumen or the ability to acquire knowledge and comprehend deeply (*jawdat al-taḥṣīl*), good judgment (*tamyīz*), in addition to clarity and soundness of thought. The moderation of the irascible power grants him calmness, steadiness (*razāna*), and a lack of irritability and anger. The moderation of the concupiscent power grants one chastity (*ʿiffa*) and self-control over one's desires and pleasures. Based on this theoretical framework for the nature of the human psyche, one must train and accustom oneself to three main qualities: reason, steadiness, and chastity, to become virtuous and well-mannered, purify the psyche, and become eligible for acquiring knowledge. Besides the virtues specific to a particular power, there is an overarching virtue, namely justice, that should also be cultivated because it enables the psyche to place everything in its proper place. On the other hand, the departure of any of these powers from the state of moderation would result in a disease. So, the departure of the rational power from its moderation is a disease that results in poor acumen (*sūʿ al-taḥṣīl*) and ignorance. For the irascible power, the disease will result in quick anger and impatience. For the concupiscent power, the disease will result in either an inability to control one's desires or a lack of strength in one's desires. As outlined in a previous section (2.2 Scholarly Background), al-Ruhāwī elaborated on the role of rational power in maintaining the health and well-being of one's psyche and protecting it from diseases (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 55–56).

3.1.3 Relational Ethics

The holistic vision of medicine outlined by al-Ruhāwī naturally placed the physician in a direct relationship not only with the patient but also with a wide network of stakeholders involved in the process of maintaining health (*tadbīr al-ṣiḥḥā*) in its broadest sense. For instance, in the chapter dedicated to the administration of therapeutic medicines, al-Ruhāwī elaborated on how the physician should supervise the work of drug developers, storekeepers, sellers, and merchants. He asserted that a physician should ensure this group avoids unethical practices, such as giving women abortifacients without formal medical permission and ensuring poisons are only accessible to trustworthy physicians (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 183). In dedicated chapters, such as chapters 3, 4, 5, 7, 11, and 12, al-Ruhāwī provided detailed insights into the moral framework and etiquette that should govern the physician's relationships with patients and surrounding caregivers. This includes visitors to the patient, service providers involved in the medical care process, and the patient's broader family (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 163–173, 184–189, 200–207). He emphasised that the physician should not proceed with implementing a healthcare plan for a patient

without ensuring that this plan considers not only the patient's condition but also the surrounding environment. This includes the behaviour of the patient's visitors and servants, as well as other external factors such as the place where the patient lives, the air around him, his medicines and foods, and how they are prepared and administered. Furthermore, all aspects of patient care, such as bathing, massage, anointing, and exercise, should be taken into account (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 163–164).

Regarding the physician-patient relationship, al-Ruhāwī held that it should be governed by the two main principles introduced by Hippocrates and further outlined by Galen: providing benefit to the patient (beneficence) and avoiding harm (non-maleficence). Guided by these two principles, the physician should not follow the patient's will if it contradicts either principle, as this ultimately serves the patient's best interest. In this regard, he went as far as holding that a physician should also disregard any displeasing remarks from the patient, as many diseases impair perception and judgment. Instead, the physician should focus on doing what is necessary and adhere to Hippocrates' recommendations of beneficence and non-maleficence (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 163–164, 167).¹⁰

As an applied example demonstrating how a physician's commitment to these two principles should operate in specific scenarios, al-Ruhāwī mentions the case of prescribing abortifacients for women, including those who became pregnant through an illegitimate sexual relationship. In alignment with Hippocrates' recommendations, al-Ruhāwī holds that abortifacients resulting in infanticide remain morally unjustified and that physicians should not be swayed by the woman's panic and distress. The unborn child should not be killed but should instead be taken care of, which is a good deed abundantly rewarded by God. Regarding the pregnant woman, she does not deserve mercy to cover up her unethical behaviour because exposing her might deter other women. According to al-Ruhāwī, the only morally acceptable reason for

10 The principles of beneficence and non-maleficence continue to be widely acknowledged in modern bioethical discourse across various cultures and religious traditions, including contemporary Islamic bioethics. However, modern bioethical discussions often frame these principles with a stronger emphasis on respecting the patient's autonomy, a concept prevalent in Western secular bioethics, or on obtaining the patient's consent before proceeding with medical interventions, as frequently highlighted in Islamic jurisprudence. Consequently, al-Ruhāwī's approach may be seen as aligning more closely with what today might be considered a morally controversial paternalistic stance. For further details, see al-Jundī and ‘Awaḍī (2005, 150–166), Ghaly (2018), Childress and Beauchamp (2019), and Ghaly (2024, 17–28).

prescribing abortifacients is to save the life of the pregnant woman or that of a foetus (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 165–166).¹¹

In the seventh chapter of *Adab al-Ṭabīb*, al-Ruhāwī offers professional insights on the physician's communication with patients, highlighting what to ask and what to avoid. In the fourteenth chapter, he elaborates on these ideas through entertaining anecdotes, illustrating how miscommunication between the patient and physician can result in serious ethical dilemmas and professional complications (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 184–189, 229–235). He explained that these insights are intended to enhance the physician-patient relationship, impress the patients, and earn their trust. The physician should not inquire about what is obvious and apparent to the senses, as this would reflect incompetence and ignorance. Instead, the physician should rely on his own methods of inference and reasoning to understand information that cannot be directly obtained from the patient. Al-Ruhāwī aligns with Hippocrates in advocating the practice of demonstrating “prior or advanced knowledge” (*taqdimat al-maʿrifa*) as a means to showcase expertise and skill. This advance in knowledge includes three components: understanding what is past to grasp the history of the case, assessing what is present to be aware of the patient's current condition, and anticipating what is future to plan accordingly. Only when sensory evidence is not apparent or clear, and when there is a pressing need in medical practice, the physician should seek this information through questioning the patient or his caregivers. This approach ensures that the physician

11 The source quoted by al-Ruhāwī here is a short treatise titled *Waṣāyā Abuqrāṭ* (“Testaments of Hippocrates”), also known as *Tartīb al-Ṭibb* (“The Conduct of Medicine”), which is attributed to Hippocrates. Although this treatise is not part of the ancient core of the Hippocratic collection and is absent from modern editions, it was considered authentic in classical Arabic scholarship and was regarded as an important guide to medical ethical standards alongside the well-known Hippocratic Oath (Savage-Smith et al. 2019, 3–2; 1207–1208n74).

Recent research suggests that, contrary to the widely accepted interpretation, the original Hippocratic Oath does not contain language related to abortion (Vintzileos and Mylonas 2024). In his work *Peri Fyseōs Paidiou* (“On the Nature of the Child”), Hippocrates describes his instructions to a prostitute to electively terminate her pregnancy, arguing that “It was important that this girl should not become pregnant and thereby lose her value” (Lonie 1982, 7). However, this permissive stance on abortion was not mentioned by al-Ruhāwī.

If the strict prohibition of abortion did not originate in the Greek medico-philosophical tradition but rather in contemporaneous Jewish laws, as Horrocks (2014) suggests, then the Jewish perspective could have influenced al-Ruhāwī's selective reading of Hippocrates. The possibility of influence from the Islamic juristic tradition is less likely due to its diversity of perspectives, including permissive positions on abortion generally before the lapse of 120 days, which is understood to be the moment of ensoulment (al-Khaṭīb 2019).

is well-informed about various bodily conditions, thereby gaining the trust of his patients, and earning their compliance (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 184–188).

Elsewhere, al-Ruhāwī underscores that mastering the skill of “prior knowledge” enables physicians to make accurate prognoses about the duration, severity, and outcomes of diseases, whether they will be severe or mild, static or dynamic. This skill not only impresses patients but also garners respect from the general public, leading them to acknowledge the benefit and prestige of the medical profession (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 212, 253–254).

In another chapter, al-Ruhāwī elaborated on the proper conduct patients should exhibit toward their treating physicians whose professional and moral excellence they have already verified. Patients should adhere to the guidance of these physicians, trust their advice and actions, and avoid contradicting them. He also strongly cautioned against concealing any details from the physician regarding the patient’s condition or errors in the treatment plan. Disclosing such information is crucial, as it enables the physician to promptly correct any oversights and mitigate potential harm. Therefore, no details regarding natural occurrences, intentional actions, or accidental events should be withheld from the physician. In his advice to healthy individuals, al-Ruhāwī advocates for what is known in modern bioethics literature as an “advance directive.” He goes beyond merely denouncing the concealing of information from the physician and recommends that healthy individuals prepare in advance for potential illness. One of the first steps in this preparation for a person, at the onset of illness, is to instruct their family and servants to comply with all the physician’s orders and to caution them against disobedience (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 195, 199–200, 206–207).

Besides sporadic references in other chapters, al-Ruhāwī dedicated the fourth chapter to delineating the etiquette of the relationship between the physician and those who serve the patient (*khadam al-marīḍ*).¹² He explained

12 Some of the tasks performed by patient’s servants in al-Ruhāwī’s time correspond to those done by nurses today. In his English translation of *Adab al-Ṭabīb*, Martin Levey uses the terms “patient’s servants” and “nurses” interchangeably (Levey 1967, 13, 57, 62). However, considering the detailed descriptions provided by al-Ruhāwī, it seems that the identities and scopes of work of the two groups are not entirely identical. For instance, as part of the proper conduct and etiquette governing the patient-servant relationship, al-Ruhāwī emphasises the ethics of reciprocal relationships between patients and their servants. He explains that when masters treat their servants with care when they fall sick and ensure they receive proper care, the servants, in turn, are more likely to reciprocate with diligent and compassionate service when the masters become ill. Conversely, some patients’ families and servants would rejoice in their illnesses and wish for their death due to their stinginess and bad treatment. In some cases, the servants and family members of such people

that it is sometimes indispensable to have a dedicated servant to assist the physician, especially when the physician is unable to provide comprehensive service, and the patient is too sick to take care of himself or cannot explain his health condition. This might be due to the nature of the illness, such as stroke, or because the patient is a child who lacks understanding, a foreigner, mute, etc. (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 168–169).

As the ultimate supervisor of the healthcare process, the physician is entrusted with the task of ensuring the patient's servants possess the necessary moral and professional qualifications. Al-Ruhāwī explained that, in addition to being intelligent, diligent, and skilled in tasks that benefit the patient, servants should be well-mannered. The servant's character should command respect from the patient and be compassionate towards the patient to prevent negligence and ensure proper care. Furthermore, the harm caused by a servant's dishonesty and lack of integrity can be significant. A servant with little integrity might be driven by greed to harm the patient, either by accepting bribes from the patient to fulfil his desires or by colluding with the patient's enemies (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 168, 198–199).

Regarding the scope of their work, the physician must provide clear instructions to the servants about monitoring the patient's conditions and symptoms. He should ensure they understand how to prepare medicine and food, the correct dosages, timing, and all other necessary care details. The physician should also be in communication with the servants when he assesses whether the patient's living environment is suitable. Proximity to harmful smells, noises, or other irritants may necessitate moving the patient to a more favourable location. Places with poor air circulation, such as basements where bad air and vapours accumulate, should be avoided. Instead, well-ventilated rooms should be chosen. Additionally, the surrounding air should be improved with appropriate incense, flowers, and herbs according to the nature of the illness and the time of year. Waste from the patient's body, especially if malodorous, should be promptly removed. Servants should also be instructed to avoid distressing the patient with upsetting news or unpleasant sights and sounds. Overall, anything conflicting with the physician's treatment plan must be avoided to prevent compromising the patient's recovery (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 169–170).

Al-Ruhāwī dedicated the fifth chapter to the etiquette of visiting the patient and the role of the physician in his relationship with the patient's visitors (*ʿuwwād al-marīḍ*). He started the chapter by listing the health conditions in which visiting the patients should be discouraged or completely prevented

would intentionally cause them harm and disobey their doctors, deliberately doing the opposite of what the physician advised (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 195, 201–202).

and distant inquiries about their condition should suffice, e.g., strokes and diseases that cause significant discomfort, making social interaction unbearable due to symptoms like continuous or malodorous discharges. In the case of acute diseases that require prompt and careful intervention, the physician should advise the patient's family not to allow visitors, except for those providing care, ensuring the patient's servants remain focused on their duties without unnecessary distractions. Also, some diseases like melancholia and severe mania prompt patients to speak or act inappropriately, and thus visitors may cause unpleasant situations, including verbal abuse or physical aggression (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 171–172).

Beyond the aforementioned cases, visitors to patients should adhere to proper conduct during their visits. Consistent with the recommendations of Hippocrates and Galen, al-Ruhāwī holds that priority should be given to those who are sincere and close to the patient's heart. If a physician notices that a patient is discontented with a visitor, the physician should allow him to stay only briefly and then suggest that the patient needs rest, indicating that the visitor should depart. Visitors should not prolong their stay and should enter only in clean clothing and with a pleasant fragrance to uplift the patient's spirits. Individuals engaged in trades with unpleasant odours, such as sulphur sellers, tanners, and butchers, should refrain from visiting to avoid contaminating the air and causing discomfort. It is important to avoid discussing disturbing news, such as failed trades, deceased individuals, or distressing information about other patients. Additionally, visitors should not excessively probe into the patient's illness unless they are physicians themselves. They should refrain from suggesting medications or foods and avoid contradicting the physician in the patient's presence if they lack medical expertise, as this can undermine the physician's credibility and create doubt (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 172–173, 204–206).

3.2 *Professional Excellence*

Taking care of the human body and maintaining health (*tadbīr al-ṣiḥḥā*), alongside nurturing the psyche, is introduced by al-Ruhāwī as an integral part of the medical profession. This essentially encompasses the knowledge of how to preserve one's health when it already exists and how to restore it when one falls ill. According to al-Ruhāwī, medicine is based on principles and natural laws that God has made consistent, discoverable, and accessible to human intellect. This consistency allows experts to rely on these principles and develop their practice accordingly. By mastering the necessary techniques and mechanisms, practitioners can achieve results so impressive that laypeople, lacking this specialised knowledge, might believe that these outcomes are due to hidden, unusual, or mysterious causes, such as the intervention of *jinn*

or divine powers. He emphasised that acquiring this knowledge and applying it to oneself is a primary duty of the physician. He argues that it is particularly reprehensible for a wise individual to understand the importance of something for his well-being and yet act contrary to it, driven by pleasure or other personal desires. However, due to the nature of the book and its primary focus on ethics and etiquette, al-Ruhāwī explains that providing detailed accounts of the diseases that affect the human body and their treatments falls outside the scope of his *Adab al-ṭabīb* (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 64, 67, 267–268).

Against this background, it should be noted that references made throughout the book to the question of professional excellence were often primarily conflated with ethical dimensions. This emphasis was not only due to the particular nature of the book but also reflected the spirit of the medical profession in al-Ruhāwī's time. This is evident in the key Arabic term he frequently used, *tadbīr al-ṣiḥḥā*, which extends beyond the narrow scope of treating diseases to encompass the idea of taking thought for a thing, examining it, and managing or conducting its affairs in an ethical manner.¹³ Although al-Ruhāwī saw the physician as the ultimate supervisor of the comprehensive process of *tadbīr al-ṣiḥḥā* and thus responsible for examining the work performed by other stakeholders, he also stressed the importance of respecting separate specialisations. He urged physicians to follow the Hippocratic recommendation against performing surgeries to extract stones, even for patients in whom the disease is manifest, and instead leave this operation to practitioners who specialise in this area to avoid causing harm to patients and treating physicians (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 166).

3.2.1 Preserving Health (*Hifẓ al-Ṣiḥḥā*)

One of the longest chapters in al-Ruhāwī's work, the second chapter, is dedicated to outlining the measures and procedures that physicians should master to ensure the effective management of bodily health. According to al-Ruhāwī, a physician's professional excellence begins with the ability to distinguish between a healthy and sick body. This requires examining both physical actions and bodily organs. If one finds that actions proceed as they should, without any struggle in performing tasks or bodily functions, it indicates that the body is healthy and free of disease. Similarly, each organ should be examined individually. For example, the eye is created to perceive visible objects such as colours and shapes. If it does so without any hindrance or deficiency, it

13 For more information on the concept of *tadbīr* and its ethical and philosophical implications in other domains, including management of household, economics, and politics, see Heffening and Endress (1998).

is considered healthy. If it fails or does not see, it is deemed diseased or blind. Al-Ruhāwī explained that this principle applies to all individual organs of the body and to the body as a whole (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 64–65). Following this introductory note, al-Ruhāwī presents the definition of health as agreed upon by ancient physicians: “a natural state of the body that enables it to perform its functions properly” (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 64–65).

Against this background, al-Ruhāwī provides detailed guidance on mastering the art of maintaining human health. He explains that the body’s actions are numerous, corresponding to the number of the body’s functional or instrumental organs (*al-ḥāṣṣ al-badan al-ālīyya*). Thus, each action performed by these organs, which serve as tools or instruments for the body, will be effectively executed only when the corresponding organ is in a state of health. For example, the sense of taste functions properly only when the mouth and its apparatus are healthy, and the same principle applies to vision and other bodily functions. The state of health of these functional organs is determined by three parameters: moderation (*i’tidāl*) of the organ’s temperament, its shape, and its connections. By the moderation of temperament (*mizāj*), al-Ruhāwī refers to the standard medical idea of that time, which posits that the body should have a balanced amount of heat and cold, and moisture and dryness. He explains that an exact and precise balance is an abstract concept and cannot be perceived in reality. The common form of moderation leans towards one of the four complex temperaments: heat combined with dryness, heat combined with moisture, cold combined with moisture, or cold combined with dryness (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 65–66).

Building upon the aforementioned definition of health, which recognises it as the natural state of the body, al-Ruhāwī observes that bodies do not remain in a constant state due to the rapid changes caused by the passage of time and the alteration of their temperaments. Therefore, bodies are constantly undergoing processes of dissolution and diminution, necessitating nutrition to replace what has been lost. However, the foods and drinks we consume do not exactly replicate what has been dissolved, either in nature or quantity, as this exact transformation is the work of nature. Thus, it is necessary to introduce nutrition that closely resembles the nature of our bodies, being the nearest in kind and the quickest to transform into them. Al-Ruhāwī explains that even when foods and drinks closely match our bodies and temperaments, they do not nourish us until our organs digest and process them. The nutrients are allocated to the suitable organ, while excesses unsuitable for nourishment are expelled, with specific locations to accumulate and pathways for their expulsion to prevent harm. Therefore, these areas and pathways must be monitored by the physician to ensure their functions proceed naturally and

serve the body as intended. When external assistance is necessary, the physician should assess and aid nature in expelling excesses and maintaining the pathways effectively. Additionally, al-Ruhāwī highlights the then widely recognised principle of individualisation in medicine by emphasising that each individual has different temperaments, and each person's health is specific to their temperament. Each temperament has unique signs and requires specific measures and interventions.¹⁴ Therefore, the physician must train and practice to acquire the professional intuition (*al-ḥads al-ṣināʾī*) that enables proper judgment. Al-Ruhāwī argues that mastering this knowledge is indispensable for determining which foods and drinks are suitable for which body and, by extension, for preserving one's health (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 66–67).

As part of elaborating the concept of maintaining, preserving, and managing one's health (*tadbīr al-ṣiḥḥa*) and related measures and regimens, al-Ruhāwī dedicated distinct sub-chapters to specific organs, detailing how to apply these principles to each one. In addition to his focus on the brain, which he argues is the noblest organ in the body (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 70–73), he also discusses other organs, such as the heart, which he ranks second after the brain, as well as the liver, intestines, spleen, gall bladder, kidneys, bladder, lungs, and chest (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 148–156).

In addition to discussing the organs, al-Ruhāwī devoted a sub-chapter to the four physical forces (*quwā al-jism*) that enable organs to perform their functions. These forces are: (1) the attracting force, which draws in compatible food; (2) the holding force, which retains the food until it is digested; (3) the digestive force, which nourishes the body from the digested food; and (4) the expelling force, which removes excess and incompatible substances from the body (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 113, 118, 135–136). Although al-Ruhāwī planned to elaborate on each of the five senses, he only dedicated sub-chapters to four: sight, hearing, smell, and taste, omitting the fifth sense, touch (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 70–73). He also included a sub-chapter on the complexion (*siḥna*) of the body, explaining that it consists of five elements: the quality of the substance (*jawhar*), the amount of flesh and fat, the body's constitution (*qiwām*), the condition and quantity of hair, and the colour of the hair. Al-Ruhāwī stressed the importance of understanding these five elements for assessing the body's overall temperament (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 139–140). He then devoted a sub-chapter to the body's temperament, asserting that without this knowledge, one cannot justly claim

14 An increasing number of recent publications have highlighted the connection between these classical ideas and the modern concept of personalized medicine. For examples, see Visvikis-Siest et al. (2020) and Guillén (2022).

to be a physician and would risk making the healthy sick and the ill worse (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 141–145).

As part of his holistic approach to health, al-Ruhāwī outlined the broader context by examining the complex network of factors influencing health maintenance. He dedicated distinct sub-chapters to various elements, including: the types of air humans breathe (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 74–75), the balance of movement and rest (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 76–82), foods (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 98–104), drinks (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 105–112), the retention and expulsion of bodily wastes (*iḥtiqān* and *istifrāgh*) (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 113–116), sleep and wakefulness (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 117–119), cities and weather conditions (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 126–128), the impact of crafts and professions on temperament (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 129–130), and personal habits (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 131–134).

Al-Ruhāwī concluded this extensive chapter with a sub-chapter detailing how a physician should exemplify the discussed measures and procedures (*tadābīr*) by applying them to his own body. This practice not only establishes a standard for others but also helps to build trust in the physician's professional expertise. He outlined the key elements of an exemplary daily routine that a physician should consistently follow throughout his life. This routine encompasses various activities designed to serve multiple purposes, including maintaining physical and mental health, enhancing medical knowledge, and cultivating the virtues and etiquette befitting a good physician. For instance, a good physician should begin his day by cleaning any discharge from his body's openings, such as the nostrils, eyes, and mouth, to maintain his physical health.

On the other hand, he should perform the ritual morning prayer out of gratitude to God, the Benefactor. Emphasising the importance of caring for both body and psyche, al-Ruhāwī stressed that the senses should be used to achieve what is beneficial and avoid what is harmful, not only in the physical and medical sense but also in the ethical and religious sense. Thus, they should be protected from all that is physically harmful, ethically wrong, and religiously prohibited. For instance, al-Ruhāwī's recommendations for taking care of one's eyesight included avoiding looking at non-*maḥram* women (women other than one's wife and close female relatives with whom one cannot marry) without a compelling necessity and striving to keep one's gaze focused on the books of his profession and the records of his religious law (Sharī'a) (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 157–161).

3.2.2 Administration of Medicines (*Adwīya*)

According to al-Ruhāwī, medicines are the primary means of healing diseases, and thus, physicians must be able to distinguish good drugs from bad ones. To

elaborate on this aspect, he dedicated a distinct chapter to the knowledge physicians need regarding therapeutic drugs (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 174–183).

Unlike other perspectives prevalent in al-Ruhāwī's time, which emphasized delegating the work of therapeutic drugs and medicines to pharmacists,¹⁵ al-Ruhāwī advocated for a broader scope of responsibility for physicians. He asserted that physicians should remain vigilant, inspect the medicine before its use, and not rely solely on any pharmacist who happens to serve the patient when prescribing medication. According to al-Ruhāwī, a practicing physician should integrate theoretical knowledge, acquired through reading specialized texts, with practical experience gained by working under masters skilled in medicines, their preservation, and their storage. A physician who has not trained under experienced pharmacists should neither purchase medicines from them nor administer them to patients. To support this view, al-Ruhāwī recounted several instances, including some he personally witnessed, where pharmacists deceived physicians by providing incorrect medicines, which sometimes caused harm instead of benefit (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 174, 176, 178).

Against this background, al-Ruhāwī classified medicines into two categories: simple (*mufrada*) and compound (*murakkaba*). He delineated the essential professional skills physicians must possess for each type to provide effective patient care. For simple medicinal drugs, which are typically derived from various sources such as herbs, trees, seeds, roots, and gums, al-Ruhāwī emphasised three main critical considerations.

Firstly, the timing of collection is crucial: harvesting should only occur after these materials have fully ripened. Additionally, remedies should not be neglected after ripening, as this can lead to spoilage and diminished efficacy. Secondly, improper storage can cause medicinal substances to deteriorate or become putrid. Neglecting proper storage practices can significantly impact patient treatment outcomes. Problems arise when substances are stored in moist conditions, pressed together, or placed in damp areas, such as the lower parts of a house with inadequate ventilation and no sunlight. It is essential to initially dry these substances in the shade, as sunlight can reduce their efficacy, and to store them in a location with moderate airflow. Prolonged storage can also cause remedies to become stale and lose their effectiveness. Substances with oily properties are particularly prone to rapid spoilage due to their

15 For instance, in his medical encyclopaedia, *al-Hāwī fi al-Tibb* ("The Comprehensive on Medicine"), the prominent physician Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d. 313/925) said: "Knowledge of medicines and distinguishing their quality—good from bad, pure from fraudulent—is not strictly necessary for the physician, as some ignorant people (*juhhāl al-nās*) think, but it is more appropriate and becoming for them to possess it" (see al-Rāzī 2002, 7:7).

tendency to attract moisture and undergo quick changes. Furthermore, storing multiple remedies in a single container can lead to contamination through interactions between them. Therefore, it is important to thoroughly clean containers before introducing new remedies to prevent spoilage (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 175–176).

The third critical consideration highlighted by al-Ruhāwī pertains to malpractices driven by unethical behaviour rather than a lack of specialised knowledge. For example, some untrustworthy apothecaries adulterate an expensive and valuable drug by mixing it with a cheaper, similar-looking substance. Others, lacking in religious and ethical integrity, might substitute a drug that visually resembles the original but has the opposite effect, potentially harming or even killing patients. Al-Ruhāwī substantiated these warnings with actual cases of fraud, some of which he witnessed firsthand. In these cases, pharmacists attempted to deceive physicians by charging for one substance while supplying a less effective or entirely different one, which could lead to severe consequences, including patient harm or even death (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 176–178).

Because of their complex nature and the multifaceted process of preparing them, the causes of corruption in compound medicines outnumber those in the simple ones. At the hand of the example of purgative pills (*al-ḥubūb al-mushila*) or laxatives, al-Ruhāwī explained the critical need for precise knowledge in the mixing and blending of the ingredients of compound medicines. When these pills are kneaded with honey or other sweet substances, they can cause significant harm. The grains of the pills are to be kneaded with water only to allow them to dry and be effective by staying in the stomach. Similarly, purgative pills are made as small as pepper seeds so that they can cleanse the stomach and intestines quickly and easily. If these pills are made too large, they will stay in the stomach too long, dissolve excessively, and potentially harm the organs. Conversely, there are pills that physicians instruct to be made large, so they remain in the body longer, allowing their properties to reach the brain, which they are intended to purify. If they are made small, they will not achieve the desired effect and will fall short of their intended function. By the same token, medicines that physicians instruct to be prepared coarse, making them fine will not yield the intended results (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 178–180).

Compound medicines can also turn out to be harmful due to issues with their ingredients, specifically, the individual drugs from which they are composed. Some ingredients might be replaced, or their essences altered due to their high cost or scarcity, even though the omitted drug might be crucial for the compound's efficacy. Additionally, adding more of a specific drug not mentioned in the original recipe, even with the goodwill of increasing the

medicine's efficacy, can eventually cause harm. Furthermore, some compound medicines need time to mature before they are fit for use, or their efficacy is typically effective for a limited duration, after which it either diminishes or completely dissipates. This time factor can sometimes be influenced by differences in the composition methods. For example, medicines compounded with honey tend to have a longer shelf life because honey preserves the strength of the medicines, aids in their maturation, and enhances their efficacy in a way that other preservatives, like water, do not (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 180–181).

Another important aspect that physicians should pay great attention to is investigating the multiple actions of the drugs. Al-Ruhāwī explained that a single drug could have multiple effects due to the various powers it possesses. For instance, aloe can effectuate maturation, cleansing, and strengthening and also function as a purgative due to the multiple powers it holds to perform each of these actions. Thus, compound drugs are more likely to have numerous effects due to the combination of several powerful individual drugs (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 182).

3.2.3 Reforming the Profession

Throughout *Adab al-Ṭabīb*, al-Ruhāwī expressed profound concerns about the state of the medical profession during his time and demonstrated a strong commitment to reform. He advocated the removal of self-proclaimed physicians who are in fact charlatans and quacks to enhance the effectiveness and benefits of medicine for both qualified professionals and the general public. While these reformist insights are scattered throughout the book, they are most clearly outlined in three consecutive chapters: the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 242–276).

As a prelude to advocating for the strict reformist measures he proposed, al-Ruhāwī emphasised the universal need for qualified and morally committed physicians, highlighting that this need extends to both the healthy and the sick across all cultures and geographies. He also underscored the nobility of the art of medicine and the dignified status of the profession (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 190–194, 208–228). If professions and crafts are to be categorised in a hierarchical order, al-Ruhāwī held that medicine should be the noblest in status and the oldest in time. He argued that medicine should be ranked even higher than religious sciences, referring to an anonymised statement: “Knowledge is of two kinds: knowledge of the bodies (*ʿilm al-abdān*) and knowledge of the religions (*ʿilm al-adyān*).”¹⁶ He explained that medicine was prioritised in this statement

16 The purport of the statement is sometimes attributed to the Prophet of Islam but has been declared unauthentic by scholars of Prophetic traditions (*Ḥadīth*). The one to whom

due to its benefit in helping people maintain a healthy body, thereby enabling them to acquire knowledge and perform acts of worship such as fasting and prayer (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 208, 211).

Among the reasons that make the art of medicine so dignified is its complexity and difficulty to master, requiring a high level of physical and mental qualities, strong moral commitment, dedicated effort, and extensive time. Its difficulty arises from the multitude of its principles and, even more so, its branches. The intricate interconnection between its principles and branches further adds to its complexity. According to al-Ruhāwī, the art of medicine is an indivisible whole, where even its smallest branches are deeply intertwined with its principles. This interconnectedness is why a small amount of knowledge in the art of medicine can be harmful rather than beneficial. Unlike other professions, where learning a single branch or principle can sufficiently enable the professional to benefit and help others without causing harm due to other unstudied principles and branches, medicine demands comprehensive understanding. For example, a jeweller who only knows how to make rings can still operate without harming anyone despite not knowing how to make bracelets or necklaces. Numerous books have been authored to address these complexities, making the art of medicine challenging to grasp, especially for those who are lazy, negligent, or slow-witted (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 237).

Against this backdrop, al-Ruhāwī argues for the need to distinguish the good from the bad, the competent from the incompetent, the professional from the unprofessional, and the true physician from the quacks and charlatans. To present his sporadic ideas in a systematic and consistent manner, al-Ruhāwī's reformist thoughts can be divided into three main categories, each relating to one of the three stakeholders who can implement his ideas: medical educators, the general public, and finally, the political and regulatory authorities.

The role of medical educators in reforming their profession primarily lies in their gatekeeping function, which involves the critical selection of suitable students to prevent unqualified individuals from entering the profession. This responsibility is detailed in the fifteenth chapter. Al-Ruhāwī identified three key factors that should dissuade a teacher from instructing a prospective student in medicine. The first factor is a physical deviation from the body's balanced

this binary division of knowledge is frequently attributed is the prominent Muslim jurist Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī (d. 204/820). However, the statement, as it appears in the sources documenting it, reads: "Knowledge is of two kinds: knowledge of the religions (*'ilm al-adyān*), namely Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and knowledge of the bodies (*'ilm al-abdān*), namely medicine" (al-Suyūṭī 2002, 90). Therefore, the statement that appears in the Islamic sources retains the same binary division but reverses their order and does not elevate medicine above the religious sciences.

temperament, leading to malformations in the actions and character of one's psyche. Regarding specific physical indicators, al-Ruhāwī cited Hippocrates, who noted that for those in the medical profession, the shape of the fingers is significant: they should be well-spaced, with the thumb positioned opposite the index finger. When evaluating the psyche and moral character, one's adherence to the principles outlined in Hippocrates' *al-Aymān wa-l-'Uhūd* should be used to assess eligibility for the medical profession. The second factor to consider is the habit of associating with unethical individuals, adopting their behaviours, and endorsing their morals. The third factor is the combination of both issues, which is the most detrimental and hardest to correct. Educators should also be cautious if a prospective student aims to learn medicine not for its inherent honour and benefits to human health but for material gains such as wealth or power (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 236–238).

To ensure that selected candidates meet these criteria, al-Ruhāwī argued that aspiring physicians should come from families with a medical background, where parents have focused on shaping their children's temperament, instilling good habits, and refining their character. In contrast, candidates from families without a medical background—such as carpenters, blacksmiths, tanners, and weavers—may encounter difficulties in succeeding in the field of medicine. These professions are dedicated to their own crafts and lack medical expertise, resulting in less comprehensive instruction for their children compared to the training provided by physicians to their own offspring. Al-Ruhāwī cited prominent figures like Hippocrates and Galen to demonstrate that selecting candidates based on their family background was the standard practice, with deviations from this norm being exceptional and only considered under compelling circumstances (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 237, 239).¹⁷

Regarding the general public (*ʿawāmm*) and the intermediate class (*mutawassitūn*), al-Ruhāwī acknowledges their critical role in reforming in the medical profession. As clients, their service requests influence the demand for specific physicians, thereby shaping the physicians' reputations. However, he also acknowledges their limitations in distinguishing good physicians from

17 The notion of inheriting a profession from one's parents and family possibly parallels the ideas explored in Plato's *Politeia* ("Republic"), which addresses social class and the division of society into distinct classes (rulers, auxiliaries, and producers). In Plato's framework, mobility between these classes is limited, with individuals largely inheriting their social status from their parents (Plato 2004). However, it goes without saying that this idea is controversial in contemporary bioethics and broader professional ethics, which emphasises merit-based approaches and advocates that individuals should have the opportunity to pursue a profession based on their abilities and qualifications, rather than their lineage or family background.

bad ones. Evaluating and confirming a physician's truthfulness in statements and accuracy in actions requires an extended period, extensive training, and precise intuition, a process that would be challenging for the general public. Considering these limitations, al-Ruhāwī proposed a straightforward approach for raising awareness among the general public in selecting physicians: they should follow the recommendations of the most distinguished and trustworthy individuals in their area. These reputable individuals usually know the number of patients who have been cured by the treating physicians and the praise they have received (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 196).

Besides medical educators and the general public, direct involvement and intervention by governmental authorities were perceived by al-Ruhāwī as the most important measures to reform the profession of medicine and cleanse it of fraudulent quacks and charlatans. He suggested a set of measurable criteria against which individuals should be tested to demarcate true physicians from false ones. These criteria comprise two main components: a body of medical knowledge, or a canon, that a good physician should master, and traits of moral character that a good physician should cultivate and develop.

Regarding the medical canon, in line with his belief in the need to systematise and regulate the examination of physicians through official bodies, al-Ruhāwī wrote a letter to officials in the town of Raqqā detailing the knowledge required for evaluating a physician. He emphasised that the first area of assessment should be the candidate's understanding of the various schools of thought in medicine, e.g., the Dogmatists, Empiricists, and Methodists. This includes knowledge of how these schools are categorised, their core beliefs, and the (dis)agreements among them. The standard text recommended for acquiring this knowledge was Galen's *Firaq al-Aṭibbāʾ*, also known as *Firaq al-Ṭibb* (*Peri Haireseōn tois Eisagomenois*, "Sects of Medicine," *De Sectis Medicorum*) (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 244–245).

The second item to be examined in the required knowledge of the medical canon pertains to the physician's specific specialisation. If a candidate claims comprehensive knowledge of the entire field of medicine, this should be taken as definitive evidence of ignorance. Consequently, such a claim should lead to immediate dismissal, as the field of medicine is so vast that no single individual can master it completely within a lifetime. Al-Ruhāwī explained that the art of medicine consists of two main components: theoretical and practical. Within these two broad categories, medicine encompasses various subdivisions, each requiring specific knowledge and expertise. When a candidate claims specialisation in a particular area of medicine, he should be questioned about which part of the field this specialisation pertains to, the books he has studied, and how he achieved mastery and practical experience in the area. Additionally, the

candidate should be inquired about the body parts and organs related to the respective specialisation, including their composition, structure, and connections. One should also demonstrate knowledge of the diseases affecting these parts, including their causes, symptoms, appropriate treatments, and general maintenance of health. To illustrate this further, al-Ruhāwī provided concrete examples of specialisations such as ophthalmology, orthopaedics and bone setting, and bloodletting (*faṣḍ*), detailing how candidates should be examined in each area. The primary reference recommended for mastering this aspect of medical knowledge was Galen's treatise *Maqāla fī Ajzā' al-Ṭibb* (*Peri tōn tēs Iatrikēs Merōn*, "Treatise on the Parts of Medicine," *De Partibus Artis Medicae*) (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 245–259; Von Staden 2002).

To evaluate the ideal moral character of a good physician, it is essential to examine the candidate's lifestyle throughout his life. It is important to determine whether he has been dedicated to education and learning from a young age, engaging with scholars and intellectuals, or whether he has been preoccupied with activities such as eating, drinking, playing chess, and other distractions that divert attention from learning and reading, and associating with the ignorant, foolish, and rabble. Additionally, one should assess whether he spends substantial time studying books, engaging in scholarly discussions, and socialising with learned individuals, or if his main focus is on commerce, earning money, and seeking pleasures. If the latter is the case, it suggests that the candidate may not offer significant value or benefit in the medical profession. In line with al-Ruhāwī's holistic approach, he argues that a refined moral character should also be evident in the candidate's physical health and daily behaviour. So, his dietary habits should be observed—such as what he eats, when he eats, how he eats, and whether he chooses good-quality food and drink. Additionally, it is important to assess how he maintains his body through cleanliness, hygiene, and regular care. A person who cannot properly care for his own body is less likely to be successful in caring for others. Regarding his interactions with others, his behaviour should be evaluated. Positive indicators include a lack of ambition for leadership, avoidance of conflict and contention, adherence to justice in dealings with others, and a genuine desire for others' well-being like his own. Additionally, his compassion and kindness should be sincere, aimed at the genuine good of others rather than for show (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 259–260). Al-Ruhāwī elaborated elsewhere on the importance of upholding justice towards oneself and others. Physicians should cultivate justice within themselves by consistently practising virtuous qualities and actions such as compassion, mercy, gentleness, chastity, contentment, courage, generosity, honesty, and confidentiality, along with all other virtues and etiquettes of the psyche. When dealing with others, physicians should

provide equal service to everyone, making no distinctions between friends and enemies or allies and opponents, and ensuring their care is inclusive of both the poor and the weak (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 287).

Al-Ruhāwī emphasised that the results of the qualifying examination should directly impact the actual practice of medicine. It is crucial that physicians are not permitted to practice medicine until they have successfully completed the necessary examinations. He considered it the primary responsibility of ruling kings, followed by officials who oversee public welfare, scholars, and intellectuals, to ensure this. These groups, operating under the supervision of kings and senior rulers, have more frequent contact with physicians and are more aware of their actual practice. They should inform the kings and urge them to enforce proper regulation and oversight. As part of his obligation in this regard, al-Ruhāwī dedicated a distinct chapter to outlining the deceitful tricks used by medical quacks and charlatans, distinguishing them from legitimate and innovative interventions for treating psychological and psychiatric conditions. Al-Ruhāwī explained how these frauds deceive people by promising to provide them with what would fulfil their desires, such as excessive eating, drinking, and sexual activities, or by restoring lost properties, among other false claims. He mentioned that his goal in exposing these deceitful practices was to assist those responsible for protecting the public in identifying frauds and distinguishing between impostors and genuine experts in the field. By doing so, authorities would better safeguard people from charlatans and thieves who conceal their true nature behind deceptive appearances and grandiose claims (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 264, 266–276).

To lend legitimacy and credibility to his proposed approach, al-Ruhāwī explained that it was the standard practice of the ancient Greeks, who adhered to strict precautionary measures and thorough scrutiny. Once a physician passed the qualifying examination, he would be granted a seat known as *kursī al-ḥikma* (chair of wisdom). Al-Ruhāwī noted that this practice was still observed in the Levant, where some physicians set up this chair, and those who sit upon it are recognised as having been rigorously examined and tested (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 264–265, 276).

Close to the widely used practice in today's medicine, commonly known as a medical record, health record, or patient chart, al-Ruhāwī also advocated for reviving another ancient practice: the formal documentation of communication with patients and their relatives on paper as part of recording the patient's case and treatment plan. When visiting and treating a patient, the physician should document each visit, including the date, the diagnosis based on symptoms and tests, and the prescribed remedies and foods. This record should be left with the patient's relatives. If the patient recovers, the physician retains

the record for future reference. However, if the patient dies and the physician is blamed, the documented record will be reviewed by authorities and medical experts. If they found that the record accurately reflects the illness and the treatment provided was appropriate, the physician would be exonerated. Otherwise, the physician will be held accountable (al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 265).

4 Concluding Remarks

When it comes to classical literature on medical ethics in Arabic scholarship and Islamic civilisation, *Adab al-Ṭabīb* ("Ethics of the Physician") stands out as a pioneering work. Its scholarly and historical significance cannot be overemphasised. Contemporary researchers recognise it as the first dedicated work in this field, to the extent that it is sometimes mistakenly considered the only one (Levey 1967, 3; al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 23–24; Aksoy 2004, 9).

To put the work in its proper historical context, the author, al-Ruhāwī, did not start from scratch, and his book was not written in a vacuum. As recognised by the famous medical biographer Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a (d. 668/1270) and clearly reflected in *Adab al-Ṭabīb*, al-Ruhāwī was well-versed in the Graeco-Arabic medico-philosophical literature. He extensively used these sources throughout the book, especially those written by Galen and Hippocrates (Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a n.d., 342; al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 29–31). He supplemented this textual knowledge with his own experience as a practising physician, incorporating stories and anecdotes from his practice and those of his contemporaneous colleagues. His analytical reading of these various sources to extract what is relevant to the theme of professional medical ethics should also be seen within the context of the popularity of the broad genre of professional ethics, which addressed the etiquette and practical ethics (*adab*) that demarcate the good practice of politicians, *muftīs*, judges, teachers, learners, Qur'ān memorisers, Sufis, and others. The early beginnings of this genre date back to the end of the second/eighth century, gained wide popularity by the time of al-Ruhāwī, and continued to thrive after him (Ibn al-Muqaffa' n.d.; Metcalf 1984; Chiabotti et al. 2017). Thus, while *Adab al-Ṭabīb* is pioneering, it was not an isolated work but rather a natural reflection of its scholarly milieu and the intellectual spirit of al-Ruhāwī's time, which continued after him as well (al-Balkhī 2005; Ṣā'id 1996; Ibn Riḍwān 1986; Ibn Buṭlān 2002; Ibn Jumay' 1983; al-Shīrāzī 2001; al-Ruhāwī 1992a, 23, 25).

The relevance of this key classical work did not wane over time, and its continued relevance can be observed in different ways in modern research.

For historians, *Adab al-Ṭabīb* remains a rich treasure of information about how the Greek medico-philosophical literature was received in Arabic scholarship, which figures and books were considered authoritative and a source of legitimising medical and ethical norms and principles, what difficulties were encountered by medical professionals and what reform proposals were introduced, etc. (Bürgel 1966; Levey 1966; 1967; Prioreshi 2004; Pormann 2005; Moseley 2018; Sadeghi and Ghaffari 2019).

Another aspect of the modern relevance of this work, stemming from its pioneering role in medical ethics and its contribution to establishing the foundations of this field, is the ongoing debate about which moral tradition should be credited with this achievement today. Researchers have hotly debated whether the credit should go to the Greek tradition, which influenced al-Ruhāwī's ideas and whose authentic version is reflected in modern Western secular bioethics, or whether it should be attributed to Judaism, Christianity, or Islam, depending on the determination of the author's religious identity (Ajlouni 2003; Aksoy 2004).

The third aspect of al-Ruhāwī's relevance to our modern times pertains to contemporary Islamic bioethical discourse, particularly the interdisciplinary discussions between Muslim religious scholars and biomedical scientists that have taken institutional form since the early 1980s. Three transnational Islamic institutions have spearheaded these interdisciplinary discussions by reviving the mechanism of collective religio-moral reasoning (*al-ijtihād al-jamā'ī*). The three leading institutions in this area are the Islamic Organization for Medical Sciences (IOMS) in Kuwait, the Islamic Fiqh Academy (IFA) in Mecca, and the International Islamic Fiqh Academy (IIFA) in Jedda, Saudi Arabia. Al-Ruhāwī, as a physician writing on medical ethics, and his work *Adab al-Ṭabīb* have been both welcomed and highly commended in the proceedings of the conferences and symposia organised by these institutions. For participants in these interdisciplinary discussions, al-Ruhāwī's contributions particularly exemplify key aspects of ideal interdisciplinary Islamic bioethics. These aspects include the integration of both medicine and religion, as well as a holistic approach to health and overall well-being that considers both the body and the psyche ('Awaḍī et al. 1999, 48–49; Ghaly 2010). Besides these institutional discussions, individual authors, particularly those with a biomedical background, have emphasised the significance and relevance of al-Ruhāwī's contributions to contemporary Islamic bioethics (al-Bār and al-Sibā'ī 2009; al-Bār and Shamsī Bāshā 2012; Sartell and Padela 2015).

The enduring and timeless appeal of *Adab al-Ṭabīb* lies not only in its pioneering character but also in the author's ability to synthesise a well-grounded

medical ethical discourse. This discourse is rooted in the authoritative Graeco-Arabic medico-philosophical scholarship and harmonised with a religious moral framework, which formed the main fabric of public morality in Muslim-governed societies during al-Ruhāwī's time. To my mind, al-Ruhāwī's religious affiliation remains elusive and confusing to those trying to identify it because he himself was keen to keep it undisclosed. It is evident that al-Ruhāwī aimed his work at the average physician practising within the context of fourth/tenth-century Islamic civilisation, where the majority of medical professionals were religious, without emphasising specific groups of Muslim, Jewish, or Christian physicians. This approach made the book appealing and accessible to medical professionals of various religious affiliations who sought to develop both professional and moral excellence. Notes on the cover of the manuscript of the book, which was the basis for the Arabic edition published in 1992, demonstrate that the book remained of practical relevance to practicing physicians up to the tenth/sixteenth century. On the title page, a handwritten note, by a possibly one of those who read the book, in a small font, reads: "Reviewed in the year 959 [around 1552 CE], with prayers for the one who endowed it ... may God be kind to him and to people." At the top margin of the page, it says: "Dār al-Shifā' endowment," indicating that the book was endowed to a hospital named, Dār al-Shifā', an Arabic term which literally means "house of healing." In the bottom left corner of the same page, a very fine script by one of the physicians serving in the same hospital reads: "Reviewed and benefited from these ethics, by God's grace and mercy, Ḥasan ibn Qāsim, in service to the weak and poor patients at Dār al-Shifā' in the year 979 [around 1571 CE]" (al-Ruhāwī 1992b, 12).

Based on what has been outlined and analysed in this chapter, we argue that there are still various aspects and questions whose analysis deserves further attention from academic researchers interested in the field of Islamic ethics, particularly Islamic bioethics. For instance, what do the appeal and popularity of a classical work like *Adab al-Ṭabīb*, written by an author whose Muslim identity is unverified and whose content does not contain a single Qur'ānic verse or Prophetic tradition, tell us about the scope of the field of Islamic (bio)ethics? How far should "Islamic" be understood in its particularly juristic or theological sense versus its wider religious and civilisational sense? How does the nature of the book and its reception over the centuries relate to the claim often made in Western (bio)ethical literature that only secular ethical discourse can speak the language of public morality, whereas religious discourses are always part of particular morality? Would this claim apply specifically to secularised societies in Western Europe and the United States, or to all societies around the world? Finally, which parts of the medical ethical

discourse introduced by al-Ruhāwī retain continued validity, and which parts need revision due to their lesser relevance to the governing values of the medical profession in our modern time?

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الرؤية الأخلاقية في «نوادير الأصول»

الحكيم الترمذي بين ولائية الأخلاق وولاية السلطنة

شفيفة وعيل

1 المقدمة

يتحرّك الدرس الأخلاقي في أمّهات مصادر التراث الإسلامي من خلال تخصصات مختلفة، من علم الكلام إلى الفقه فالمقاصد والآداب والتصوّف وغيرها، وكلُّ منها يتناول الأخلاق بجزئية تخصصية قد تغفل عن الإحاطة بالرؤية الأخلاقية الإسلامية بوصفها نظريةً مكتملة. ولعلّ نوادر الأصول للحكيم الترمذي يصنع الاستثناء من حيث كونه—في ظاهره—كتاباً حديثاً مزوّداً بملاح علم الحديث روايةً وتحملاً، ولكنه من حيث الدراية والتحليل يختصّ برؤية تتجاوز التخصص الذي تأطر الكتاب ضمنه، ليمنح أدواته من مختلف أساليب الاستنباط بمنحى أخلاقي ذي صبغة صوفية. في هذا الفصل أقرأ الكتاب بوصفه نوعاً تأليفاً علمياً، وأتلمّس موقعه بين عمامة المحدث وجبة الصوفي، لألقي—بعد ذلك—الضوء على رؤيته الأخلاقية وعلاقتها بالسلطة الدينية-الوجدانية والسلطة السياسية التي يقدمها ضمن المشروع الأكبر للحكيم الترمذي: «الولاية».

2 عن الكاتب والكتاب

2.1 الحكيم الترمذي من المحنة إلى المنحة¹

مؤلف كتاب «نوادير الأصول» هو أبو عبد الله محمد بن علي بن الحسين الملقّب بالحكيم الترمذي (ت. 265-320\879-932)، من الأعلام الذين أنجبهم مدينة ترمذ إحدى مدن ما وراء النهر والتي تقع على الضفة الشماليّة من نهر جيحون بالقرب من مصبّ نهر سروخان. وبالرغم من أنّ سنة مولده وسنة وفاته كانتا محلّ خلاف كبير

1 في ترجمته يُراجع: السلمي (1998، 175)؛ أبو نعيم (1996، 233/10)؛ السبكي (1964، 245/2)؛ الذهبي (1983، 439/13)؛ ابن حجر (2002، 386/7)؛ الجيوشي (1980، 9-159).

بين المترجمين نعلم—على الأقل—أنه ولد في بدايات القرن الثالث/التاسع، وتُوفي بين 879/265 و932/320 في مسقط رأسه (الجيوشي 1980، 6-9).

وإذا كانت المصادر تشخّح في توفير سيرة للرجل، فإنّ الحكيم الترمذي نفسه قد أورد بعض تفاصيل سيرته في رسالته «بُدُوْ شَأْن أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ» التي سرد فيها شيئاً من نشأته وطلبه للعلم، وشيئاً من محتته مع المُغرضين ومع السلطان، ثمّ المَنح المعرفيّة التي تبعث ذلك. فمن جملة ما نعرفه عنه أنّ أباه أوّل مشايخه وهو من المشتغلين بالحديث، وأنّه انصرف بادئ الأمر إلى طلب الحديث وعلم الرأي، ثمّ سافر إلى الحجّ في السابعة والعشرين من عمره وسأل الله التوبة والفتح، فانصرف قلبه إلى حفظ القرآن ومسلّك التصوّف. وفي طريقه إلى الحجّ أقام شيئاً بالكوفة ثمّ بالبصرة وأخذ الحديث والفقه عن شيوخها، واستكمل مساره في التعلّم في شتّى المعارف، ففتّح له في التفسير وعلم الكلام والتصوّف واللغة وغيرها. وتجاوز عدد شيوخ الحكيم الترمذيّ في الحديث مئة وستين محدثاً (الجيوشي 1980، 37)، منهم والده عليّ بن الحسن الترمذيّ (ت. القرن الثالث/التاسع)، والجارود بن معاذ (ت. 858/244)، وسفيان بن وكيع (ت. 862/247)، والحسن بن عمر بن شقيق البلخيّ (ت. 935/232). والحكيم معدود في طبقات علماء الحديث (ابن عبد الهادي 1996، 352/2)، فهو من أقران البخاريّ (ت. 870/256) (الأنصاريّ 2007، 254/1)، ومن طبقة رواة الكتب الستّة في الحديث (الصحيحان والسنن الأربعة)، ويشترك معهم في بعض مشايخهم، وقد روى عن عدد من الرواة الذين روى عنهم أصحابها (المزيّ 1980، 230/2؛ 1992، 632/26).

أمّا التصوّف فلا يُعرف له فيه شيوخ إلّا ما رواه فريد الدّين العطار (ت. 1229/627) من أنّ الخضر—عليه السلام—كان يعلّمه المعارف اللدنيّة لمدّة ثلاث سنوات (العطار 2009، 622). وكانت له صحبة مع ثلاثة من أقرانه في التصوّف وهم: يحيى بن الجلاء (ت. 918/306) وأبو تراب الحشنيّ (ت. 859/245) وأحمد بن خضرويه (ت. 854/240). أمّا تلاميذه فقد ذكّر في رسالة «بُدُوْ شَأْن أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ» أنّهم كثير، ولكن لم يتوفّر لنا التعرّف عليهم جميعاً وإن أوردت المصادر بعضهم، منهم: الحسن بن عليّ الجوزجانيّ (ت. القرن الثالث/التاسع)، ومحمّد بن عمر الورّاق الترمذيّ (ت. 893/280)، والقاضي يحيى بن منصور (ت. 962/351)، وغيرهم. وقد ترك الحكيم الترمذيّ موروثاً غنياً من المؤلفات يهتمّ أكثره بتعليل الدين وتأصيله من منظور روحيّ، ومن جملة هذا الموروث: «ختم الأولياء»، و«علل الشريعة»، و«غور الأمور»، و«تحصيل نظائر القرآن»، و«الفروق ومنع الترادف»، وغيرها كثير.

قدّم الحكيم الترمذي أفكاراً جديدة في مجال التصوّف خصوصاً وفي تلقّي العلوم عموماً، وقد ألّبت عليه علماء الرّسوم في الحديث والفقه وبعض الصوفيّة أيضاً، فرُمي بالبدعة وادّعاء النبوة بسبب كتابيه ختم الولاية وعلل الشريعة، وسُعي به لدى السلطان فنفاه إلى بلّغ وكتب عليه الوالي هناك أن لا يعود للحديث في ”الحب“ أيّ التصوّف (الحكيم الترمذي 1960، 390). وقد تلقّته بلخ بالكثير من التقدير والاحترام، فانتشر صيته وارتفع شأنه فيها، وصار قبلة المتعلّمين. ولم يكن الحكيم الترمذي محلّ جدل في زمانه فحسب، بل استمرّ الأمر حتّى بعد وفاته، فممن زكاه وأثنى عليه أبو عبد الرحمن السُّلَميّ (ت. 1021/412) (السلميّ 1998، 175)، وأبو القاسم القُشيريّ (ت. 1073/465) (القشيريّ 2001، 400)، وابن حجر العسقلانيّ (ت. 1448/852) (ابن حجر 2002، 386/7-398)، وجمعٌ غيرهم. وفي المقابل، شتّع عليه ابن العديم (ت. 1262/660) فيما نقله عنه ابن حجر (ابن حجر 2002، 388/7)، وخطّاه ابن تيمية (ت. 1328/728) في بعض المسائل مع اعترافه له بالفضل والمعرفة (ابن تيمية 2005، 137/2).

والسبب الظاهر لمحتنه هو ما نُسب إليه من القول بتفضيل الوليّ على النبيّ في كتابيه «علل الشريعة» و«ختم الأولياء». قال أبو عبد الله السُّلَميّ: ”نَفَوهُ من ترمذ بسبب تأليفه كتاب «ختم الولاية» وكتاب «علل الشريعة»، وقالوا: زعم أنّ للأولياء خاتماً، وأنه يفضّل الولاية ... فجاء إلى بلّغ فأكرموه لموافقته إياهم في المذهب“ (السبكيّ 1964، 245/2؛ ابن عبد الهادي 1996، 353/2). كما اتُّهم بادّعاء النبوة (الحكيم الترمذي 1960، 18). ولكنّ السبب الأعمق لهذه المحنة—فيما أرى—هو موقفه النقديّ من بعض الممارسات العلميّة السائدة في وقته، وخاصّةً في رواية الحديث التي كانت تتسم بالصرامة في التعامل مع النصّ فمزج الحكيم الترمذيّ فيها بين صنعة الحديث وذوق التصوّف، وكان—بالإضافة إلى ذلك—يتوسّع في تعليل أحكام الشريعة جامعاً فيها بين النزعتين العلميّة والروحيّة. فأخذ على بعض أهل الحديث انحباسهم في الإسناد والرواية، إذ ”ليس بأيديهم إلّا ذرّو الكلام، وليس بأيديهم من العلم إلّا قشره“ (الحسينيّ د.ت.، 80). وهو في هذا لا يهاجم علم الحديث وإنّما ينتقد ما كان يراه من مظاهر اهتمام نقله الحديث بالرواية شكلاً مع عدم تحصيل أدوات الفهم: ”فلم يقفوا على ناسخها ومنسوخها وعلى عامّها وخاصّها وعلى غوامض تأويلها، إنّما شأنهم الكتابة والحفظ“ (الحسينيّ د.ت.، 80)، ويصفهم في رسالته «الكلام على معنى لا إله إلّا الله» بأنّهم الذين ”يحفظون أسانيد هذه الأخبار وعدد وجوه روايتها ونقد رجالها وزيافها، وقد ضاعت منهم معانيها وألفاظها. فكم من حديث بتغير كلمة يتغيّر عامّة معنى الحديث، فقد أهملوا هذا التفقّه

وأقبلوا على نقد الرجال، وفلانٌ عن فلان غريب، ثم يروون ما زيفوه“ (نقلًا عن السايح 1988، 47). ويرى الحكيم أنّ اللّباب بأيدي ”الوعاة“ الذين سمعوا الحديث عن أئمة الدين الثقات ”فرعوها، فكان من رعايتها أن استنبطوا وكشفوا عن معانيها، وقلّبوها ظهرًا لبطن؛ تفتيشًا عن وجوه التأويل، فربما تغيّر المعنى بحرف واحد من حروف المعجم... فالوعاة هذا شأنهم، إنّما دورهم في كشف الغطاء عن المعاني وطلب حُسن التأويل“ (نقلًا عن الحسيني د.ت.، 80)، وقد عُرف مثل هذا النقد بين المحدثين أنفسهم حتّى صار ذمّ الفصل بين الرواية وفقه المرويّ شبه تقليد بينهم (انظر مثلاً: الرامهرمزي 1984). ويستعرض الحكيم الترمذيّ في رسالة ”بُدوّ شأن أبي عبد الله“ المِنَح التي تواردت بعد المحنة، فبعد النفي والتهجير والتشنيع أيّده الله بنصره فسقط شأن المُعرضين وانفتحت له الأسباب إلى المعرفة والعلم حتّى علا شأنه وذاع صيته (الحكيم الترمذيّ 1960، 399 فما بعدها). وهذا الجزء بالنّصرة والظهور هو ما يكاد يُنبئ عنه في كتاب ”نوادير الأصول“ في استعراض مفهوميّ تنظيريّ لسيرة الوليّ الإنسان (الولاية الدينيّة الوجدانيّة). فيؤصّل في هذا الإسقاط المقاربة بين الوليّ الإنسان (الولاية الدينيّة الوجدانيّة) والوليّ السلطان (الولاية السياسيّة) من حيث إنّ كليهما مؤيّد بالظهور والنّصرة وبتعبّد الناس بطاعتهما. فالأوّل ”واحد الله في أرضه“، والثاني ”خليفة الله في أرضه“ (انظر: الحكيم الترمذيّ 2010، 424/3؛ 418/6).

2.2 وصف «نوادير الأصول»

لا يبدو «نوادير الأصول» كتابًا بالمفهوم التقليديّ الذي يفترض اشتماله على بنية واضحة: عنوان ومقدمة منهجيّة وتبويب مُحكم، وربّما أيضًا بيان سبب التأليف أحيانًا، فكلّ ذلك لا يبدو متحقّقًا في «نوادير الأصول». أمّا عنوان الكتاب فقد اختلف فيه جزئيًّا أو كليًّا، سواء في النسخ المخطوطة أو في المصادر التي ترجمت للحكيم الترمذيّ. وهذه الاختلافات تمايزت في توجّهين في النظر إلى تصنيف الكتاب، فتوجّه احتفظ له بالشكل الحديثي، وآخر رأى فيه مضمونه الصوفيّ. على التوجّه الأوّل، جاء عنوانُ الكتاب—كما في بعض النسخ المخطوطة—إمّا مختصرًا بلفظ «نوادير الأصول»—وهو العنوان الذي أحال إليه الحكيم الترمذيّ نفسه في بعض كتبه (الحكيم الترمذيّ 1986، 241)—، أو كاملاً بلفظ «نوادير الأصول في أحاديث الرسول»، أو «نوادير الأصول في تفسير أحاديث الرسول»، أو «نوادير الأصول في معرفة أخبار الرسول» (الحكيم الترمذيّ 2010، 43/1؛ حاجي خليفة

د.ت.، 1979/2؛ الباباني 1951، 16/2)، وعلى التوجه الثاني، جاء عنوان الكتاب—كما ورد في كتب التراجم وفي بعض النسخ المخطوطة أيضًا—«سلوة العارفين» (الحكيم الترمذي 2010، 43/1)، أو «سلوة العارفين وبستان الموحدين» (الحكيم الترمذي 2010، 43/1، 46؛ الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 44/1؛ حاجي خليفة د.ت.، 1979/2)، أو «سلوة العارفين وبستان الموحدين وحقائق الموقنين» (الحكيم الترمذي 2010، 44/1).

وكتاب «نواذر الأصول»—على جليل محتواه—لم يلق الاهتمام اللائق به من قِبَل الدارسين إلا القلة منهم، حيث اعتنى الإمام جلال الدين السيوطي (ت. 1505/911) في كتابه «زوائد نواذر الأصول» باستخراج الأحاديث التي زادها الحكيم الترمذي في «نواذر الأصول» على الكتب الستة، ووضع مصطفى بن إسماعيل الإمام (ت. بعد 1877/1294) حواشي على الكتاب سماها «مرقاة الوصول حواشي نواذر الأصول» والذي اختصره عبد الوهاب البريهي (ت. 904/813) في «الدرر النظيم المنتقى من كتاب الترمذي الحكيم». ومع ذلك، فقد ورد العزو إلى «نواذر الأصول» والاقتراس عنه عند المحدثين كالسيوطي، وعند المفسرين كالقرطبي (ت. 1273/671)، وعند أهل التصوف كابن العربي (ت. 1240/638)، وغيرهم. ولعل أحد أسباب قلة الاهتمام بهذا الكتاب هو الجدل الذي ثار حول صاحبه الذي تجاذبه علما الحديث والتصوف، وهما مجالان ظلّا في صدام لوقت طويل.

ولم يُبين الحكيم الترمذي مبررات تأليف هذا الكتاب—كما فعل في سائر مؤلفاته—، ولذلك تنوّعت آراء الباحثين المعاصرين حول الموضوع، فمنهم من قال إنه أراد أن ينافح عن مسلكه الصوفيّ باعتماده على أصول شرعية من الكتاب والسنة (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 51/1)، ومنهم من قال إنه أراد أن ينافح عن التصوف عمومًا (الحكيم الترمذي 2010، 43/1)، ومنهم من قال إنه أراد أن يثبت لنفسه قدمًا راسخة في علم الرواية ليكون فقيهاً بين الفقهاء ومحدثاً بين المحدثين (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 51/1)، ومنهم من قال إنه أراد فقط أن يؤسس منهجاً جديداً يجمع بين الرواية والدراية لفهم أصح للكتاب والسنة (الحكيم الترمذي 2010، 42/1). ولعلّ الأقرب إلى الاعتبار أنه أراد أن يقدم عملاً تأويلياً إشارياً يجمع بين علم النقل وعلم الدراية ولكن دون الدخول إلى دائرة الصراع بين الفقهاء والمحدثين من جهة وبين الصوفية من جهة أخرى. فقد صرح أنّه كان يؤلف أثناء مراجعة ظروفه وتدبره فيها والتأسي عنها، فقال: ”ما صنفتُ حرفاً عن

تدبر ولا يُنسب إليّ شيء منه، ولكن كان إذا اشتد عليّ وقتي أتسلى به“ (القشيري 2001، 400)، ولعلّ ذلك كان في سنوات المحنة والاضطهاد. والأصول التي يقصدها الحكيم الترمذي في العنوان هي أخبارٌ حديثية جعلها مصادر لاستمداداته الإشارية. وأوّل ما طُبِع الكتاب في الأستانة عام 1877/1294 ومعه كتاب «مرقاة الوصول» المذكور سابقاً، وأعاد دار صادر-بيروت-طبعه لاحقاً. وتبلغ هذه الأصول 288 أو 360 أصلٍ وفق «كشف الظنون»، ولكن المطبوع على غير ذلك. فقد اشتملت طبعة دار الكتب العلمية (بتحقيق عبد القادر عطا، 1992) والنسخة المسندة لطبعة دار الجبل (بتحقيق عبد الرحمن عميرة، 1992) والنسخة المسندة لطبعة دار المنهاج (بتحقيق بوبا جيلار، 2015) وطبعة دار يعرب (بتحقيق عبد الحميد محمّد الدرويش، 2004) على 291 أصلٍ. أمّا طبعة مكتبة البخاري (بتحقيق إسماعيل عوض، 2008) فقد أوصلتها إلى 293 أصل، ثم بلغ العدد 294 أصل في طبعة دار النوادر (بتحقيق تكلّة، 2010).

2.3 إشكالية البناء والنوع الكتابي

لا يبدو تبويب الكتاب واضحاً، بل قد أقول إنّه لا تبويب له، ذلك أنّه ليس كتاباً بمعنى الصنعة العلمية المعهودة القائمة على الترتيب والتعاليق بين أجزائه، وافتقاره إلى رؤية تبويبية كالتّي تعتمد مَدُونات الحديث (كالترتيب على المسانيد أو على الموضوعات) يجعلنا نتبعد عن تصنيفه ضمن الصنعة الحديثية. ومع هذا فهو مؤسّس على أصول حديثية التزم الحكيم الترمذي شرحها بأسلوب إشاري جديد ضمن نوع تصنيفي لم تعهده صنعة الرواية والدراية الحديثية استقلالاً. ومن جهة أخرى، ليس الكتاب كتاباً صرفاً في الإشارات والتصوّف، ذلك أنّه يحتفي بالإسناد بشكلٍ قلّ أن تتبناه كتب التفسير الإشاري للنصوص. ولذلك حقّ لنا أن نقول إنّ الحكيم الترمذي في «نوادير الأصول» يؤسّس نهجاً جديداً يجمع بين الرواية والدراية والتأويل الإشاري للحديث، ليكون بذلك أوّل مصنّف من نوعه بهذا التصوّر. وفي الكتاب تشكيل متنوّع للأصول تتجاوزه موضوعات السلوك، والعقيدة، والفقه والتفسير. ويرى عميرة-أحد محقّقي الكتاب-أنّها جاءت وفق أربع حُرُم مؤسّسة هيكلية (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 51/1-54): (1) الوسائل التي يتدرّج فيها الإنسان لينجو من حبال الشيطان [أو ما قد نسميه التحلية]؛ (2) وفقه المؤمن في التزوّد للآخرة [أو ما قد نسميه التحلية]؛ (3) وأصول الفرار إلى الله؛ (4) وسياحات في كتاب الله. غير أنّي لا أرى الكتاب يُفصح عن هذا التقسيم بنسقه التراتبي الذي يقدمه عميرة، فهذه الحُرُم مبعثرة على مدى الكتاب بلا نسق ولا اتّساق تنظيمي أو تعالقي مرتّب.

غياب المنهج في الكتاب يعزّزه غياب مقدّمة يمكن الاستناد إليها لفهم إطار التصنيف ومنهج التأليف. ولذلك لا يمكن أن نفهمه بما هو "كتاب" بقدر ما نستطيع فهمه بما هو "كشكول" دوّن فيه الحكيم الترمذي واردات تدبّر جاءت عفوّ تداعي الذاكرة تسلّى بها عند وقوع الشدائد، لتكون هذه التدوينات من وحي الوقائع اليومية، وهو ما صرّح به المؤلّف نفسه كما رأينا سابقاً. وقد يدلّ على ذلك تكرار الفكرة الواحدة تحت أكثر من أصل، أو تكرارها أثناء شرح أصول ذات عناوين مختلفة، وهو ما نجده في مؤلّفات تصوّف التأملّي المتداعي عموماً. وربّما هذا ما فهمه صاحب "كشف الظنون"، فبعد أن أورد تصريح الحكيم الترمذي المذكور بخصوص قصّده التسلّي عن المصائب بتأليف الكتاب، قال: "وفى تصانيفه يلوح صدق ما يقول، لاسيّما في هذا الكتاب [أي «النواذر»] حيث لم يقدّم خطبةً ولا ترتيباً" (حاجي خليفة د.ت.، 1979). أمّا صاحب «مرقاة الوصول» فيرى أنّ عدم وجود تدبيرٍ وتدبّرٍ في صنعة التصنيف في هذا الكتاب راجعٌ إلى أنّه "من لدن حكيمٍ عليم" (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 49/1 نقلاً عن «مرقاة الوصول»)، أي محض وحي، وهي الدعوى التي نجدها في كثير من مؤلّفات تصوّف (مثلاً: ابن العربي 1985، 19؛ الأمير عبد القادر 2004، 43/1). وقد انفراد عميرة بعنونة الأصول الحديثيّة، ولعلّها محاولة أخرى منه لالتقاط رؤية منهجيّة للكتاب كما فعل مع الترتيب. فهل يمكن أن يكون ذلك قائماً على المخطوطات التي اعتمدها إن أخذنا في الحسبان أنّ التحقيقات الأخرى خالية من عناوين الأصول ولا تعتمد سوى ترقيمها (ما عدا تحقيق جيلار الذي لم أقف عليه)؟

ويصرّح بعض الباحثين أنّ نواذر الأصول هو أول مؤلّفات الحكيم الترمذي مستندلاً على ذلك بغياب الإحالة إلى أيّ من مؤلّفاته السابقة خلافاً ما يفعل في تصانيفه الأخرى (الحسيني د.ت.، 22؛ عوبضة 1993، 16-17). بينما يرى عميرة أنّ الكتاب من آخر ما ألف الرجل، لكونه جامعاً لأصول الرواية وفنون المعارف (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 50/1). وإذا كان الجزم في المسألة يفتقر إلى دلائل، فأميل إلى رأي عميرة لما سأيّته لاحقاً من أنّ الكتاب هو أقرب إلى السيرة الروحيّة والمعرفيّة للحكيم الترمذي.

وأزعم أنّ خصوصيّة هذا الكتاب تقوم على جملة أمور:

الأول: أنّه يدخل ضمن عموم الرؤية العلميّة للحكيم الترمذي والتي تقوم على التعليل والتأصيل. فالكتاب يقدّم نفسه بوصفه كتاب ممارسة طبيعيّة للحياة وتدبّرٍ في مجرياتها، يعلّلها بالتفسير الإشاري ويؤصّلها بالأصول الحديثيّة، خاصّة أنّ الترمذي ربّما كان

من أوائل من استعمل لفظ "المقاصد" في تعليل الأحكام وذلك في رسالته «الصلاة ومقاصدها» ويعلّل—في «النوادر» كذلك—رؤيته الإشاريّة بأصل يستشهد به من الرواية الحديثيّة.

الثاني: أنّ الكتاب يقدّم ملمحاً عن صراع صاحبه ومكابداته الحياتيّة التي عانى منها بسبب رؤاه الصوفيّة، ولذلك نلمس فيه "شرعنة" للتصوّف (أو لتصوّف الحكيم الترمذيّ على وجه الخصوص) من خلال تأصيل تجربته الصوفيّة على أصول من الكتاب والسنة كي يُلجَم من بدّعه. وهذا الأمر يجعلني أرى أنّه متأخّر زمنياً في تصانيف الرجل.

الثالث: أنّه بناءً على ما سبق، يتحرّك الحكيم الترمذيّ—في هذا الكتاب بين الإطار النظريّ لتجربته الروحيّة والإطار التطبيقيّ لها في تجربته الحياتيّة. ففي تصانيفه السابقة أسّس رؤيته حول فكرة الولاية التي أدخلته دوّامة المواجهة والنفي والمكابدات، بينما يفسر في هذا الكتاب حياته ومكابداته بوصفها من تجلّيات نظريّته في الولاية وإن لم يصرّح بأنّ ذلك هو المقصود، لبدأً الكتاب سيرةً مؤصلة ومعللة يُسقط فيها نظريّته على تجربته الحياتيّة. وهو بذلك يقدّم نوعاً آخر لسيرته الذاتيّة يبدو أكثر نضجاً وتفصيلاً وعمقاً من رسالته "بدوّ شأن أبي عبد الله" التي يسرد فيها سيرته بأحداثها الواقعيّة.

ويتّسم نوادر الأصول—ظاهريّاً—بملاصق المنهج الحديثي في الدراية والرواية. فمن حيث الدراية وتحليل المحتوى (الاستنباط والتعليل)، يُعدّ أوّل مصدر في التفسير الإشاريّ للأحاديث، ويستند—في ذلك—إلى مجموعة من الأدوات الاجتهاديّة كأصول الاستنباط والفقه وأدوات التفسير وأصول النظر الكلاميّ الناقد. أمّا من حيث التوثيق أو أصول الرواية، فيضع الحكيم الترمذيّ لنفسه رؤية خاصّة في التلقّي لا يمكن القول بانتمائها إلى مدرسة الجرح والتعديل المعهودة في وقته أو فيما بعده وخالف فيها—أيضاً—منهج الصوفيّة في التحمّل. فمن جهة، درج الصوفيّة على عدم العناية بصنعة نقل الحديث وأسانيدها في رواية الفتوحات العرفانيّة، ويعبّر أبو يزيد البسطاميّ (ت. 875/261) عن ذلك بقوله: "أخذتم علمكم ميّتاً عن ميّت، وأخذنا علمنا عن الحيّ الذي لا يموت" (الشعرانيّ 2018، II). ومع هذا، يبدو الحكيم الترمذيّ في «نوادير الأصول» مُحكِّماً للصنعة الحديثيّة روائيةً؛ حيث يحرص على إيراد الأسانيد المتّصلة، وإن أورد بعض الأحاديث المعلّقة فيقتصر على الصحابيّ في الأغلب الأعمّ وقد يورد تابع التابعي أحياناً، باستثناء حديثين أوردَ فيهما الإسناد كاملاً.

ومن جهة أخرى، لا يتكلّم الحكيم الترمذيّ في نقد الأسانيد ولا يقف على درجتها أو أحوال روايتها إلّا نادراً، ويُجيز الرواية بالمعنى، ويتجلّى ذلك في حديثه في الأصل الثامن

والستين بعد المئتين حيث ضرب أمثلةً حديثةً على ذلك (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 117/4-122). كما يرى أن عبارتي "حدثني" و"أخبرني" -اللتين هما من مصطلحات تحمّل الرواية- لا تنحصران فيما وقع مشافهةً، بل قد تقعان أيضًا على إلقاء المعنى لفظًا أو كتابةً (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 122/4)، وهي رؤية جديدة لا تجري على أصول الرواية وفق تقليد المحدثين. كما أنه يرسم -في جراحة وثقة- لقوانين الجرح والتعديل رؤيةً جديدة ذات صبغة صوفية تقوم على الحكمة التي يعزوها إلى القلب. ذلك أن التصحيح والتضعيف في الرواية ليسا صنعة المحدث المحض ما لم يكن مزودًا بالحكمة التي يفهم بها المعاني ويدرك بواسطتها المباني، فيقول: "ثم لما تداولت هذه الأحاديث طبقات القرون واشتهت عليهم أصول العلم -وهي الحكمة- وافقدوا غور الأمور، كثرت التخليط بحال الزيادة والنقصان والتقديم والتأخير، فالحكاماء ميّزوا رواية الرّواة صحيحها من سقيمها" (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 119/4). وربما كانت هذه النظرات التجديدية في صنعة الحديث من أسباب حكم المحدثين على كتاب «النواذر» بالضّعف (المتقي الهندي 1985، 10/1)؛ لأن من شأنها أن تنقل علم الحديث من كونه علمًا شديد الصرامة ومسورًا بقوانين حازمة إلى كونه علمًا تتلبسه رؤية صوفية تُعزّز ما قرّناه من أن الكتاب تطغى عليه الصبغة الصوفية.

3 أسس الرؤية الأخلاقية للكتاب: ولائية الأخلاق في الولي الإنسان

إن غياب المعطيات الدالة على وجود منهج واضح في الكتاب يجعل من الصعوبة تصوّر وجود نظرية أخلاقية مؤسّسة فيه، ولذلك سأتوسّل باستنطاق "الأصول" (أو الأحاديث) التي أوردها الحكيم الترمذي وأعرض تفسيره لها في محاولة لاستكناه رؤية أخلاقية قائمة في الكتاب. ولا مناص في هذا المنعطف أن أستعرض الإطار النظريّ للرؤية الأخلاقية التي يقدّمها الكتاب من خلال تصوّره لطبيعة الأخلاق، ومصدرها، وغايتها، ثم هيكلتها الروحية من خلال تراتبيتها وتصنيفها.

1.3 منطلقات الرؤية الأخلاقية عند الحكيم الترمذي: الطبيعة والمصدر والغاية
يقدم الحكيم الترمذي تصوّرًا صوفيًا لطبيعة الأخلاق. فمن حيث مصدرها يراها وهيبةً، ويؤسّس ذلك على حديث "إن الأخلاق مخزونة عند الله، فإذا أراد الله بعبد خيرًا منحه منها خُلُقًا" (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 311/2)، وحديث "إن الله قسم بينكم أخلاقكم كما قسم بينكم أرزاقكم" (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 150/1؛ 312/2). ومن حيث فاعليتها،

يرى أنّها "احتمالُ أثقال المكاره" (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 43/4). وبين كون الأخلاق وهبيّةً وكونها فعل "احتمالٍ للمكاره" بما فيه من مجاهدةٍ وكسبٍ إنسانيّ، يشير الحكيم الترمذيّ الجدليّة العقديّة التي حرّكت الدّرس الكلاميّ، وهي مسألة أفعال الله وأفعال العبد. ويكون بذلك رافداً للأشاعرة من حيث اعتباره الأخلاق من أفعال الله وهباً ولكنّها من اختيارات العبد كسباً، ويعبّر عن هذا التفاعل بقوله: "فالأخلاق مَوْضُوعَةٌ فِي الطَّبَعِ، ومُعْقَلَةٌ فِي الصَّدْرِ" (الحكيم الترمذيّ 1992، 40/4).

ويشرح الحكيم الترمذيّ حركيّة هذا التخلّق "في الصدر" وفق رؤية أقلّ ما يُقال عنها إنّها تصوّرٌ صوفيّ لتجليّات الأسماء الإلهيّة الحسنى على قلب العبد وعقله. فاسمُ الله "يُشرق" في صدر العبد، فيتخلّق بمقتضاه بـ "كدّ" بالتطهّر من سيّئ الأخلاق. وإشراق الاسم الإلهيّ على العبد هو تفضّلٌ ومنحة من الله، وإن كان موقوفاً على كدّ العبد في تخلية نفسه من سيّئ الأخلاق لأجل استحقاق تجلّيات الاسم فيما يُشيّعه من خُلُق، وفي ذلك يقول:

فإذا أراد العبدُ أن يتخلّق بِخُلُقٍ من هذه الأخلاق احتاج إلى أن يُمكن له في الصدر الذي هو ساحة القلب، فمن كان أوسع صدرًا كان بمنزلة من كان أوسع مملكةً من المال حتّى تجد قوَادُ المَلِكِ منفسحًا، فيأخذ كلُّ قَائِدٍ ناحيّةً فيتملك فيها على حشمه، فإذا اتسع صدره أخذ كلُّ خُلُقٍ من هذه الأخلاق ناحيّةً من صدره وتمكّن فيه، ويسهل على القلب إنفاذُ أمرِ الله عزّ وجلّ. وإذا ضاق صدره لم يستقرّ فيه خُلُقٌ، بمنزلة أولئك القوَادِ لَمَّا لَمْ يجدوا فسحةً انتقلوا إلى مَلِكٍ آخر أوسع مملكةً منه وأوفر كنوزًا. ولذلك سأل موسى عليه السلام أولَ ما سأل حين بعثه إلى فرعون فقال ﴿رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي﴾ (طه: 25). فيشرح الصّدْرُ قَدَرَ على احتمال أثقال المكروه حيث احتاج إلى أن يستقبل فرعونَ بالمكاره، قد هرب منه خوفًا من القتل. ومبتدأ هذا الأمر أن يعمل في توسيع الصدر حتّى تصير له هذه الأخلاق، وتوسيعه أن يترك الشّهوات والنّهات ويجعل المكاره على النّفس حتّى تصير مدبوعةً، فعندها تطهر الأخلاق وتشرق أنوار الأسماء في صدره، ويغزّر علمه بالله تعالى فيعيش عبدًا غنيًّا بالله ما عاش.

الحكيم الترمذيّ 1992، 48/4-49؛ 2010، 187/6

فالأخلاق صدريّة التفاعل الوجدانيّ من حيث تمكّنها في ضمير العبد، وعقليّة التفاعل التدبيريّ من حيث انعكاسها على الواقع. وبطبيعتها الوجدانيّة والتدبيريّة في آنٍ واحد

يُقيم القلبُ بشقيهِ العقلِ والصدرِ موازينَ التحسين والتقييح. وفي هذا يقول الحكيم الترمذي: "العقل في الرأس، وشعاعه في الصدر، والتدبير للعقل مع القلب في الصدر، لأنَّ عَيْنَ الفؤاد في الصِّدر، وشعاع العقل يُشرق من الصِّدر، فبذلك الإِشراق يهتدي القلب إلى ما حَسُنَ وَقَبِحَ" (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 249/3-250). فالقلب هو المشرِّع، والعقل هو المنفِّذ، والصدر هو ميدان التفاعل، والأخلاق هي الآليات: "فالمَلِك هو القلب وخزائنه جوفُ القلب، فيه كنوز المعرفة وجواهر العلم بالله، والعقل وزيره، والصِّدر فُسْحته وساحته ومملكته، والأخلاق قُوداه، والأركان رعيته ونواحيه، وهي الجوارح السَّبع" (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 40/4). ولكنَّ هذه الآلية مرصودةٌ في كليَّتها لنوع مخصوص من الأخلاق. فإِشراق الاسم الإلهي على الصِّدر هو عند المجبولين منحةٌ لا تتوقَّف على المكابدة، وأمَّا المكابدة فمقتزنة بالتخلُّق لأنَّها سعيٌّ لإِجلاء أدران الصدر كي يتمكَّن فيه نور الاسم الإلهي الذي يُراد التخلُّق بمعناه. يقول الحكيم الترمذي:

وَمَنْ أَشْرَقَ فِي صَدْرِهِ نَوْرُ اسْمٍ مِنْ أَسْمَاءِ اللَّهِ كَانَتْ لَهُ تِلْكَ الْأَخْلَاقُ الَّتِي لَذَلِكَ الْاسْمِ، هَذَا لِلْمَجْبُولِينَ. وَمَنْ تَخَلَّقَ بِذَلِكَ الْخُلُقِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ جُبِلَ عَلَيْهِ كَانَ تَخَلُّقُهُ طَهَارَةً لَصَدْرِهِ وَقَلْبِهِ مِنْ دَنَسِ الْخُلُقِ السَّيِّئِ الَّذِي هُوَ ضِدُّ هَذَا الْخُلُقِ. فَإِذَا تَطَهَّرَ مِنْ سَيِّئِ الْأَخْلَاقِ لِيَتَخَلَّقَ بِمَحَاسِنِ الْأَخْلَاقِ بِجُهْدٍ وَكَدٍّ شَكَرَ اللَّهُ لَهُ ذَلِكَ فَوَجَدَ قَلْبُهُ طَرِيقًا إِلَى ذَلِكَ الْاسْمِ.

الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 44/4

والمجبولون هم أصحاب الكمالات الروحية، وعلى رأسهم الأنبياء. ولذلك يصوِّر الحكيم الترمذي تراتبية الأخلاق بوصفها مسارًا صوفيًّا وفق حركة عروج روحي. فالعباد مُنحوا منها على قدر منازلهم عند الله، والأنبياء أكملهم. وهم—مع ذلك—يتفاوتون، فقد يقلُّ لدى بعضهم شيءٌ من الأخلاق كمثل لدى غيره، ومثَّل الحكيم الترمذي لذلك بيونس—عليه السلام—الذي قلَّ فيه الحِلْم ولذلك سَمَّاه القرآن أَبَقًا ثُمَّ طَهَّرَهُ اللَّهُ مِنْ هَذَا النِّقْصِ بِالْمَحْنَةِ وَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ، وهو فحوى "الكَدِّ" الذي يكابده الإنسان لتلقِّي تجلّيات الاسم الإلهي والتخلُّق به، ولكنَّ كَدَّ يونس هنا كَدُّ كمالِيٍّ لتعلُّقه بمقام النبوة. ونتج عن هذه التراتبية أن يكون—من باب أولى—من واجبات العبودية لله أن يكَدَّ مَنْ لَمْ يُجِبَلْ عَلَى هذه الأخلاق من غير أصحاب الكمالات لبلوغ مراقبها في معراجهم الروحي.

أمَّا الغاية من الأخلاق عند الحكيم الترمذي فهي بلوغ السعادة (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 311/2)، ولكنَّ أيَّ سعادة؟ لقد تداول الحكيم الترمذي كلمة السعادة في سياقات

تربطها بتحصيل ثمرة الإيمان، وبالنجاة في الدنيا والآخرة. ويستفيض في مفهومها أثناء تفسيره لحديث "بُعِثْتُ إِلَيْكُمْ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا رَحْمَةٌ مُّهْدَاةٌ" ليربطها بالأخلاق، ويمنحها بُعداً روحياً يقوم على الحكمة. وينطلق في ذلك من التمييز بين بَعَثَ مُحَمَّدٌ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وبين بَعَثَ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ قَبْلَهُ، فهم قد بُعِثُوا "عَطِيَّةً وَحِجَّةً" بينما بُعِثَ—صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ—"عَطِيَّةً وَهَدِيَّةً": "فَجَعَلَ الْإِيمَانَ وَالْإِسْلَامَ فِي الْعَطِيَّةِ، وَحِكْمَةَ الْإِيمَانِ وَالْإِسْلَامِ فِي الْهَدِيَّةِ" (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 150/3). ومدعاة العَطِيَّةِ الرَّحْمَةُ، ومدعاة الهدية المحبة، والفرق بينهما في المنح فَرَّقُ اصطفاء. فأَمَّةُ مُحَمَّدٍ—صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ—أُمَّةٌ مصطفاهُ لِلْمَحَبَّةِ الْإِلَهِيَّةِ، بينما أُمُّ الرسل قبله لها موقع الرحمة لكي لا يقع عليها العذاب في الدنيا، فَمَنْ قَبِلَ مِنْهُمْ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ السَّابِقِينَ عَطِيَّةً بُورِكَ لَهُ وَنَجَا مِنَ الْعَذَابِ، وَمَنْ لَمْ يَقْبَلْهُمْ قَامَتِ الْحِجَّةُ عَلَيْهِ وَعُوجِلَ بِالْعُقُوبَةِ. ولكن الأمر يختلف في مُحَمَّدٍ—صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ—، فالناس فيه بين مَنْ قَبِلَهُ عَطِيَّةً وَهَدِيَّةً، وَمَنْ قَبِلَهُ عَطِيَّةً وَلَمْ يَفْطِنَ لِلْهَدِيَّةِ، وَمَنْ لَمْ يَقْبَلْهُ عَطِيَّةً وَلَا هَدِيَّةً. فَمَنْ قَبِلَهُ هَدِيَّةً وَعَطِيَّةً "سَعِدَ" وَ"رَشِدَ" وصار من السابقين المقربين، ووَصِفَ السبق والقرب هنا هو وصف روحي لَأَنَّ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ صَنَفَانِ:

صِنْفٌ مِنْهُمْ قَدْ انْفَرَدُوا فِي فِرْدَانِيَّتِهِ، فَخَلَّتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ مِنْ ذِكْرِ نُفُوسِهِمْ، وَاللَّهُ تَعَالَى يَسْتَعْمَلُهُمْ، وَوَحْدَانِيَّتُهُ تَمْلِكُ قُلُوبَهُمْ، وَهَذِهِ صِفَةُ أَبِي بَكْرٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. وَصِنْفٌ مِنْهُمْ لَمْ يَصِلُوا إِلَى هَذِهِ الْحِظَّةِ [أَيِ الْحِظَّةِ]، قَدْ انْكَشَفَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مِنْ جَلَالِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَعَظَمَتِهِ مَا مُلِثَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ مِنْ هَيْبَتِهِ، فَهُمْ الْقَائِمُونَ عَلَى نُفُوسِهِمْ فَلَا يَدْعُونَهَا تَلَحُّظًا إِلَّا إِلَى حَقٍّ، فَالْحَقُّ يَسْتَعْمَلُهُمْ وَالْهَيْبَةُ تَمْلِكُ قُلُوبَهُمْ، وَعَمَرُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ مِنْهُمْ.

الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 30/2؛ 2010، 127/3²

وأما الذين قبلوا العَطِيَّةَ وَلَمْ يَفْطِنُوا لِلْهَدِيَّةِ فِي مُحَمَّدٍ—صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ—فيسعدون في حياتهم الظاهرة وينجون ولكنهم لم يُصِيبُوا ثَمَرَ الرُّشْدِ (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 149/3). والذين أَبَوْا الْعَطِيَّةَ وَالْهَدِيَّةَ كَفَرُوا النَّعْمَةَ وَجَحَدُوا، فَقَلَّ حَظُّهُمْ مِنَ السَّعَادَةِ بَأَنَّ نَجَوْا فَقَطْ مِنَ الْعُقُوبَاتِ الْعَاجِلَةِ فِي الدُّنْيَا—وَالَّتِي وَقَعَتْ عَلَى الْأُمَمِ السَّابِقَةِ—، وتأخَّرَ عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 149/3).

2 بين النسختين اختلاف بالزيادة والنقص، ونسخة عميرة فيها أخطاء في قراءة نص المخطوط، وفيها—هنا—زيادة على ما في نسخة تكلة (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 30/2؛ 2010، 127/3).

2.3 الهيكلة الروحية للأخلاق: التراتبية والتصنيف

إن رؤية الحكيم الترمذي للأخلاق تتجاوز التأصيل العقدي الذي رأيناه في الحديث عن طبيعتها إلى التأصيل الروحي، ويؤكد ذلك تصنيفه لها. فبنية السلم الأخلاقي عنده من حيث المنحة والكسب تقوم على ثلاث مراتب تصاعديّة: الأخلاق الطبيعيّة (أي الجبليّة)، والأخلاق الحسنة، ومكارم الأخلاق أو معاليها. فالأخلاق الطبيعيّة هي التي رُكّب عليها آدمي، كالأكل والشرب، وهي لعموم الناس (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 311/2). ويبدو عنده الأكل والشرب منها مُربكًا في تحديد مفهوم واضح للأخلاق، إذ كيف يكون الأكل والشرب من جملة الأخلاق؟ لعلّ النّظر في السياقات يفضي بنا إلى الفكرة، ففي سياق التأصيل لمصدر الأخلاق يردّ "الجبل" في مقابلة التخلّق الكسبيّ، وهناك يتكلّم الحكيم الترمذي عن الأخلاق العالية بشقيها الجبليّ والكسبيّ، ومن ثمّ قد نفهم أنّ تمثيله بالأكل والشرب—تحديدًا—يشير إلى فطريّة الخلق الذي رُكّب عليه الإنسان في إنسانيّته. وهو ما يشي بأنّ الأخلاق الطبيعيّة—عند الحكيم الترمذي—هي نزعة أصلية أساسية في جوهر الإنسانيّة من حيث حاجة الإنسان الفطريّة إليها لأجل البقاء، ولم أجده يستعمل الخلق بهذا المعنى إلّا في هذا الموضع من الكتاب. أمّا الأخلاق الحسنة—عنده—فهي عموم الأخلاق التي تُقَرَّب إلى الله تعالى، وعددها كثير لا يُحصى لأنّها تدخل في معنى المحبوب من القيم، والمحبوب غير محدود. وأمّا مكارم الأخلاق—ويستعمل الحكيم الترمذي أحيانًا تعبير "معالي الأخلاق"—فهي مجموعة محدّدة تُعدّ عليّة الأخلاق الحسنة، وهي كسبيّة غير وراثيّة "تكون في الرّجل ولا تكون في ابنه، وتكون في الابن ولا تكون في أبيه، وتكون في العبد ولا تكون في سيّده" (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 311/2). يُؤصّل لها الحكيم الترمذي بحديث يورده أكثر من مرّة على مدار كتابه إمّا كليًّا أو جزئيًّا وهو:

إنّ لله تعالى مئةً وسبعة عشر خلقًا، من جاء بخلقٍ منها دخل الجنة بغير حساب. فقلنا: بيّنها لنا. قال: كَظْمُ الغيظ، والعفو عند المقدرة، والصّلة عند القطيعة، والحلم عند السّفه، والوقار عند الطّيش، ووفاء الحقّ عند الجحود، والإطعام عند الجوع، والعطيّة عند المنع، والإصلاح عند الفساد، والتجاوز عن المُسيء، والعطف على الظالم، وقبول المعذرة، والإبانة للحقّ، والتجافي عن دار الغرور، وترك التماذي في الباطل. ألا وليس في أخلاق الله شيء أحبّ إليه من الجود والكرم. فإذا أراد الله بعبدٍ خيرًا وفّقه لأخلاقه فتخلّق بها، وإذا أراد الله بعبدٍ شرًّا خلّى

بينه وبين أخلاق إبليس، وإنَّ من أخلاق إبليس أن يغضب فلا يرضى، وأن يسمع فيحقد، وشراهية النفس وهنتها، وأخذ ما ليس لها، ونزقها إلى اللّهُو والباطل. ألا وإنَّ إبليس ليس هو على أحد أشدَّ منه على القُراء الذين هم عند أنفسهم قُراء، لا يزال فيما بينهم يذهب ويجيء حتّى يُورث بينهم العداوة والبغضاء. فلو قلتُ حقًا ما أقلَّ من يجتمع منهم غدًا في الآخرة إلّا قومٌ عطف بعضهم على بعض، وتَرَكو الحقد والغضب، وألحوا في الطُّلبة إلى الله أن يقبلهم ويقبل معذرتهم.

الحكيم الترمذيّ 1992، 350/1، 312/2، 39/4

وهذه الأخلاق هي الباقية التي تَمّمها النبيّ—صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ—والتي عبّر عنها بقوله: "إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ مَكَارِمَ الْأَخْلَاقِ" (الحكيم الترمذيّ 1992، 312/2). ويفهم الحكيم الترمذيّ الإتمام بأنّه زيادة من الأخلاق اتّصف بها النبيّ—صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ—على ما كان لدى الأنبياء—عليهم السلام—قبله. ويجعل جزاءها استحقاق العبد المتخلّق بها محبة الله بناءً على أصل: "إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يَحِبُّ مَعَالِيَ الْأَخْلَاقِ، فَإِذَا جَعَلَ مِنْ مُحَابَّهِ فِي عَبْدٍ مِنْ عِبِيدِهِ أَنْجَاهُ مُحَبُّوهُ" (الحكيم الترمذيّ 1992، 312/2). وإذا كان الجزاء واقعًا في كلّ حال أيّا كان المتخلّق فإنّ مقداره موقوفٌ على القصد من التخلّق، فالعبد إذا تخلّق بهذه الأخلاق استوجب أن يُعطى معروفًا: فإنّ كان ظالمًا تاب الله عليه، وإن مات من غير توبة غفر الله له بذلك الخلق، وإن كان كافرًا خفّف عنه العذاب (الحكيم الترمذيّ 1992، 312/2)، والله هو صاحب صنائع المعروف لأنّه معروفٌ بالمعروف (الحكيم الترمذيّ 1992، 14/4).

فعقيدة التخلّق بمكارم الأخلاق عند الحكيم الترمذيّ ليست فقط عقيدةً إسلاميّة جزائيّة ترتبط بخشية نار أو برجاء جنّة، بل هي "عقيدة" المروءة العربيّة التي يركّز عليها في أكثر من موضع من كتابه، والتي هي سبب النجاة المطلقة (التوبة أو الغفران) أو الجزئيّة (تخفيف العذاب الآخرويّ). وتفكير الحكيم الترمذيّ في ارتقاء أخلاق المروءة العربيّة إلى مستوى العقيدة في المجتمع العربيّ ما قبل الإسلاميّ مبنيّ على أنّ هذا المجتمع وقع عليه الاصطفاء تأهيلاً لتلقّي الرسالة الإسلاميّة "فبرز ولدُ إسماعيل عليه السلام—وهُم العرب—بما منحهم الله تعالى من أخلاقه" (الحكيم الترمذيّ 1992، 350/1)، والرسول—صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ—عندما جاء إليهم "وجدَهم مهذّبين كرامًا فصاروا صديقين وأبرارًا وأتقياء وحكماء وعلماء بالله تعالى" (الحكيم الترمذيّ 1992،

334/1). فكأنما كوفئ هذا المجتمع العربيّ بالعقيدة الإسلامية جزاءً على تلك المكارم التي هي "شرفٌ وفضيلةٌ في الدُّنيا، ورفعةٌ ووسيلةٌ في الآخرة" (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 315/2)، والتي ليست سبباً في هذا الارتقاء فحسب، ولكنّها—أيضاً—جوهرٌ في الوجود العربيّ. فبالأخلاق فضّل العرب—وفق الحكيم الترمذي—لا باللسان العربيّ (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 333/1)؛ لأنّهم "بالأخلاق شرفوا [أي على بني إسرائيل]، وإلا فالشجرة واحدة، وهو خليل الرحمن" (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 333/1). وفي هذا الارتقاء تلميح إلى أنّ عقيدة الرسالة والتشريع هما نتيجةٌ طبيعيةٌ لعقيدة المروءة. والجزء—كما نرى—غير مقترن بالإيمان بل هو مُستحقٌّ بكلّ حال من الإيمان وعدمه وعلى مدّى زمنيّ مفتوح، فيقتضي أن يكون مُستحقّاً للأفراد والمجتمعات مطلقاً ولكن على أشكال مختلفة. فبالنسبة للأفراد يتراوح مستوى المكافأة بين التوبة والمغفرة وتخفيف العذاب وأما بالنسبة للمجتمعات فيتراوح بين النجاة من العذاب العاجل في الدنيا وبين الاقتصار على العذاب الأخرويّ ليصل إلى استحقاق الاستخلاف على رسالة العقيدة الإلهية "الإسلام"، لأنّه لا يليق بمكارم الأخلاق (التي هي تجلّيات أخلاق الله) إلا أن تُقابل من الله بالمكافأة (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 14/4).

ويستعرض الحكيم الترمذي حديثاً يشمل عشرًا من هذه المكارم التي "تكون في الرُّجل ولا تكون في ابنه، وتكون في الابن ولا تكون في أبيه، وتكون في العبد ولا تكون في سيّده، يقسمها الله تعالى لمن أراد به السعادة: صدق الحديث، وصدق البأس، وإعطاء السائل، والمكافأة بالصنائع، وحفظ الأمانة، وصلة الرّحم، والتذمّم للجار، والتذمّم للصاحب، وإقراء الضّيف، ورأسهنّ الحياء" (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 311/2). ثمّ يُعيد هذه الأصول الأخلاقية العليا إلى أصول أخلاقية أعلى يمكن تصنيفها إلى نوعين: (1) أصول العقيدة، وتشمل صدق الحديث وصدق البأس. (2) وأصول المروءة، وتشمل الحياء، وإعطاء السائل، والمكافأة بالصنيع، وحفظ الأمانة، وصلة الرّحم، والتذمّم للجار والصاحب، وإقراء الضيف (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 314/2-315). هذا فيما يتعلّق بالتصنيف التراتبيّ للأخلاق، لكننا نجد—أيضاً—تصنيفات أخرى مبنية على موضوعها أو على وصف المتخلّق بها، نحو: أخلاق المسافرين، وأخلاق الكفر، وأخلاق المعرفة، وأخلاق المؤمن (الإيمان)، وأخلاق الأنبياء، وأخلاق الفقراء، وأخلاق أهل الجنان، وأخلاق العرب، وأخلاق الكرام، وأخلاق الكلاب. وقد نجد تصنيفات جدلية قائمة على الصراع بين الخير والشرّ نحو: أخلاق الله، وأخلاق إبليس.

أصولها الأعلى	المكارم العليا	
الإيمان بالله	صدق الحديث	أصول العقيدة الإسلامية
الثقة بالله	صدق البأس	
عفة الروح	الحياء	أصول عقيدة المروءة
الرحمة	إعطاء السائل	
الشكر	المكافأة بالصنيع	
الوفاء	حفظ الأمانة	
العطف	صلة الرحم	
نزاهة النفس	التذمُّم للجار	
نزاهة النفس	التذمُّم للمصاحب	
سخاوة النفس	إقراء الضيف	

4 السلطة وولائية الأخلاق عند الحكيم الترمذي

إذا كان كتاب «نواذر الأصول» ينزاح نحو التصوّف فهو لا يعرض رؤية أخلاقية كيفما اتفق، وإنما يحاول بناءها ضمن نطاق فكرة الولاية-الصوفيّة-التي أسس لها الحكيم الترمذي في كتبه الأخرى. وهذا التأسيس الأخلاقيّ العرفانيّ لنظرية الولاية في كلّ منجزه المعرفي لا يخلو من تماسّ معرفي مع رؤيته للولاية السياسيّة. فالولاية-كما يستعرضها في هذا الكتاب-هي ولاية روحية،³ ولكنها لا تُرى إلّا ضمن سلطتين: سلطة المعرفة الدينيّة الوجدانيّة وسلطة الحكم. وارتباط المفردتين بالسلطة في التراث (Palmer 2015, 6) قد يكون أوحى للترمذيّ إجراء مقارنة ورفع حواجز البناء الأخلاقيّ

3 الولاية بالفتح مصدر، وبالكسر اسم، من الوَلَّى ومعناه القرب. في الاصطلاح الصوفيّ تعني القُرب الروحيّ من الله تعالى، وتتميّز في التراث الصوفيّ بنوع من السلطة الوجدانيّة، وفي الاصطلاح الفقهيّ تأتي بمعنى الولاية القضائيّة التي تنبني على صلة القرابة بالمولىّ عليه، كما تأتي بمعنى الولاية السياسيّة أيضًا عندما تتعلّق بالمنصب السياسيّ الذي يمنح صاحبه سلطة تدير مجموعة من الناس سياسيًا وإداريًا.

بينهما في ارتقاء لا تتحقق فيه الأخلاق الولائية السياسية (ولاية السلطان) إلا بالأخلاق الولائية الروحية (الولاية الدينية الوجدانية). ولذلك نجده يداول دلاليًا بين الخليفة والولي عند إرادة الولاية الدينية الوجدانية، ويداول بين الخليفة والحاكم والمليك والأمير عند إرادة الولاية السلطانية. وفي ذلك إشارة إلى سلطة الخلافة عن الله في الولاياتين، فالولي والسلطان من آثار الله في أرضه، ومن غياث الله لعباده (الحكيم الترمذي 2010، 424/3، 418/6). ويبدو موقف الحكيم الترمذي هذا محاولة لتجاوز التصور الشيعي لسلطة الولي التي كان الاتجاه السني قد بدأ يطوره خلال القرن الثالث الهجري/التاسع الميلادي (2015، 53 Palmer). ويرسم الحكيم الترمذي ملامح الولاية من خلال نموذجين يمتدان من نموذج الولي الإنسان المستعرض سابقًا، وهما: ما قد نسميه نموذج الولي-المدينة الذي يقارب فيه حركة الأخلاق في الصراع لأجل السلطة الروحية داخل الإنسان، ونموذج الولي-السلطان الذي يقارب فيه السلطة السياسية من خلال خلق الاعتدال لدى الولي، وخلق العدل لدى الحاكم، واجتماع الخلقين في مفهوم الولاية.

1.4 ولاية الأخلاق في الولي-المدينة

يشحن الحكيم الترمذي كتابه بشكل مكثف بالسحابة الدلالية المتعلقة بالحكم والسياسة والصراع على السلطة في تشبيهه للحراك الأخلاقي داخل نفس الإنسان بالصراع على السلطة السياسية، ويجعل الأخلاق في هذا التمثيل جنودًا يقع عليهم التعويل في النصر. ومما تتضمنه هذه السحابة من ألفاظ: السلطان، والأمير، والجند، والقواد، والعدو، والخارجي، والذل، والخضوع، والنصرة، والتأييد، والغلبة، والعدوان، والاستبداد، والقمع، والإسار، والسلم، والإذعان، والأسر، والسجن، والمُلك، والمحرابة، والتدبير، والحراسة، وبيت المال، والخزائن، والخليفة، والإمام. وكلها تتكاثف لتقدم صورة مفعمة بالمكابدة في التخلق بالأخلاق الحسنة والصراع للتخلي عن الأخلاق السيئة عند تجليات الاسم الإلهي على صدر الإنسان. ويظهر الحكيم الترمذي صراع التخلق هذا بما يشبه إستراتيجية حرب في توصيف المكابدة الإنسانية نحو الترقى الأخلاقي، ونعني بالمكابدة تخلق من ليست الأخلاق فيه جبلة، لأن المجبولين من أصحاب الكمالات الأخلاقية كالأنبياء يكون القلب عندهم هو الأمير، وبموجب عصمتهم لا سبيل لتمكّن منهم النفس، ولذلك هم محصّنون من خوض الصراعات الداخلية. أمّا المتخلق فقلبه المأسور في إسار النفس يبقى في كَرٍّ وفرٍّ بمن معه من الجنود (الأخلاق) حتى تدين

له النَّفس (الخارجي) رَغَبًا أو رَهَبًا، وتَسَلَّم الرعايا (الجوارح). ونستطيع أن نقرأ في هذا المقطع تمثيلًا دقيقًا لهذه الإستراتيجية:

فإذا نظرَ الله إلى عبدٍ "بالرحمة" وقلبه مأسورٌ في إِسار النَّفس، أمده من عنده بما إذا صار المدد إليه تاب. ومن رحمة الله تعالى على عبده إقباله، فإذا أقبل عليه تلظَّت جمرَةُ الإيمان في القلب فتورَدتْ أشجار الخيرات وأينعتْ كما يتورَد بساتينُ الدنيا ويتورَد أشجارها إذا وجد الحرّ. فإذا وجد القلب هذه القوّة أقبل على النَّفس بالزّجر لها بسلطانٍ قويّ حتّى يجمعها، بمنزلة ما ضربنا له المثل: الخارجي إذا سمع أنّ جيشَ أمير المؤمنين قد أقبل هرب عن البلد وخلّى عنها، وخرج الأميرُ من السجن فقعده في إمّره واحتوشته الجنودُ وفرّق الأموال والكنوز التي جاءتْ من أمير المؤمنين في جنده وقصده الخارجي يحاربُه، ويتباعد قليلًا قليلًا والأمير خائفٌ مع هذا الجند لا يأمن بياته وافتراصه [أي اغتنامه]،⁴ فهو مشغولٌ بحرس جنده ونفسه. ويسأل أمير المؤمنين زيادةً في مدده، فلا يزال يُمدّه حتّى إذا أمده بغاية المدد أخذه أسيرًا. ويكون الخارجي قد نظر إلى كثرة المدد فعلم أنّه لا يُقاوم أمير المؤمنين فألقى بيده سلّمًا وأسلم وتاب على يدي أمير المؤمنين. فهذه صفة التائب، إذا تاب احتاج إلى مجانبة النفس ومجاهدتها في كلّ أمر، فلا يزال كذلك ويزداد مددًا وهو لا يأمنها مع ذلك المدد، يخاف أن يثب وثبةً من زوايا جوفه فيأخذها لأنّ مكّرها أعظم من أن يُوصف، حتّى تجلّى لقلبه شأنُ الملكوت وأشرق في صدره أنواره فامتلاً صدر العبد من جلال الله وعظمته. فبسلطان الجلال يأسر النَّفس ويسبيها، وبالعظمة يُؤلّها، فإمّا أن يأخذها بتلك القوّة فيحبسها حتّى تموت في سجن القلب غمًّا، وإمّا أن تُلقِي يديها سلّمًا وتُدعِن للقلب وتنقاد له فتصير في يدي القلب كالأسير.

الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 4/182

فالوليّ هنا بمثابة المدينة في تصوّرها السياسي من حيث تشبيه أعضائه بأركان المُلْك، وتشبيه الصراع بين النفس والقلب فيه بالصراع بين الخارجي وأمير المدينة، وتشبيه الحراك الأخلاقي داخله بالصراع على السلطة، وتشبيه سلطة القلب بالخلافة الشرعيّة، وتشبيه ثورة النَّفس على القلب بثورة الخارجي. فالنفس متمكّنة بأصلها في الصدر، والقلب مسجونٌ لديها تمامًا كالأمير الذي سجنه الخارجي وتحكّم في المدينة وجنودها

4 في طبعة تكلّة: "افتراضه"، ولا معنى لها هنا (الحكيم الترمذي 2010، 6/499).

وأهلها، فإذا وُهب العبد الإقبال على الله يُشرق اسمُ الله الذي هو مَجْلَى "الرحمة" في المثال الذي قدّمه الحكيم الترمذي. وهذا التجلّي هو بمقام الجند الذي يقوم بانقلاب في السلطة ليُمكّن القلب من الخلافة:

وَمَنْ أَشْرَقَ فِي صَدْرِهِ نَوْرُ اسْمٍ مِنْ أَسْمَاءِ اللَّهِ كَانَتْ لَهُ تِلْكَ الْأَخْلَاقُ الَّتِي لَذَلِكَ الْاسْمِ، هَذَا لِلْمَحْبُولِينَ. وَمَنْ تَخَلَّقَ بِذَلِكَ الْخُلُقِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ جُبِلَ عَلَيْهِ كَانَ تَخَلُّقُهُ طَهَارَةً لَصَدْرِهِ وَقَلْبِهِ مِنْ دَنَسِ الْخُلُقِ السَّيِّئِ الَّذِي هُوَ ضِدُّ هَذَا الْخُلُقِ. فَإِذَا تَطَهَّرَ مِنْ سَيِّئِ الْأَخْلَاقِ لَتَخَلَّقَهُ بِمَحَاسِنِ الْأَخْلَاقِ بِجُهْدٍ وَكَدٍّ شَكَرَ اللَّهُ لَهُ ذَلِكَ فَوَجَدَ فِي قَلْبِهِ طَرِيقًا إِلَى ذَلِكَ الْاسْمِ، وَذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ﴿وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ﴾ (العنكبوت: 69). أَحْسَنَ⁵ أَخْلَاقَهُ جَهْدًا، فَكَانَ اللَّهُ مَعَهُ بِالتَّيْيِدِ وَالتُّصْرَةِ وَالْعَوْنِ حَتَّى تَمَّتِ الْمَجَاهِدَةُ، فَأَعْطَى مِنْ نَفْسِهِ الْجُهْدَ وَالطَّاقَةَ فَشَكَرَ اللَّهُ لَهُ ذَلِكَ، فَهَدَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِلَيْهِ أَنْ كَشَفَ عَنْهُ الشُّوْءَ حَتَّى أَشْرَقَ فِي صَدْرِهِ نَوْرُ ذَلِكَ الْاسْمِ ... فَإِذَا وَصَلَ الْقَلْبُ إِلَى رَبِّهِ دَانَ لَهُ، فَعِنْدَهَا أَصَابَ الدِّينَ الَّذِي يَدِينُ اللَّهُ بِهِ.

الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 44/4، 2010، 176/6-177

وميثاق السلطة هنا قائمٌ على التكليف بين الأمير والريّة. فإذا كانت طاعة الجوارح للقلب واجبةً بموجب الأمر الإلهي بطاعة وليّ الأمر—لكون القلب وليّ الأمر هنا—وبموجب عصمة "طاعة الأئمة" المنوطة بطاعة الله تعالى (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 243/2) فإن رعاية القلب لها قائمةٌ وجوبًا على الأمير/القلب بموجب مسؤوليّة الأمانة على الريّة/الجوارح: "فالسمع أمانة، والبصر أمانة، والفرج أمانة، والبطن أمانة، واللسان أمانة، واليد أمانة، والرّجل أمانة" (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 155/3-156). يشرح الحكيم الترمذي ذلك في قوله:

فَإِذَا غَابَ الضَّوْءُ ضَلَّ الْقَلْبُ بِمَنْزِلَةِ قَمَرٍ وَقَعَ فِي كَسُوفٍ. فَكُسُوفُ ضَوْءِ الْأَمَانَةِ فِي ظُلْمَةِ الْخِيَانَةِ ... فَكَلِمَا زَلَّتْ جَارِحَةٌ مِنْ جَوَارِحِكَ يَفْعَلِ حَظَرُهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ فَقَدْ ضَيَّعْتَ الْأَمَانَةَ بِقَدْرِهَا وَانْكَسَفَ مِنْ ضَوْءِ قَمَرِكَ بِقَدْرِهِ، وَنَقَصَ مِنْ وَزْنِ إِيْمَانِكَ

5 في طبعة عميرة: "أحسن الله أخلاقه جهدًا" ولا يستقيم سياق الكلام هكذا، كما سقطت من هذه الطبعة عبارة "فأعطى من نفسه الجهد والطاقة" وهو ما يؤكد أيضًا إقحام لفظ الجلالة بعد كلمة "أحسن" (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 44/4).

غداً بقدّره. فإذا أَحْكَمَتْ شَأْنَ الجوارح السَّبع وجعلتها في وثاق الأمانة فقد نجوت، فإن كان ممّن فُتِحَ لهم الطريق فسارَ إلى الله صار حفظُ الأمانة أصعبَ وأعظمَ خطراً وأوفرَ حظاً من ثمرته، لأنّه حتّى الآن كان في كَسْبِ الجوارح عملاً ينالُ به أجرًا والآن وَقَعَ في كَسْبِ القلبِ سعيًا إلى الله ينال به القُربة. فالحراسةُ ههنا للأمانة من الخواطر، فإن حَرَسَهَا بحَقِّها وصِدَقَها تحوّل الصَّوءُ الذي كان بدءًا شعاعًا يتوهَّج يخطف بصائر النفس.

الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 3/156-157؛ 2010، 5/388-389

2.4 ولائبة الأخلاق في الولي-السلطان

في تفسيره الإشاري للأحاديث النبوية التي اعتبرها أصولاً في التأسيس لرؤيته الأخلاقية، يقرّر الحكيم الترمذي أنّ الأخلاق معراجٌ روحيّ، ويمهّد للعلاق بين الحراك الأخلاقي داخل الإنسان المكابد في عروجه وبين صراع السلطة في الواقع السياسي. لكنّه ينتقل في رصد هذه العلائق إلى مستوى آخر يعرض فيه المكابدة المذكورة سابقاً في التخلّق بنور ما أشرق في الصدر بوصفها ولايةً روحيةً، ثمّ يقرنها بمرتبة استحقاق الإمامة. في صفة أولياء الله وحقيقتهم عند تفسير الحديث القدسيّ: ”مَنْ أَهَانَ لِي وَلِيًّا فَقَدْ بَارَزَنِي بِالْمَحَارَبَةِ، وَإِنِّي لَأَسْرِعُ شَيْءٍ إِلَى نُصْرَةِ أَوْلِيَائِي لِأَنِّي لَأَغْضِبُ لَهُمْ كَمَا يَغْضِبُ اللَّيْثُ الْحَرْبَ [أَيُّ الَّذِي اشْتَدَّ غَضَبُهُ]“ (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 2/232)، يرى الحكيم الترمذي أنّ الوليَّ إمامٌ—بالمعنى المطلق لا بالمعنى السياسيّ—تحديدًا—وأَنّه موعود بالنصر الإلهيِّ لمقامه من خلافة الله في الأرض، ولذلك فمن أهانه أو عاداه يكون مبارزًا لله، ومن بارز الله أنى يسلم؟! وقد أورد زيادةً على الحديث في موضع آخر وهي: ”مَنْ آذَى لِي وَلِيًّا فَقَدْ بَارَزَنِي بِالْمَحَارَبَةِ، وَإِنِّي لَأَسْرِعُ شَيْءٍ فِي نُصْرَةِ أَوْلِيَائِي، أَفِيضُ أَنْ يَفُوتَنِي؟! كَيْفَ وَأَنَا الثَّائِرُ لَهُمْ؟!“ (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 3/91)، وهذه النصرة هي—في الحقيقة—المكافأة بالمعروف على الولاية الدينية الوجدانية:

فالوليّ مَنْ وَلِيَ الله هِدَايَتَهُ وَنَصْرَهُ وَأَخَذَهُ مِنْ نَفْسِهِ وَرَفَعَهُ بِمَحَلِّ عَلَيٍّ⁶، ... جَاهَدَ فَصَدَّقَ اللهُ فِي جِهَادِهِ حَتَّى إِذَا اسْتَفْرَغَ وَسْعَهُ فِي ذَلِكَ ... وَأَشْرَقَ الصَّدْرُ بِالنُّورِ،

6 في طبعة عميرة: ”بمحمل عليّ“، وفيها أيضًا سقط لا بأس به، وثمة أيضًا اختلاف بين نسختي عميرة وتكلة في بعض العبارات (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 2/233-234؛ 2010، 4/149-150).

وكشف السوء، وجعله من خلفاء الأرض إماماً من أئمة الهدى وريباً للقلوب وخريفاً يجتني ثماره، فولي إقامته على طريقه حتى رتب له ما عنده وهو قوله تعالى ﴿وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ﴾ (العنكبوت: 69) فمن أهانه فقد خرج إلى البراز [أي مبارزة الله تعالى] يريد أن يسلبه ما أخذ.

الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 233/2-234؛ 2010، 149/4-150

فإنه إذا حقت للولي الخلافة في الدين وجبت له الطاعة (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 44/4)، ولذلك يُسبغ الحكيم الترمذي على الولي صفات تجعلنا نحار هل يريد به الولاية السياسية أم الولاية الوجدانية، فيقول إن الله:

شهره [أي الولي] في أرضه وجعله إمام خلقه، وصاحب لواء الأولياء، وأمان أهل الأرض ومنظر أهل السماء، وريحانة الجنان، وخاصة الله وموضع نظره ومعدن سره، وسوط الله في أرضه يؤدب به خلقه، ويحيي القلوب الميتة برؤيته، ويرد الخلق إلى طريقه ويتعش به حقوقه، مفتاح الهدى، وسراج الأرض، وأمين صحيفة الأولياء وقائدهم ... فهو سيد الثجباء، وصالح الحكماء، وشفاء الأدواء، وإمام الأطباء، كلامه قيد القلوب، ورؤيته شفاء النفوس، وإقباله قهر الأهواء ... وكهف يلبأ إليه، ومعدن يؤمل ما لديه، وفصل بين الحق والباطل، وهو الصديق والفاروق والولي والعارف والمحدث، واحد الله في أرضه.

الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 96/2-97

وتكاد هذه الأوصاف تقع على "السلطان" (بالمعنى السياسي) الذي يصفه الحكيم الترمذي -وفق الأصل- بأنه "ظل الله يأوي إليه كل مظلوم من عباده. فإذا عدل كان له الأجر وعلى الرعية الشكر، وإذا جار كان عليه الإصر وعلى الرعية الصبر. وإذا جارت الولاة قحطت السماء، وإذا منعت الزكاة هلكت المواشي، وإذا ظهر الزنا ظهر الفقر والمسكنة، وإذا خفرت الذمة أذيل الكفار (أي صارت الدولة دولتهم)". (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 153/4). ونلاحظ تلميح الحكيم الترمذي باستعماله لوصفي "الصديق" و"الفاروق"، وتصريحه باسم صاحبيهما أبي بكر الصديق وعمر الفاروق رضي الله عنهما في وصف أصناف الأولياء المذكورة سابقاً (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 30/2)، فالصحيبان هما خليفان على مرتبة سياسية سلطانية بالإضافة إلى ولايتهما الوجدانية التي يوردها الحكيم الترمذي في مواضع أخرى من كتابه. وقد نقراً ذلك على أنه محاولة أخرى لرفع

الحواجز بين الولايتين الدينية الوجدانية والسلطانية. كما تجتمع الولايتان في خطرهما أيضًا، فالولاية السلطانية تستدعي من الرعية معاملةً يمكن وصفها بالدينية، وأيّ إخلال بها سيكون إخلالاً بمقام صاحبها بوصفه ظلّ الله في أرضه: "فإذا عاملت الملوك بمعاملة الرعية فقد استخففت بحق السلطان، وهو ظلّ الله تعالى في أرضه، به تسكن الثفوس وتجتمع الأمور" (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 410/1)، وتستدعي الولاية الوجدانية التقدير والطاعة في الدين، وعدم الاستهانة بها كما رأينا سابقاً.

والعدل الذي تقوم به الولاية يفيد عند الحكيم الترمذي "القصد بأن تأخذ من كل أمر وسطه" (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 276/1)، وهو درجة من درجات الترقّي النفسي، أي من أعمال القلب (السايح 1988، 92)، ولذلك فهو خلق جامع بين الولايتين عنده. فحين تناول أخلاق المعرفة أورد أصلاً في الولي الإنسان الذي يصفه بالعدل فقال: "... إن من أخلاق المؤمن قوة في دين، وحزمًا في لين، وإيمانًا في يقين، وحرصًا في علم، وشفقة في معة [أي حاوية]، وجلماً في علم، وقصداً في غنى، وتحملاً في فاقة، وتخرجاً في طمع، وكسباً من حلال، وبراً في استقامة، ونشاطاً في هدى، ونهياً عن شهوة، ورحمة لمجهود..." (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 1/4-2). ذلك أن الولي إذا عاد إلى الله "أشرق له نوران: نور الحق ونور العدل. فنور الحق يمنك عن الباطل والمعصية، ونور العدل يمسكك عن الميل في الحق" (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 109/4). وفي صفات أولياء الأمور العادلين، يورد الأصل الآتي: "من ولي من أمر أممي شيئاً فحسنت سريته، رزق الهيبة من قلوبهم، وإذا بسط يده لهم بالمعروف رزق المحبة منهم، وإذا وفر عليهم أموالهم وفر الله عليه ماله، وإذا أنصف الضعيف من القوي قوى الله سلطانه، وإذا عدل مد الله في عمره" (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 124/2). وفي معرض شرحه لهذا الأصل، يربط الحكيم عدالة السلطان بحسن السريرة، ويربط حسن السريرة بحسن الخلق، ويربط حسن الخلق بمحبة الله لعبده ونشره هذه المحبة بين الخلائق، فينقل نموذج الولي الإنسان (ولاية الوجدان) إلى الولي السلطان (ولاية السلطان) منشئاً مقارنة—أو انعكاساً—بين الولايتين، فيقول:

فحسّن السريرة من هيبة الله تعالى. فإذا هاب عبدُ ربّه ظاهراً وباطناً سراً وعلناً هاب الله منه خلقه. وصنائع المعروف لا تكون إلّا من حُسن الخلق، ومن حَسَنَ الله خلقه أحَبّه، ومن أَحَبّه الله ألقى مَحَبَّتَه على قُلُوب عبادِه. قال تعالى لموسى عليه

السلام: ﴿وَأَلْقَيْتُ عَلَيْكَ مَحَبَّةً مِنِّي﴾ (طه: 39)، فكان لا يراه أحدٌ إلا أَحَبَّهُ حتَّى فرَعَوْنُ اللَّعِين الذي كان يذبح بني إسرائيل من أجله وهو يوسعُه في صدره.⁷

الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 124/2

ذلك أنَّ النبوة أكمل مثالٍ على زوال الحواجز بين الولايتين، ويعزّز الحكيم الترمذي هذه المقاربة عندما يضرب المثل على الهيبة والمحبة التي يُلقِيها الله في قلوب الناس تجاه "وليّ الأمر" بنبيّ الله موسى عليه السلام.

فالولي ولاية وجدان يُقيم العدل في عالمه الروحي، حيث يمكن للسلطان (القلب) ويُحسِّن استعمال الجنود (الأخلاق) ويُحسن إلى الرعية (الجوارح)، ولذلك هو "واحد الله في أرضه". وخصوصية كونه واحداً لله في أرضه تضعه بجامع الأمان في نفس مستوى العبارة التي تُطلق على السلطان، وهي أنه "ظلّ الله في أرضه". فالأول "أمان أهل الأرض ومنظر أهل السماء" (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 367/1، 96/2)، والثاني "به تسكن النفوس وتجتمع الأمور" (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 410/1). وهذا التقارب قوامه أنَّ سلطة الخليفة (ولاية السلطان) هي استمدادٌ من سلطة الله، لأنَّ "الخليفة له شعبة من ملك المستخلف" (الحكيم الترمذي 1965، 422). ولذلك لا تُفهم الخلافة إلا بوصفها نظاماً مبنياً على الاصطفاء الروحي وميراثاً نبوياً: "ثم قُبِضَ رسولُ الله صَلَّى الله عليه وسلّم فابْتَعَتْ الله تعالى لهذا الدين أئمة صِدِّيقِينَ خلفاء الأنبياء عليهم السلام وأوتاد الحق، يقومون بالحق وبه يعدلون" (الحكيم الترمذي 1992، 350/1). ولعلّ الحكيم الترمذي في كتابه «ختم الأولياء» كان صريحاً في رفع الحواجز بين الإمامة الدينية الوجدانية والإمامة السلطانية وفي بيان علاقتها بإرث النبوة، وهو ما لا نجده بهذا الوضوح في «نوادر الأصول»، وقد يكون السبب في ذلك أنه كان في «النوادر» أكثر حيطة بعد المحنة التي تعرّض لها. ففي «ختم الأولياء» يقول في معرض إجابته عن سؤال يخصّ صفة الولي الذي له إمامة الولاية ورياستها وختم الولاية:

7 اختلفت الطبقات في العبارة الأخيرة، ففي طبعة عميرة: "كان يذبح بني إسرائيل لأجله وهو يوسعُه في صدره" (الترمذي 1992، 124/2)، وفي طبعة عوض وتكلة: "كان يذبح أمه في جنبه، وهو يُرشفه في صدره" (الحكيم الترمذي 2008، 529؛ 2010، 388/3). وقد يكون الأصح: "كان يذبح بني إسرائيل لأجله وهو يوسعُه في صدره"، أي يوسع له في صدره.

ذلك من الأنبياء قريب، يكاد يلحقهم. قال: فأين مقامه؟ قال: في أعلى منازل الأولياء، في ملك الفردانيّة، وقد انفرد في وحدانيّته ومناجاته كفاً في مجالس المُلْك، وهداياه من خزائن السّعي. قال: وما خزائن السّعي؟ قال: إنّما هي ثلاث خزائن: خزائن المِنّ للأولياء، وخزائن السّعي لهذا الإمام القائد، وخزائن القُرب للأنبياء عليهم السّلام. فهذا مقامه من خزائن المِنّ، ومتناوله من خزائن القُرب، فهو في السّعي أبداً، فمرتبته ههنا، ومتناوله من خزائن الأنبياء عليهم السّلام، قد انكشف له الغطاء عن مقام الأولياء ومراتبهم وعطاياهم وتُخفهم.

الحكيم الترمذيّ 1965، 367

وبزوال الحواجز بين الخلافة والولاية نفهم أنّ الرؤية الأخلاقيّة التي يؤسّس لها الحكيم الترمذيّ ليست مجرد منهج للعروج الروحيّ والخلاص الفرديّ، ولكنّها منهج للعروج المجتمعيّ. ولعلّ ما تميّز به فكرة الولاية لديه عنها لدى غيره ممّن اشتغل عليها لاحقاً وطوّرها إلى رؤية "الإنسان الكامل" أنّها ذات أبعاد حيائيّة واقعيّة، وليست موعلة في التجريد، وأنّها تؤسّس للمدينة الوليّة (المجتمع الوليّ)، وليس فقط للإنسان الوليّ. وقد قلت ذلك، أعود إلى ما كنتُ قرّرتُه في البدء من أنّ هذا الكتاب هو سيرة روحية تنظيريّة إسقاطيّة على واقع حياة الحكيم الترمذيّ. فمكابداته الحيائيّة حوّلتُه من أحد طُلاب علم الرّسوم (الحديث) إلى مريدٍ في علوم الحكمة، ليرتقي فيها حتّى يُمتحنَ بالاضطهاد، وتنتهي المحنة بالتأييد والنصرة والمِنح العرفانيّة، وهي سنّة يرى الحكيم الترمذيّ أنّها شأن الوليّ أيّاً كان سلطاناً أو عارفاً في نصرة الله وتأييده له. لكن لا ينبغي أن نفهم أنّ الرجل يزعم أو يطالب أو حتّى يلمّح إلى استحقاقه الولاية السلطانيّة، لأنّه من حيث يُزيل الفوارق التصوريّة لأخلاق الولايتين ومنزليتهما الدينيّة الوجدانيّة فهو يميّز بين وظيفتيهما. فالوليّ الإنسان أخلاقه تشعّ منه للتأثير الوجدانيّ على الإنسان والمدينة والكون، بينما الوليّ السلطان أخلاقه تُشعّ منه للتأثير الواقعيّ السلطويّ على الإنسان والمدينة والكون. فلكليهما سلطة، الأوّل سلطته على عُمران الروح، والثاني سلطته على عُمران الأرض ومتعلّقات المعيشة. ونفهم من رؤية الحكيم الترمذيّ أنّ الوليّ السلطانيّ ينبغي أن يكون وليّاً وجدانيّاً حتّى يتحقّق فيه مفهوم الولاية السلطانيّة، ولكن لا عكس.

5 الخاتمة

إذا كان كتاب «نواذر الأصول في معرفة أحاديث الرسول» يبدو كتاباً حديثياً شكلاً وعنواناً، فمحتواه يُسفر عن ثلاثة ملامح أضفاها الحكيم الترمذي على الصنعة الحديثية. الملمح الأول له علاقة بالإطار النظري لمشروعه العلمي الذي يقوم على التأصيل والتعليل للدين وعلومه بما في ذلك التصوّف، ويتمثل في تعليل رؤاه الصوفية وبنائها على أصول حديثية، وتوجيهها بما يؤسس لها في مصادرها التشريعية. والثاني له علاقة بأدواته العلمية، ويتمثل في المراجعات النقدية التي أجراها على منهج علم الحديث وآلياته، وفي إضفاء الصبغة الصوفية على صنعة تحمّل الرواية. والثالث هو تعزيزه الأخلاقي العملي أو التمثيلي لمشروعه الصوفي الوجداني الذي تُعدُّ نظرية الولاية جوهره. ونلاحظ من هذه الملامح أنّ الكتاب يؤسس لأربعة أمور: (1) نقل علم رواية الحديث المسوّر بقوانين صارمة تقوم على ضبط السماع والنقل إلى مستوى أعمق في التحمّل، يجعل الفهم والحكمة من أدوات الضبط في الرواية والدقة في الدّراية، (2) وتقديم أولى بواذر التفسير الإشاري في علم الحديث، (3) وتقديم ما يمكن أن يُقرأ على أنّه سيرة تنظيرية لحياته الواقعية بمحنها ومنحها.

هذه المراجعات والبواذر تُخرج الكتاب من ضيق الصنعة الحديثية إلى براح التنظير الصوفي، وغياب هيكل بنائي للكتاب لم يحجب رؤية أخلاقية مؤسّسة يمكن رصدّها. فالحكيم الترمذي يضع—في الكتاب—أساسيات هذه الرؤية التي تبدأ بصياغة مفهوم للأخلاق من حيث طبيعتها الإلهية المصدر والإنسانية الكسب، ومن حيث تصنيفها المعراجي الذي ينطلق من أخلاق الجبلّة التي تشكّل جوهر الإنسان إلى الأخلاق الحسنة التي هي أخلاق القرية، إلى مكارم الأخلاق التي هي خلاصة أخلاق العقيدة وأخلاق المروءة. وفي الربط بين أخلاق العقيدة وأخلاق المروءة، يقدّم الحكيم الترمذي تصوّراً جديداً للارتقاء الأخلاقي في المجتمع العربي القديم من قيم الإنسان المحض إلى قيم الإنسان المؤمن، كما يقدّم تصوّراً لسنة الارتقاء الوجداني في عموم المجتمعات والأوقات. ثمّ يعزّز تصوّره للولاية بالتعليل والتأصيل من خلال ثلاثة مناظير ترتقي وجودياً ومجتمعياً في معراج روعي يقوم على العدل والاعتدال: منظور أخلاقي للوليّ الإنسان بسلطته الدينية الوجدانية، ومنظور أخلاقي للوليّ المدينة بسلطته التدبيرية، ومنظور أخلاقي للوليّ السلطان بسلطته الحُكميّة المجتمعية.

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The Cognitive Therapy of Abū Bakr al-Rāzī's *al-Ṭibb al-Rūḥānī*

Raja Bahlul

1 Introduction

This chapter is a theoretical exploration of *al-Ṭibb al-Rūḥānī* (“Spiritual Medicine”) by Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d. 313/925),¹ analysing the book’s overarching argument. It aims to demonstrate that al-Rāzī’s work constitutes a sustained effort to elaborate and defend three interconnected claims. Firstly, it posits that vice and psychic ailment stem from epistemic deficiencies, where individuals may lack a complete understanding of what is good or the consequences of their actions. Secondly, it asserts the causal efficacy of reason and moral understanding in providing incentives for individuals to believe what is right and act accordingly. Lastly, on the basis of the first two claims, al-Rāzī contends that possessing the right knowledge, under the guidance of reason, is sufficient to set one on the path of virtue and psychic well-being. By investigating these aspects, this chapter seeks to provide an understanding of al-Rāzī’s significant contribution to the field of philosophical ethics and psychological therapy. This chapter begins with a brief background on al-Rāzī’s life, times, and works, contextualising him within the philosophical tradition. It then moves on to discuss the key issues that reflect the book’s overarching argument.

2 Al-Rāzī’s Life, Times and Works

Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Zakariyyā al-Rāzī was born in Rayy, present-day Iran in 250/864. In his late thirties, he embarked on the study of medicine in the ‘Abbāsīd capital, Baghdad. Upon completing his studies, he practised medicine in his native city of Rayy, but he later returned to Baghdad. In both

¹ The precise date of al-Rāzī’s death remains a subject of disagreement, and it is beyond the scope of our current focus to discuss this matter.

places, he directed hospitals and gained fame as a distinguished physician. He enrolled in the service of local rulers, wrote many books on medicine and philosophy, and travelled extensively before he died in his native Rayy in 313/925. Despite his outspoken ideas on philosophical topics and matters of religion, he managed to lead a peaceful life, free from the types of persecution that some of his contemporaries, or near contemporaries, were subjected to, such as Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) and Ibn al-Rawandī (d. 298/911), to mention but two examples from opposite sides of the theological spectrum.

Al-Rāzī lived in the Islamic golden age. During his time, Baghdad was the centre of learning in the civilised world, having benefited from the patronage of a succession of enlightened ‘Abbāsid rulers who actively supported the Arabic translations of much of the legacy of antiquity in the fields of science, medicine, and philosophy. A brief mention of the names of some the figures who lived not long before or after al-Rāzī bears witness to the intellectual achievements and riches of the Islamic civilisation at that point in time. Keeping in mind some uncertainty about the dates of some of the major thinkers of classical Islam, we can see that al-Kindī (d. 256/870), the first philosopher in Islam, died when al-Rāzī was just a child; al-Farābī (d. 339/951), known to Muslims as “the second teacher” (after Aristotle) survived al-Rāzī by some 25 years only; al-Ash‘arī (d. 324/936), one of the key figures in *kalām* (Islamic theology), outlived al-Rāzī by only 10 years; Ibn Ḥanbal, one of the central figures of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), died only 10 years before al-Rāzī was born; and Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna, d. 427/1037) was born a quarter of a century after al-Rāzī’s death. All this and more, attests to the fact that al-Rāzī lived during a period of intellectual ferment and creativity.

To his credit is the fact that he was a creative participant in the intellectual and scientific life of his times. His greatness of stature was such that Arthur Arberry (d. 1969) could claim that “With the possible exception of Avicenna and Averroes [...] no man so powerfully affected the course of learning in the Middle Ages and the early Renaissance as Rhazes” (al-Rāzī 1950, 8). Indeed al-Rāzī’s achievements were varied. He is, of course, primarily known and famous for his medical writings, which continued to be printed in Europe as late as 1866 (al-Rāzī 1950, 8). But of more interest to us here are his contributions to the fields of ethics, religion, and philosophy, where his writings were typically controversial, in fact, so unorthodox as to draw critique and censorship from nearly all sides, philosophers, jurists, and *kalām* figures. In many cases, we know about his views only through fragments preserved by his opponents in books written for rebuttal. This applies, in particular, to the infamous book *Makhārīq al-Anbiyā’* (“On the Tricks of the Prophets”), parts of

which survive in the rebuttal written by his namesake and countryman, the other al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥātim (d. 322/934).²

Al-Rāzī wrote his *al-Ṭibb al-Rūḥānī*, the subject of the present chapter, at the behest of al-Manṣūr ibn Ishāq (d. 302/915), who was governor of Rayy, between the years 290/903 and 296/909. The book was intended to be a companion volume to his medical tract known as *Kitāb al-Manṣūrī* ("The Book for al-Manṣūr") (Mohaghegh 1967, 6). In writing this book al-Rāzī has contributed to the creation of a new genre of writing about spiritual maladies and cures.³ According to Mehdi Mohaghegh (1967, 7), several books bearing titles similar to that of al-Rāzī's own text were produced, often reviewing material covered in al-Rāzī's own book, and having similar divisions. Of these, Mohaghegh mentions Ibn al-Jawzī's (d. 597/1201) *al-Ṭibb al-Rūḥānī*, and we may mention two other books, namely *ʿUyūb al-Nafs* ("The Maladies of the Soul") by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (d. 74/693 or 75/694) and *Mudāwāt al-Nufūs* ("Remedies for the Souls") by Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064). We may take this to be a sign of the influence which al-Rāzī had on those who followed him.

Al-Ṭibb al-Rūḥānī is often discussed in association with *al-Sīra al-Falsafiyya* ("On Philosophical Life"), a short treatise which is commonly viewed as al-Rāzī's intellectual autobiography. On the one hand, Meir Bar-Asher (1989, 130–147) takes the view that the autobiographical treatise is inconsistent with the book: whereas *al-Ṭibb al-Rūḥānī* is hedonistic and this-worldly, *al-Sīra al-Falsafiyya* is more concerned with the life of the intellect and the afterlife. Thérèse-Ann Druart (1996), on the other hand, has argued that the apparent inconsistency can be explained by reference to the different audiences and purposes of the two pieces of writing. Be that as it may, I shall focus solely on the book, leaving al-Rāzī's autobiographical treatise aside.

3 Al-Rāzī and the Philosophical Tradition

Al-Rāzī is often viewed as one of the "free thinkers" of classical Islam, along with such figures as Ibn al-Rāwandī, ʿUmar al-Khayyām (d. 525/1131), and

2 Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī was an Ismāʿīlī proselytiser and a critic of Abū Bakr al-Rāzī. According to Sarah Stroumsa, Abū Ḥātim's *Aʿlām al-Nubuwwa* ("The Proofs of Prophecy") is "our most detailed source for al-Rāzī's anti-prophetic views" (Stroumsa 1999, 94).

3 So must we also say of al-Kindī, in reference to his memorable treatise, *al-Ḥīla li-Dafʿ al-Aḥzān* ("On the Means of Dispelling Sorrows") (al-Kindī 2007). However, al-Rāzī's contribution was more systematic and wider in scope.

Abū al-‘Alā’ al-Ma‘arrī (d. 449/1057). In Stroumsa’s definition of the term, free thinking is the “[advocacy] of autonomous reflection on the major metaphysical and human issues, with no commitment to the monotheist tradition” (Stroumsa 1999, 9). Majid Fakhry, on the other hand, does not offer a definition of “free thinking,” despite his frequent usage of the term. Instead, he proposes an understanding of al-Rāzī and other kindred spirits in the context of “the philosophical awakening that followed in the wake of the introduction of Greek philosophy, and was attended by the rise of a hitherto unknown spirit of free inquiry” (Fakhry 2004, 95). In al-Rāzī’s case, this becomes evident in his belief in the sufficiency of reason for knowledge of the truth and the conduct of human life, with no reference to prophecy (Fakhry 2004, 106).

Non-specialists and people with only but a general knowledge of Islamic intellectual history tend to associate al-Rāzī’s free thinking with the anti-prophetic tracts which are attributed to him. But, in fact, al-Rāzī’s free-thinking reveals itself no less in his ethics than in his discussion of prophecy (see Agraygar 2018; al-Kirmānī 1997). The reason for the aforementioned association is probably the fact that al-Rāzī’s views on prophecy were perceived, at least in retrospect, to have been more revolutionary and intellectually destabilising than his ethical views, which were not, on the whole, something that Islamic thought could not, at least to some degree, accommodate. As luck would have it then, the same free-thinking spirit sparked in al-Rāzī by his introduction to Greek learning climaxed, for posterity, in his anti-prophetism, rather than in the ethical system which he propounded.

Many of al-Rāzī’s views on ethics and related subjects, such as moral psychology, have Greek origins. By the year 263/877 (the year in which the great translator Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq died), many philosophical works by Plato (d. 348 BC), Aristotle (d. 322 BC), and Plotinus (d. 270 CE) had been translated, and such Platonic ideas as the tripartite division of the soul (rational, spirited, and appetitive) were known to al-Rāzī. According to Fakhry, “there can be little doubt that the inspiration for his metaphysical thought is essentially Platonic” (Fakhry 2004, 100). As to his ethical ideas, Lenn Goodman has forcefully argued that al-Rāzī was a hedonist and an Epicurean (Goodman 1971, 5–26). Among many other things, al-Rāzī’s well-known position on the “fear of death” adds little to what is to be found in Epicurus’s (d. 270 BC) *Epistolē pros Menoikea* (“Letter to Menoeceus”) (reprinted in Inwood, and Gerson 1988, 28–32). As we shall also see later in this chapter, al-Rāzī’s views on the relationship between knowledge and virtue bear a clear Platonic stamp.

In this chapter, I will not offer a chapter-by-chapter analysis of the contents of *al-Ṭibb al-Rūḥānī*, nor pause to comment on the many particular assertions that he makes about the sizable list of “spiritual” ailments he proposes to treat.

This has been done by other writers, notably Druart (1996) and Mohaghegh (1967). Rather, I will present a theoretical analysis of the book in terms of a few basic concepts which include the concept of practical reasoning, the idea of moral failure as an “epistemic deficiency,” the causal efficacy of knowledge and understanding, and the idea of cognitive therapy.

4 Vice as Epistemic Deficiency

The first thing we must do to lay the ground for thinking in a theoretical vein about al-Rāzī's discussion of the “spiritual afflictions” (which cause and/or manifest themselves in what people do or fail to do) is to introduce the notion of practical reasoning. The notion can be briefly explained thus: people who have desires and goals, and who find themselves in situations where they must make certain practical decisions, or undertake certain actions, often engage in what might be referred to as “practical reasoning.” They reason, deliberate, or consider what to do, and as a result of this, they either reach a decision to do something, or they do it right away.⁴ Aristotle gives a memorable example of such practical reasoning:

I need a covering, a coat is a covering; I need a coat. What I need I ought to make, I need a coat, I make a coat. And the conclusion *I make a coat* is an action.

ARISTOTLE 1978, 701a10–20

We can reasonably imagine that this bit of practical reasoning takes place in a setting (practical situation) of a certain sort, where one finds oneself needing a covering—perhaps it is getting cold, or perhaps one needs to venture outside the house.

The above is also an example of what Aristotle called “practical syllogism.” To give other examples of such practical reasoning which are closer to al-Rāzī's concerns, we borrow two from Donald Davidson:

Pleasure is to be pursued; this act is pleasant. [So] this act is to be pursued [The agent proceeds to perform the action in question]. No fornication is

4 Practical reasoning thus differs from the kind of reasoning which a mathematician or a logician might engage in, in that the latter does not typically terminate in practical decision or action.

lawful; this is an act of fornication. [So] this act is not lawful [The agent forthwith refrains from performing the action].

DAVIDSON 2001, 33

Now from the point of view of a moralist (al-Rāzī or anyone else) a given piece of practical reasoning may result in an action that is moral, or it may result in an action which is not. Furthermore, to a moralist like al-Rāzī, concerned as he was with character reformation,⁵ the question of why and how someone may fall into moral error must have been ever-present. So, what was al-Rāzī's answer?

The answer, I believe, runs through al-Rāzī's discourse like a subterranean stream which is not visible to the eye, but one whose existence is revealed by the vegetation along its path. In more mundane philosophical language, al-Rāzī's answer is an implicit background assumption which explains his almost exclusive recourse to a certain way of diagnosing and treating spiritual ailments. I submit that according to al-Rāzī, spiritual ailments are, at root, a manifestation of a certain type of deficiency, a deficiency in the knowledge which people bring to bear on their affairs. To use a catchy modern phrase, the cause of spiritual ailment lies in an epistemic deficiency of sorts.⁶

To explain further: epistemic deficiency may reside in not fully knowing the consequences of what one is doing, or it may reside in failure to adopt the right values, or choose for oneself truly moral and/or rationally justifiable goals. To give an example of the first type, suppose I have a goal of helping poor people. Coming upon a poor family sitting at a table for a modest supper, I proceed to destroy their food, in the belief that this will only serve to make them join in a revolution against an unjust social order. Here, it is arguably the case that my goal is moral, but that my knowledge of the nature and consequences of my action was deficient. Not only did my action cause people to go hungry for a night, but it is very doubtful that it was one that could be justified as a way to help poor people.

To illustrate the second type of epistemic deficiency, suppose I have a goal of putting an end to human life on the planet, and I am in a position to push a button which would start a nuclear world war. Putting the two together, I push the nuclear button. It is obvious here where I went wrong. The trouble lies in my goal. In and of itself, it was not a moral goal. I was not ignorant on the score

5 Review al-Rāzī's definition of the goal of "spiritual physick" as "the reformation of the soul's character" (al-Rāzī 1950, 22).

6 The term is borrowed from Mele (1985, 375).

of the chosen instrument, or the consequences of my action, but on the score of the goals and values that a moral being can set for himself.

In *al-Ṭibb al-Rūḥānī*, we find instances of both kinds of moral failure, sometimes relating to one's values and goals, while at other times relating to the actions one chooses to perform. Invariably, we find that some sort of epistemic deficiency causes the failure (alike in thought, desire, or action), as I seek to illustrate in the next section.

5 Knowledge and Psychic Ailments

In the previous section, I made two claims about al-Rāzī's understanding of moral failures. These were: (1) vice is explained by reference to a certain kind of epistemic deficiency, and (2) epistemic deficiency manifests itself, at least, on two levels—the level of goals and values which regulate one's life, and the level of actions which one may undertake. Let us now see how al-Rāzī's texts can be read in this light. The two claims are generalisations of a certain kind; hence they are best supported inductively, in view of the fact that al-Rāzī does not make them explicitly, much less argue for them.

There is hardly a place where al-Rāzī talks about spiritual ailments without reference to the concept of knowledge, either directly, or indirectly (as when he employs concepts such as reason, persuasion, error, intelligence, and understanding, all of which are related to *knowing* in one way or another). He begins his book, quite appropriately, by praising reason: "Reason is the thing without which our state would be the state of wild beasts, of children and lunatics" (al-Rāzī 1950, 20). In essence, we are rational creatures—elsewhere al-Rāzī unequivocally states that the rational soul *is* "the true man" (al-Rāzī 1950, 41). Fairly early on in the book, he goes as far as to define "spiritual physick" as "persuasion through arguments and proofs" (al-Rāzī 1950, 30). Persuasion and proof, of course, do or can yield knowledge of how things are, and may involve giving up mere opinions which do not amount to knowledge. A close look at a few examples of the way al-Rāzī explains the nature of spiritual ailments, and the errors which we may fall into as we deliberate over (sometimes dash into) actions to fulfil our goals, will amply illustrate the structural role of knowledge in al-Rāzī's thinking about these matters.

Let us begin with the matter of the values and goals which we set for ourselves. It goes without saying that one will, normally and for the most part, act in light of the values and goals which one has. Consequently, if these values and goals are of a morally inferior or simply wrong sort then it can hardly be expected that the moral quality of the actions which one undertakes will

be any better. Thus, it behoves the rational agent (“the true man,” according to al-Rāzī (1950, 41)) to know what his values and goals are. He may seek the advice of an intelligent, experienced man to help him discover what is amiss in this thinking or practice (al-Rāzī 1950, 32), and failing that, *we* may (not unreasonably) presume on al-Rāzī’s behalf, that he must rely on his reason. This is not too much to expect, for a man who is willing and able to find another intelligent and experienced man who can diagnose his faults, must already possess enough reason to help himself diagnose his own faults, to some degree at least. For how else would he be able to recognise the intelligent and experienced man in the first place?

We can ask now: What kind of knowledge does one need to have about values and goals, to close at least one path to moral error? Al-Rāzī, in his exploration of human psychology and ethics, sheds light on areas where individuals may fail to have the proper understanding.

Firstly, individuals may fail to know the fact that reason is the noble part of the self and should reign instead of being reigned by the base instincts (without this knowledge, all other types of knowledge would not be accepted nor acquired).

Secondly, concerning pleasure, al-Rāzī emphasises that “Most of those who incline after pleasure and follow it blindly do not know it for what it really is” (al-Rāzī 1950, 40). Thus he argues that pleasure should not be viewed as additional good to what one already has in the natural state. Properly understood,

Pleasure consists simply of the restoration of that condition, which was expelled by the element of pain, while passing from one’s actual state until one returns to the state formerly experienced.

AL-RĀZĪ 1950, 39

For instance, the pleasure of eating follows the pain of hunger but diminishes once one is sated. The reasonable conclusion one should draw from this is that pleasure is not to be sought after; at most one may seek to avoid pain whose removal constitutes pleasure in that one is “restored” to one’s natural state.⁷

Thirdly, considering the value of love, one can also be the victim of conceptual (hence broadly epistemic) error. Here, al-Rāzī offers the corrective: one ought to know that love is not what ignorant people take it to be, viz. “a habit [...] of refined natures and subtle brains, [which] encourages cleanliness, elegance, spruceness and a handsome turn-out” (al-Rāzī 1950, 44). On the contrary, “Love is in fact the habit of gross natures and stupid minds” (al-Rāzī 1950,

⁷ In his recently published book Adamson aptly refers to this as “the restoration theory” of pleasure (Adamson 2021, 185).

45). The things to which it is supposed to lead are not “signs of perfect intelligence and wisdom” (al-Rāzī 1950, 45); and in its carnal form, it is a beastly function which animals (to their credit, one may say) engage in according to nature—“so much and no more” (al-Rāzī 1950, 41).

Fourthly, with regard to miserliness, it is sometimes rational—as when one saves to guard against misfortune and future hardships. But when one is a miser because one “take[s] pleasure in keeping things to [himself] purely for its own sake” there is a difference (al-Rāzī 1950, 64). One catches a glimpse of the inherent irrationality of this type of miserliness “when one asks a person what reason he has for holding on to his possessions and he cannot find any clear and acceptable argument” (al-Rāzī 1950, 64). Clearly, such a person does not understand the nature of the values and goals which he sets for himself. He does not know the proper attitude to take when it comes to acquiring material possessions. If he were to listen to the voice of reason, he would know that the proper attitude towards spending would be one of moderation.

Fifthly, greed stems from erroneous evaluative beliefs, causing individuals to prioritise material desires over rational considerations. The greedy man does not set his priorities correctly; he seems to believe that one lives in order to eat, whereas he should rightly believe that “the appetitive soul is united with the rational soul only in order that it may supply this body, which serves the rational soul as an instrument” (al-Rāzī 1950, 76).

In addition to the aforementioned examples of qualities and activities, one may also consider the goal of ambition—the yearning to ascend to higher ranks and positions in life. A person who is ambitious has simply chosen the wrong goal endeavours for his life: he ought to know that value and the worthy goal do not lie in these endeavours. What is superior to higher rank and social prestige? According to al-Rāzī, the person afflicted with ambition ought to “remember and keep in mind [...] the superiority of reason and rational action” (al-Rāzī 1950, 93).

The cases of pleasure-seeking, love, miserliness, greed, and ambition which we have discussed illustrate the bearing of knowledge (and ignorance) on the values and the goals one sets for oneself.⁸ One can be wrong in one's choice of values and goals. The antidote is nothing but proper knowledge.

Life goals and values are not the only areas where knowledge is relevant for al-Rāzī. Action is another field where knowledge matters a great deal. Here we find a strain of a consequentialist line of argument that runs through al-Rāzī's book from beginning to end: actions have consequences, and agents who undertake wrong actions are ones who do not fully appreciate (that is,

⁸ Review al-Rāzī's constant invocation of such terms as *knowing*, *remembering*, *intelligence*, *reason*, and *rationality*.

know) the consequences of their actions. In other words, they have a case of epistemic deficiency with respect to knowledge of (the consequences of) their actions, regardless of their epistemic situation with respect to the values and goals which they may have set for themselves.

Let us go further into some of the examples explored by al-Rāzī. One such example is love, a potent emotion that often leads individuals to partake in intense and passionate activities. Yet, as al-Rāzī points out, “Many [lovers] are reduced by prolonged insomnia, worry and undernourishment to a state of madness and delusion, of consumption and wasting away” (al-Rāzī 1950, 42). The pleasure derived from love, like any other pleasure, is such that “when it is attained, [it] is in strict proportion to the degree of suffering and pain that stimulate and incite to such pleasure” (al-Rāzī 1950, 42). Moreover, it is a consequence of being in love that it must eventually come to a painful end, for “to part from the beloved is an inescapable necessity, that is to say at death, even if one be secure from all the other mundane accidents and incidents that scatter friends and divide lovers” (al-Rāzī 1950, 42). These are all things which lovers ought to know. To fail to know them is to miscalculate, and miscalculation is an epistemic deficiency.

Another example is conceit, which involves placing a high value on oneself and one’s achievement while underestimating one’s shortcomings (al-Rāzī 1950, 50). What are the consequences of being conceited, and thus engaging in all manner of conceited actions? “One of the calamities of conceit is that it leads to the diminution of the very thing about which a man originally became conceited; for a conceited man never seeks to increase or improve, or acquire from others, the quality about which he is conceited” (al-Rāzī 1950, 50). This self-inflated perspective proves to be detrimental, hindering personal development and fostering stagnation.

Moreover, the adverse effects of envying others warrant our attention. Al-Rāzī denounces envy as a “hurtful disease of the soul” that invites both divine and human wrath upon the envious individual (al-Rāzī 1950, 52). The envious soul bears the burden of “prolonged sorrow, anxiety and care,” while the body endures “prolonged insomnia and malnutrition” (al-Rāzī 1950, 56). In sum, envy “fuddles [the envier’s] mind and tortures the body; by preoccupying his soul and weakening his body it enfeebles his cunning and endeavours against the envied if it continues long enough” (al-Rāzī 1950, 56). As we contemplate these examples, it becomes evident that proper knowledge of values and goals is indispensable for a life lived virtuously.

Action undertaken in anger is a straightforward case of regrettable consequences. For example, the angry person strikes, but being blinded by his

anger, he does not know the right measure in retaliation. "Upon my word," says al-Rāzī, "there is no great difference between the man who loses his powers of thought and reflection when he is angry and a lunatic" (al-Rāzī 1950, 59). Action undertaken in a fit of anger may have consequences for the person himself too; al-Rāzī, for example, reports seeing a man "get into a rage and scream and spit blood on the spot" (al-Rāzī 1950, 59).

To give one final example, consider ambition and the consequences of embarking on its path. To begin with, there is the emotional strain involved when we "press and exhaust ourselves, in order to rise to a grander state" (al-Rāzī 1950, 95). Having reached his goal "it is not long before [the ambitious person] loses all happiness and enjoyment of it; for his new circumstances become like all other customary and usual conditions" (al-Rāzī 1950, 95). As he rises higher and higher in rank, he becomes weary from his continuous exertions, fearful about the loss of rank, and stressed by the need to adapt to new situations (al-Rāzī 1950, 92).

In all of these examples al-Rāzī leaves us with the strong impression that the victims of these various ailments do not fully know what their actions mean, what their consequences are. To al-Rāzī, not only are these types of action misguided, but their consequences are foreseeable by any man who is willing to consult reason. This follows from the very nature and function of reason, as al-Rāzī conceives of it. For it is the function of reason to put knowledge of consequences at our command. In the very first chapter of his book entitled *Faḍl al-Aql wa-Madhuh* ("On the Excellence and Praise of Reason"), al-Rāzī credits reason with quite a few things, including useful inventions, medical knowledge, knowledge of the physical world, knowledge of "obscure and remote matters," but, more interestingly, being able to "picture our intellectual acts before they become manifest[ed] to the senses, so that we see them exactly as though we had sensed them [...]" (al-Rāzī 1950, 20–21). Thus, for him, it is a mark of reason that we should be able to conceive of the consequences of our actions before we undertake them. Failure to put reason to use in regard to consequences is thus an epistemic failure because reason is a source of knowledge; to lapse out of reason is to lapse into ignorance, which can straightforwardly lead to engaging in misguided action.

Thus, we can see how it is that, for al-Rāzī, vice, moral failure, and other spiritual ailments have their source in our failure to make use of reason, or in his words, allowing ourselves to be ruled by passion rather than reason. As reason is a spring (if not *the* spring) of knowledge, failure to be guided by it is an epistemic deficiency. It remains for us to see how al-Rāzī makes use of these insights in his method of treating spiritual ailments.

6 Al-Rāzī's Cognitive Therapy

We begin by drawing attention to an idea on which al-Rāzī's type of therapy is based, one whose importance cannot be overemphasised. This is the idea that sheer knowledge (belief, understanding, realisation) is causally efficacious, in the sense that it can bring about changes in desires and behaviour, including, of course, actions which one may undertake or refrain from undertaking. There is no explicit acknowledgement of this idea, but we see it very much at work in the recommendations which he offers for treating psychic ailments of different kinds.

Typically, we find al-Rāzī using several techniques, singly or in combination. Firstly there is a narrative technique, which involves telling stories, anecdotes and giving examples; secondly, there is the imaginative technique where al-Rāzī invites the "patient" to picture or imagine situations; thirdly, there is a conceptual technique where al-Rāzī analyses concepts, offers definitions, and asks the patient to dwell on thoughts of consequences; finally (at his best) al-Rāzī employs a demonstrative technique in the course of which he provides arguments and proofs that recommend wise choices or right actions.

Now all of these activities which we have just mentioned are (to varying degrees) cognitive, in the sense that they put the mind of the patient in a thinking mode. For what are illustrative stories, examples, imaginings, analyses of concepts, and arguments but different modes of ideation? A patient who is paying attention to any of the things which his "spiritual doctor" is doing is bound to think and put things together, and if all goes well he comes to believe, know, or even desire certain things which he did not hitherto believe, know, or desire. All of this is a thinking (which is to say, a cognitive) activity in the broad sense of the term. If al-Rāzī's method of treatment involves some or many of the activities which we have just enumerated, then it is, by definition, a cognitive type of therapy.

To complete our reconstruction of al-Rāzī's therapeutic strategy, we need only to mention the rather uncontroversial idea that we are normally moved to act by our motivations, incentives, and desires. Not all the time, of course, but certainly in normal situations where there are no obstacles, internal or external, to stand in the way of our acting. You desire to drink, and in the right situation, this desire moves you to reach out for a glass of water before you—unless your hands are tied, or you believe the water is not fit for drinking, and so on. Al-Rāzī's therapy tacitly implies that when our beliefs are set right (i.e., when we have knowledge of how things are) and when our motivations fall in line with our right beliefs, right actions will follow. Vice will have no place in the system of things. Without this assumption (this rather uncontroversial idea) it

is hard to imagine what good it would be to reason with someone about making a decision or taking an action.

We can now look at some examples of al-Rāzī's therapy at work. We begin with one, perhaps simplistic, example of how knowledge (vouchsafed in this instance by storytelling) provides an incentive for action. Al-Rāzī tells a story of an encounter between a learned *shaykh* (a philosopher) and an ostentatious aesthete who sets high store on love, eloquence, literature, lexicography and artistic achievement, thinking that this is what science really is. Initially proud and confident, the fellow is asked to answer questions about what we nowadays would call the philosophy of science—e.g., whether the truths of science were necessary (objective) or conventional (al-Rāzī 1950, 45–46). The fellow is made to contradict himself several times in a short space, revealing the superficiality of his learning, as well as the activities which he greatly values. Having been reduced to a “state of shame and great confusion and dismay,” he is admonished by the *shaykh* to taste the real science (al-Rāzī 1950, 47).

Al-Rāzī states the purpose of this story thus: “We have only recounted this story so that it may serve as an additional *encouragement and incentive* to the nobler part [of the soul]” (1950, 47, emphasis added). Encouragement and incentive: these words are significant, for as we have said, if all goes with the spiritual therapy of the type which al-Rāzī espouses, new motivations, incentives, and desires may be created in the soul, with the expectation that these motivations will eventually lead to actions that are different from those based on a cognitively unenlightened state. Simple-minded as the story may appear to our modern sensibilities, there is no reason for us to belittle its significance. It is an edifying story, for sure, but who is to say that edifying stories have no role in our lives, in our educational practices, and the way we tend to learn from the experiences of others about whom stories are told? Simple-minded or not, what matters to us is that it reveals the cognitive, mind-involving nature of al-Rāzī's therapy.

Another, perhaps more compelling example is provided by al-Rāzī's treatment of envy. Al-Rāzī's attack here is frontal: “A method of *repelling* it is for the intelligent man *to examine* envy” (al-Rāzī 1950, 52, emphasis added). *To repel* is (or is eventually) a type of action, while *to examine* is a type of cognitive activity. How does one engage in the latter, and what outcome can be expected? Al-Rāzī uses a battery of arguments designed to show how irrational envy is. Over and over again al-Rāzī makes the point that the envier has no rational grounds for resenting those who are more fortunate than him. “[T]he envious man is stamped as resenting what happens to the advantage of those who never injured or offended him” (al-Rāzī 1950, 52). Further, “[...] the person envied has never deprived the envier of any of his possessions, or prevented him from

achieving anything that he might have gained, or used him in any way to his own advantage" (al-Rāzī 1950, 53). Besides, why should he, the envier, envy only the more fortunate neighbour whom he sees? In all consistency, "[...] should he not envy those living [in the lap of luxury] in India and China?" (al-Rāzī 1950, 53). If it is "folly and madness to grieve over what [the Indian and the Chinese] have obtained," it should be equally folly and madness to grieve over what your neighbour has achieved (al-Rāzī 1950, 53). For the fact that you can see him but not them should make no difference (al-Rāzī 1950, 53), or at least no rationally acceptable difference (as we might more guardedly add). Furthermore, it is not true that the envier has a greater right to, or need of, the goods which the envied party has (al-Rāzī 1950, 55). Lastly, there are various ways in which the fortune of the envied may work to the benefit of the envier (al-Rāzī 1950, 55).

In short, envy is against reason. It is an irrational attitude to take towards others. Al-Rāzī expects that dwelling on these very reasonable arguments will *repel* envy. But how can this happen, unless it is thought that knowledge is something that can, in and of itself, move us to desire or act in a certain way? This is how it is normally—we act on what we know, believe, or desire. Thus, it would be a mistake to think that reasoning is *inert*, in the sense of leaving everything as it is. Reasoning isn't and doesn't: "[...] the reasonable man *will rein* his animal soul by means of the perspicacity of his rational soul" (al-Rāzī 1950, 5, emphasis added). *To rein in* is a power which the rational soul has.

The causal efficacy of right reason is even more patent in al-Rāzī's treatment of grief. Various cognitive terms are invoked in the process of reasoning and are followed by claims, or expectations, regarding the practical behaviour-involving outcome of reasoning about grief. Initially "the intelligent man" is invited to examine and consider that "nothing is constant or permanent as an individual, but rather that all things pass away and perish and change and decay and vanish" (al-Rāzī 1950, 72). These cognitive premises, derived from logical and natural laws, are immediately followed by an assertion concerning the affective state of the patient: "When he reflects on all of these things, he ought not to take too much to heart or feel too outraged or stricken by the sudden deprivation of anything" (al-Rāzī 1950, 72). Furthermore, accepting the non-permanence of good things is a rational thing to do "So long as [one] goes on desiring that they should survive forever, he is yearning for the impossible" (al-Rāzī 1950, 72), which is arguably an irrational desire. Recognition of the irrationality of this desire may go some way toward unsettling the feeling of grief. Such a realisation is expected to be followed by such a state of feeling, which can naturally be translated into appropriate action.

There are, moreover, at least two other less logic-involving but equally cognitive considerations which al-Rāzī brings to bear on his treatment of grief

here. Both can be expected to “assuage the impact of grief” (al-Rāzī 1950, 73). One of them is for the intelligent man “to remind himself, when the misfortune is upon him, how it will presently pass and give way and he will return once more to normality” (al-Rāzī 1950, 73). This is obviously a cognitive act of looking at the bright side, saying to oneself, as it were, that the sun will rise tomorrow. The other, equally cognitive, act is to derive some consolation “by reminding oneself how many there are that share one’s misfortunes, and how scarcely a single man is free of them” (al-Rāzī 1950, 73).⁹

The treatments of love, envy, and grief are but three examples of al-Rāzī’s therapy at work. They may be more perspicuous than some of the other examples to be found throughout al-Rāzī’s book. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the book as a whole sustains a simple argument: Ailments of the soul result from lack of proper knowledge (discussed in section 3 above); when ignorance is replaced by proper knowledge, the ailing patient is set on the path to healing (discussed in section 4). What we did in the present section is illustrate how the principles on which the argument is based can be applied in therapeutic practice.¹⁰

7 Al-Rāzī and the Problem of Incontinence

Al-Rāzī was not the first to think of vice and “spiritual” ill-being in terms of ailment, disease or malfunction. This view goes back to Plato and Aristotle (and Socrates). Thus, we find Aristotle describing the incontinent man, who might “follow pleasure blindly” (to use al-Rāzī’s words), as someone who is “asleep or drunk” (Aristotle 2000, 1152a14–15). Plato is even more forthright about describing virtue and vice in terms of health and disease:

And injustice [...] is the opposite of justice, and is inharmonious and unnatural, being to the soul what disease is to the body [...] And virtue is the health [...] and well-being of the soul, and vice is the disease and weakness and deformity of the soul.

Plato 1982b, 444A

9 Much of what we find in al-Rāzī’s chapter “Fī al-Ghamm” (“On Grief”) repeats what al-Kindī says in his *al-Ḥila li-Dafʿ al-Aḥzān* (al-Kindī 2007). Influence cannot be ruled out, but it is probable that they were both drawing on the Greek and Hellenistic traditions of their time.

10 According to Adamson, al-Rāzī viewed ethics as “a kind of medicine” (Adamson 2021, 181). This is not inconsistent with our interpretation of al-Rāzī. What we are saying is that al-Rāzī’s medicine was a kind of *applied knowledge* of ethics.

A-Rāzī as also not the first to think of vice, and psychological ill-being in terms of lacking the right knowledge that is vouchsafed by the use of reason. Thus, according to Aristotle, “The same person cannot be practically wise and incontinent at the same time” (Aristotle 2000, 1152a9–10). And while the “rest of the world” may believe “that knowledge is [not] a principle of strength, rule, or command,” Plato is of the view that

[...] knowledge is a noble and commanding thing, which cannot be overcome, and will not allow a man, if he only knows the difference of good and evil, to do anything which is contrary to knowledge, but that wisdom will have strength to help him.

Plato 1982a, 325B

Al-Rāzī is thus following a Greek tradition of thinking about virtue and happiness being the fruits of having knowledge and living under the guidance of reason. Nevertheless, there is a difficulty which al-Rāzī does not address in his *al-Ṭibb al-Rūḥānī*. This difficulty is much discussed in the writings of Plato and Aristotle, and it continues to be discussed now, not just as a problem of how Plato and Aristotle are to be interpreted, but also as a problem that deserves interest in its own right. That al-Rāzī does not recognise the problem may be a reflection of a cursory or incomplete knowledge of the tradition, or it may be due to the fact that, being a physician, his interest lies more in treatment than in philosophical theory.

A good (albeit somewhat literary) way of stating the difficulty is the challenge posed by Fyodor Dostoevsky (d. 1881) in his *Zapiski iz Podpól'ya* (“Notes from the Underground”), which Davidson also makes use of in his text (Davidson 2001). Alluding probably to the Greeks, Dostoevsky asks:

Oh, tell me, who was the first to proclaim that man does dirty only because he doesn't know his real interests; and that were he to be enlightened [...] man would immediately stop doing dirty, would immediately become good and noble? What is to be done with the millions of facts testifying to how people knowingly, that is, fully understanding their real profit, would put it in second place and throw themselves onto another path, a risk, perchance, not compelled by anyone or anything?

DOSTOEVSKY 2004, 19–20

Even if not borne by “millions of facts” as Dostoevsky claims, the problem is one of those “appearances” which theory of virtuous behaviour that is worth its salt must try to account for. In the case of the theory that Plato, Aristotle,

and al-Rāzī subscribe to, the problem is particularly acute in that the theory seems to make unvirtuous action practically impossible in the presence of knowledge. According to the Aristotelian account of practical syllogism which we briefly explained earlier in this chapter, the agent (say, a diabetic) believes that: such-and-such (eating a large quantity of dates) ought not to be done; this is an instance of such-and-such (e.g., the option of eating a large quantity of dates); therefore, this ought not to be done. And the conclusion, says Aristotle, is an action, of avoidance. How can we then explain the fact that many diabetic agents nonetheless proceed to eat a large quantity of dates? This ought not happen, but it does. We need to explain this.

Plato grapples with this problem in his dialogue *Protagoras* where his Socrates (d. 399 BC) seems to think that the problem is only apparent, it being the case that that the *truly* knowledgeable man would not indulge in unvirtuous action. The idea that one (or one's reason) may be overcome by a near-to-hand pleasure, which leads him to do something against his long-term interest, does not apply to the man who truly has knowledge, because "knowledge is a noble and commanding thing, which cannot be overcome" (Plato 1892a, 352B). The true knower who places himself under the guidance or reason will perform a strict calculus of good and evil, pleasure and pain, present and future, and will figure out the balance and act accordingly. When present pleasures appear great to us while distant evils appear small, "the art of measurement would do away with the effect of appearances" (Plato 1892a, 356D). Thus, it emerges that knowledge of measuring, "when the question is one of excess and defect," is the "saving principle of our lives" (Plato 1892a, 356D). The incontinent man who is deceived by appearances is not good at measuring. His is a case of epistemic deficiency. He does not have knowledge, despite what he may be thinking. This, we may presume, is how Plato would respond to Dostoevsky's challenge.

Aristotle may also be taken to be referring to "deceptive appearances" which can addle the mind and thus lead to epistemic deficiency. He discusses "the influence of the ways [people] are affected," and mentions such "ways" as drunkenness, spirited feelings, sexual appetites and "some other such things [which] clearly alter our bodily condition as well, and in some people even produce attacks of madness" (Aristotle 2000, 1147a13–24). These "deceptive appearances" serve as a reminder of the complexities inherent in human cognition and the importance of critical self-awareness in navigating the intricacies of knowledge and understanding.

According to Aristotle, incontinent people "succumb [...] to [temptations] that most people rise superior to" (Aristotle 2000, 1150a13–14). But, clearly, this may be the case with other people who are not affected in the aforementioned

“ways.” Aristotle’s intervention at this point constitutes the progress which he makes beyond Socrates and Plato. According to him, in addition to knowledge, *character* is an important consideration for understanding continence, self-control, and temperance. As Alfred Mele rightly observes, Aristotle describes the continent person, “not as a person whose ‘good’ desires outweigh his ‘bad’ ones with a commendable frequency, but rather as one whose ‘desiring element’ [...] is obedient to his ‘rational principle’” (Mele 1985, 381; cf. Aristotle 2000, 1102b26–28).

Aristotle’s “dispositional account of continence” (Mele 1985, 380) is borne out by several statements such as the following:

[R]ational choice involves not only intellect and thought, but a state of character; for acting well and its contrary require thought and character.

ARISTOTLE 2000, 1139a45–47

[The] practically wise person is at the same time good in character. Again, a person is practically wise not only by knowing, but also by being disposed to act; and the incontinent person is not disposed to act.

ARISTOTLE 2000, 1152a11–15

Is any of this to be found in al-Rāzī? To be fair to al-Rāzī, in working out the details of his cognitive style of therapy, he *does* refer to character. Moreover, one may charitably interpret his many discussions of the consequences of incontinent action as hinting at errors of calculation, which would allow us to say, for example, that the diabetic agent who embarks on eating a large quantity of dates is deceived, by the nearness of the lesser pleasure, into thinking that it outweighs the distant greater pain. While we are not able to prove the second claim by a reference to al-Rāzī text (it is merely a conjecture, after all), the first claim can be amply supported. Speaking of character in his chapter about anxiety, al-Rāzī says:

Because men differ so much in temperament and habit, there is also a difference in the amount of anxiety and worry they can stand; some can endure a great deal of them without being adversely affected, while others are unable to put up with so much. This power of endurance needs to be looked after and taken care of and gradually increased as much as possible before the matter becomes too difficult; habit is of great help and assistance here.

AL-RĀZĪ 1950, 66

Moreover, al-Rāzī's talk of the reasonable man being able to "rein his animal soul by means of the perspicacity of his rational soul" (al-Rāzī 1950, 55) bears more than a slight resemblance to Aristotle's idea of the "desiring element" being obedient to the "rational principle". Al-Rāzī, lastly, devotes an entire chapter to "al-Sira al-Fāḍila" ("The Virtuous Life") in his book, where he outlines a virtuous way of living that is inseparable from possessing a virtuous character.

Nevertheless, al-Rāzī does not offer these ideas as a conscious response to the problem posed by the fact that it is possible for one to knowingly do what is wrong (Dostoevsky's challenge). The idea of this possibility does not seem to have crossed his mind, and so when invoking character, or hinting at errors of calculation, this comes across as something which common sense might have suggested, not as something which can be used to alleviate the pressure of the possibility of knowingly doing that which is wrong. Is there a way to explain the omission other than by reference to his possibly cursory or incomplete knowledge of the Greek tradition, or his overwhelming interest in medical practice, rather than theory?

In his discussion of Aristotle, Mele (1985) considers why Aristotle stopped short of taking seriously the notion of full-blown *akrasia*, which can be explained as someone undertaking, with full knowledge, and with no rational explanation or natural cause, a course of action which is against his own happiness or interest. Precisely this is what seems to be contemplated in Dostoevsky's text, where Dostoevsky speaks of people who "fully understanding their real profit [...] throw themselves onto another path [...] not compelled by anyone or anything [...]" (Dostoevsky 2004, 19–20). Mele (1985, 89) suggests that that it may have been an inability on the part of Plato, Aristotle and the Greek tradition, in general, to think that humans could be so irrational as to do in *full* knowledge what is against their good. Mele glosses this as a kind of optimism about the human condition, or "men as they are," as he puts it (Mele 1985, 89).

Here we find something that al-Rāzī can identify with. Al-Rāzī is well-known for his whole-hearted espousal of the Greek philosophical tradition, and he may thus come under the scope of the suggestion offered by Mele: perhaps it was beyond his kin to think of *akrasia* to begin with, much less full-blown *akrasia*. To Mele's suggestion, we can add another which applies to al-Rāzī and the Greeks equally: theirs was a culture that had no place for any conception or doctrine of original sin, a doctrine that implies that man has a corrupted nature which is inherently prone to sin. Neither Islam nor the Greek tradition had a place for the notion of fallen man, which took root in Western thought after the advent of Christianity.

The experiences of modern man, and the atrocities of recent times may tell a story which is closer to the one which Dostoevsky tells than what we find in al-Rāzī, Plato and Aristotle. But this is a long discussion which we cannot engage in. We shall thus conclude by saying that Plato, Aristotle, and al-Rāzī, breathing the same air, bequeathed to us a view of man as an essentially a rational creature who can live happily, if only he would follow the path of reason.

8 Conclusion

In conclusion, our analysis has demonstrated that al-Rāzī's work revolves around three interconnected claims: firstly, psychic ailments are caused by epistemic deficiencies; secondly, reason and understanding are causally efficacious in guiding one towards virtuous behaviour; thirdly, in order to lead a virtuous and happy life all one needs to do is to place oneself under the governance of reason which will provide him with necessary knowledge. In this chapter we sought to show that these three propositions constitute the overarching argument of al-Rāzī's work: the first two claims are the two premisses from which the third claim follows.

Viewed in this light, al-Rāzī appears to have been a unique figure. He did not only formulate a system of philosophical ethics, but he sought to show how psychological well-being is related to physical well-being, knowledge, and the use of reason. It is thus to his great credit that he made contributions to physical therapy as well as psychological therapy.

It is hoped that by contextualising al-Rāzī within the philosophical tradition and exploring these key aspects of his work, this chapter has provided an adequate understanding of his philosophical insights and intellectual legacy.

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Didactics of Blame and Tactics to Tame

Al-Sulamī's 'Uyūb al-Nafs wa-Mudāwātuhā

Jason Welle

1 Introduction

A distinctive feature of Sufism (*taṣawwuf*), in its formative period, is a vision of religious growth as a path or a journey. A believer travels along the path toward God making progress along the way. The ethics of the Sufi master Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021) express this general trend, with varying points of emphasis across his literary corpus. This chapter will concentrate on al-Sulamī's treatise *'Uyūb al-Nafs wa-Mudāwātuhā* ("The Maladies of the Soul and Their Remedies"), a brief Arabic text that stands in dynamic tension with the remainder of al-Sulamī's oeuvre. While he often elsewhere approaches questions of religious growth through the categories of proper customs (*ādāb*), virtues or character traits (*akhlāq*), and the spiritual states (*aḥwāl*), *'Uyūb al-Nafs* generally lacks these characteristic elements. The treatise relies on imagery of healing and therapy rather than travel or discipline, collecting isolated practical strategies to address specific defects in a believer's religio-moral life. This analysis of *'Uyūb al-Nafs* in the context of al-Sulamī's larger ethical project will thus concentrate less on what the good life looks like than on how one moves toward it—how healing and progress occur in the life of the believer. The strong influence of the path of blame on al-Sulamī has long been recognised, and the remedies al-Sulamī prescribes for these sixty-nine maladies of the *nafs* contribute to our understanding of the fusion of the *malāmatiyya* and other spiritual currents during the formative period of Sufism. Setting al-Sulamī's work in dialogue with ethical theories inherited from the Greek philosophical tradition—a tradition that appears to have left no visible trace on his writings—also enables one to identify al-Sulamī's distinctive contribution with greater precision.

2 Al-Sulamī's Life

Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Sulamī was born in Nishāpūr, probably in 325/937, descending from Arab tribes on both sides of

his family (Thibon 2009). Al-Sulamī's father passed on to him an inclination toward *taṣawwuf*, but his more meaningful formation in the Sufi path took place under the guidance of his maternal grandfather Ibn Nujayd (d. 366/976) (Thibon 2018; al-Sulamī and Ibn Nujayd 2010, 9–15). Al-Sulamī grew up in a bustling city at the peak of its prosperity, benefitting from the dynamic flow of languages, cultures, and trade through the region. Intra-Sunnī factionalism marred this prosperity and contributed to the conquest of the city in 429/1038 by the Seljūq Turks (Paul 2005). This factionalism affected al-Sulamī's scholarly concerns, as he lived in a time when, in the words of Kenneth L. Honerkamp, Nishāpūr's "social fabric was beginning to unravel" (al-Sulamī 2003, 89). Under different circumstances, the diversity of intellectual trends among the city's residents could have been combined with the constant traffic on the trade routes to maintain the city's status as a potent incubator for economic and scholarly life. Instead, the chasms cleaving the main social factions gradually grew deeper and the personal relationships more acrimonious. Most sources demarcate this conflict according to doctrinal or legal affiliations, with the main battle between Ḥanafīs/Mu'tazilis and Shāfi'īs/Ash'arīs, and a smaller skirmish on the side-lines between Shī'īs and Karrāmīs. Richard W. Bulliet (1972; 1979) famously argued that the roots of Nishāpūr's factionalism lay in a generational conflict between the descendants of families whose ancestors converted to Islam in different periods.¹ According to Bulliet's hypothesis, tightly knit networks of patrician families retained and handed down different assumptions about what Islam is and what an Islamic society should look like, and because these families rarely intermarried with each other as they struggled for power over the course of generations, the fault lines between them gradually increased even though they were all nominally Sunnī. The patriotism (*ʿaṣabiyya*) that Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406) would later portray as a source of strength, a "group feeling" that enables tribes to survive in the desert and possibly ascend as a dynasty, denotes in the history of Nishāpūr only a toxic and lamentable factionalism.

Nishāpūr's social divisions simmered for decades and eventually boiled over. This shift from simmer to boil provides the backdrop for al-Sulamī's writings about companionship, one of his signature concerns and a cornerstone of his ethics. Al-Sulamī writes from the heart of a cosmopolitan centre that on one hand knew full well its power and prestige, but on the other, increasingly perceived its own fragility, breathing insecurity out and in. Searching for ways to promote healthier social ties, al-Sulamī becomes acutely concerned

1 Over the course of his long career Bulliet revisits and revises aspects of his analysis in these frequently cited books, but to understand the effect of Nishāpūr's *ʿaṣabiyya* on al-Sulamī, these works suffice.

with companionship (*ṣuḥba*) and fellowship (*ʿishra*). While some of his treatises concentrate either on the bond between master and disciple or on the bond that links a small group of Sufi adherents in a lodge, other key texts show his concern with the larger social fabric and how to hold this strained garment together (Berger 1998, 83–101). His tendency to abstain from divisive scholarly debates between schools of theology and law manifests this concern for social cohesion, although his identity as Shāfiʿī and Ashʿarī—like nearly all Sufis in Nīshāpūr—was never in doubt (Malamud 1994; Melchert 2001, 242–243). Al-Sulamī’s pronounced distaste for speculative theology emerges most clearly in the treatise *al-Radd ʿalā Ahl al-Kalām* (“Refutation of the People of Theology”), a text al-Sulamī uses to criticise the project of *kalām*, not to take sides in *kalām* debates (al-Sulamī and al-Muqriʾ 1996; cf. Thibon 2009, 167–169).

Throughout his adult life, al-Sulamī met with scholars and disciples in his lodge and some of his students became prominent in their own right, none more so than al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072), author of the famous *al-Risāla fī ʿIlm al-Taṣawwuf* (“Treatise on Sufism”). Scholars who studied with al-Sulamī to varying degrees include Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066), the great traditionist who frequently narrates through al-Sulamī; Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī, author of *Ḥilyat al-Awliyāʾ* (“The Adornment of the Friends of God”) (Melchert 2012); and Abū Saʿīd ibn Abī l-Khayr (d. 440/1049), the mystic celebrated by the Persian hagiographical masterpiece *Asrār al-Tawḥīd* (“The Secrets of Monotheism”). Al-Sulamī died on Sunday 3 Shaʿbān 412/12 November 1021 and was buried at the site of his lodge in Nīshāpūr, but no remains of his lodge or tomb remain in our day.

3 Al-Sulamī’s Literary Corpus

Al-Sulamī wrote prolifically and his texts span different literary genres. Several scholars follow the framework in Gerhard Böwering’s numerous publications on al-Sulamī and place al-Sulamī’s writings into three categories: Qurʾānic commentary, biographical dictionaries, and treatises (al-Sulamī 1999a, 87; 2010, xvii). I will proceed as such, noting that it might be better to speak about al-Sulamī’s Qurʾānic commentary, his biographical dictionaries, and his “everything else.” “Treatises” in this context simply denotes writings of varying length—from a few pages to fifty or sixty pages in a modern Arabic edition—that often focus on a particular theme but rarely by means that could be considered systematic. Al-Sulamī arranges his material in a way that does not strike readers today as intuitive, but highlighting a contrast between the modern

mind and the medieval mind does not resolve the challenge; even by comparison with the manuals of al-Sarrāj (d. 378/988), al-Kalābādhī (d. 385/995), and al-Kharkūshī (d. 407/1016)—all of whom preceded al-Sulamī—or with those of al-Qushayrī or al-Hujwīrī (d. 465–469/1072–1077) in the generation following al-Sulamī, al-Sulamī’s organisation can seem haphazard. Julian Baldick put this point in an exceptionally caustic way, blasting al-Sulamī for his “atomistic and disorderly presentation of materials” and dismissing al-Sulamī’s treatise on *futuwwa* as “nothing but a succession of banalities about the ethical implications of sacrificing oneself for others” (Baldick 1989, 57–58). In fairness, one can say that al-Sulamī chose a path well-worn by many Muslim authors before him: as much as possible, he attempts to efface his own thought in favour of transmitting material transmitted to him. His treatises provide a more accessible point of entry into his ethical project, because in his *tafsīr* and *ṭabaqāt* the relevant material is scattered throughout the wise maxims of Sufi masters collected in those works, whereas in his treatises the relevant material is more concentrated. A number of his treatises have only been edited and published in the last two decades (al-Sulamī 2009–2010; 2009b; al-Sulamī and Ibn Nujayd 2010), so recent research benefits from new material available and in some of it al-Sulamī argues more explicitly on his own authority. The publication of a scholarly French translation of *Ṭabaqāt al-Šūfiyya* (“The Generations of Sufis”) (al-Sulamī 2019) marks a turning point in the study of al-Sulamī. Previously, his treatises had drawn the greatest attention from translators, perhaps because they are shorter and more manageable. Several of al-Sulamī’s treatises have been translated into European languages, and those which have been translated tend to exist in two or more translations. This is true for *ʿUyūb al-Nafs wa-Mudāwātuhā*, which has been rendered into English, French, Italian, and Spanish versions of widely varying quality.²

4 Al-Sulamī’s Ethical Project

Fazlur Rahman once noted that theological thought in Islam had little influence on ethical thought, whereas the Sufi ethic proved far more consequential (Rahman 1984). Given al-Sulamī’s lack of interest in *kalām* debates and constant concern for growth in virtue and pious comportment, his literary corpus stands fully in line with Rahman’s assessment. Indeed, in al-Sulamī’s writings focused on *taṣawwuf*, one struggles to identify a distinction between

2 Translations of passages from *ʿUyūb al-Nafs* in this essay are my own, although I have consulted the translations indicated in the bibliography.

ethical growth and progress in Sufism (cf. Heck 2016). Likewise, any distinction between ethical growth and obedience to the Sunna of the Messenger of God cannot be sustained. Etan Kohlberg's comment that *'Uyūb al-Nafs* occupies a "middle ground between the worlds of *ḥadīth*, *adab*, and ethics" (al-Sulamī 1976, 17) may have some validity in regards to literary genres, but has no basis in al-Sulamī's conception of what these terms meant.

Al-Sulamī does not describe ethical cultivation or religious growth with a consistent framework that cuts across his many writings, but several key terms recur frequently and demonstrate their significance for the author by their sheer weight in his discourse (Welle 2024, 17–20). First among these is the centrality of *adab* (pl. *ādāb*), a loaded word that can be translated as "comportment," "correct behaviour," "etiquette," "rules of conduct," "attitudes," "ways," "customs," "practices," or the like. A famous maxim al-Sulamī attributes to Abū Ḥafṣ al-Naysābūrī (d. ca. 270/883) sums this up best: "The whole of Sufism is proper ways" (*al-taṣawwuf kulluhu ādāb*) (al-Sulamī 1969, 119 §19). The term *adab* never carried the weight for Baghdad Sufis that it would later enjoy in Khurāsān (Thibon 2016, 102–103), and the gravitas it holds for al-Sulamī exceeds that of his contemporaries in the region. One may justly apply to al-Sulamī a moniker that Qamar-ul Huda has used for other Sufi masters: his thought consists of an "*adab* theology," as *adab* provides an inclusive and comprehensive concept for the pursuit of saving knowledge (Huda 2004, 461–462). Al-Sulamī did not attempt to probe *adab* as a theoretical concept or craft a succinct definition of it, but his discourse revolves around *adab* and he presupposes that sincere believers desire to learn good comportment and grow in it. One sees this in the rhetorical structure of some of his treatises. Just as *'Uyūb al-Nafs* consists almost entirely of a sequence of paragraphs beginning with "Among its maladies is ..." (*wa-min 'uyūbihā ...*), al-Sulamī compiled at least two treatises with a snowballing list of moral principles and wise vignettes each beginning with "among its proper ways ..." (*wa-min ādābihā ...*). The importance of proper *adab*, in which one's outer comportment aligns perfectly with one's inner orientation, cannot be underestimated as an element of al-Sulamī's ethical project. Al-Sulamī's consistent emphasis on the unity of outer (*ẓāhir*) and inner (*bāṭin*) hinders any attempt to distinguish his ethical project from his idea of progress on the mystical path; the two are thoroughly intertwined.

Two other key terms that recur frequently in conjunction with *ādāb* in al-Sulamī's description of spiritual progress are *akhlāq* and *aḥwāl*. *Ādāb*, *akhlāq*, and *aḥwāl* exist in an ascending hierarchy, based on the agent involved (al-Sulamī 1979, 19 §16). A Sufi's progress begins with disciplined attention to the Sufi ways then advances to virtues and states. These three categories interpenetrate each other to some degree, but progress through this hierarchy

involves a gradual shift in agency from the believer to God. The spiritual labour that a believer performs generally falls into the categories of *ādāb* and *akhlāq*, while God alone grants *aḥwāl* (Honerkamp 2012). Here, al-Sulamī does not seem desperately concerned with Ash'arī debates about the origins of human actions; his use of these three key terms suggests a more fundamental insight that growth in Sufism involves a collaboration between a believer and God in which the stress on divine agency expresses itself more robustly in the later stages. A believer freely submits to the religious law, carries out that law, and puts into practice the customs of the Messenger of God and the Sufi path. As the believer takes the initial steps along the path by voluntarily learning these ways and striving to actualise them, the believer acquires virtues (*akhlāq*) that enable perseverance in proper practice. *Akhlāq* are traits that result both from human volition and divine volition. God responds to the good actions of God's servant by adorning the servant with noble *akhlāq*, and these stable dispositions themselves serve the servant because they keep the servant directed toward that for which a true servant should always strive.

By translating *akhlāq* as “virtues,” I do not intend to suggest the influence of Greek ethical thought on al-Sulamī. Philosophers like Yahyā Ibn 'Adī (d. 363/974) and Miskawayh (d. 421/1030) normally used *faḍā'il* as their preferred term to designate virtue in the sense inherited from the Platonic tradition, in keeping with the terminology in Arabic translations of Greek philosophical works. Al-Sulamī's use of this term—as well as its antonym, vices (*radhā'il*)—is rare. Scholars in recent decades have noted the connection between the revival of virtue ethics in philosophy today and the ethical systems of classical Islamic thinkers like al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111). Such inquiry demands increasing precision about what kind of virtue ethics is at play for different thinkers (Kukkonen 2016). Here, it suffices to note that such interest has concentrated on medieval Muslims indebted to the Greek philosophical tradition in one way or another, while the exploration of latent parallels with early Sufis who show no marked influence of Greek thought has only just begun (Zargar 2017; Khalil 2018; Welle 2024). Though al-Sulamī's writings do not manifest the author's exposure to the Greek concept of virtue, al-Sulamī's understanding of *akhlāq* nonetheless remains surprisingly consistent with the philosophical tradition. He conceives *akhlāq* as stable dispositions of the soul to perceive things, believe things, and most especially, to actively behave in a proper way as a matter of habit. The prominent role that God plays in the acquisition of virtue contrasts al-Sulamī's usage of the term *akhlāq* with some of the philosophers. On one hand, al-Sulamī assumes that believers will not experience a transformation of their morals without making the proper free choices: one must decide to actualise the ways that characterise the Sufi path.

On the other hand, al-Sulamī elsewhere lays the emphasis on God granting the believer virtues (*awrathahu Allāh tilka al-akhlāq*) like modesty, generosity, courage, and the like (al-Sulamī 2009–2010, 3:137). Once a Sufi grows in discipline by means of *ādāb*, God provides assistance along the path. That process—the movement from *ādāb* to *akhlāq*—ideally culminates in God’s gift of spiritual states (*aḥwāl*). At the level of the spiritual states, the initiative and agency unambiguously belong to God alone. Based on one’s effort and one’s persistence in the virtues, one has good cause to hope that God will grant the blessing of spiritual states, but such an occurrence is far less certain or predictable than the transformation of *akhlāq* many believers experience. The spiritual states are a pure gift of mercy that descend upon a Sufi and open the Sufi’s heart (al-Sulamī 2009b, 31 §113; cf. al-Sulamī 2009–2010, 3:136). Although one can identify certain familiar patterns in early Sufi literature regarding the experience of the spiritual states (Avery 2004), precisely how and when a state will descend cannot be foreseen.

The mention of spiritual states gives rise to another category many Sufi manuals use to describe progress on the path: the mystical stations (*maqāmāt*, sg. *maqām*). Dhū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī (d. 245/859 or 248/862) famously distinguished between the stations and the states, and early Sufis generally assumed that the difference lay in the duration and constancy of the experience. States are transitory and might be only momentary; stations involve longer duration and a believer generally remains in one station until passing upward to another. Al-Sulamī generally concurs with reigning assumptions about the fleeting nature of the states (al-Sulamī, 2009–2010, 3:554 §2), but by comparison with some other Sufis in the formative period, his use of the term *maqāmāt* is less central and less consistent. He does not always separate the states from the stations in his writings (Berger 1998, 80; Thibon 2009, 238), even speaking in one place of “the states of the stations” (al-Sulamī 2009–2010, 3:80–81 §4). Further, he defines the term *maqām* in two different ways in *Manāḥij al-Ārifīn* (“The Open Roads of the Knowers”). The beginning of that treatise includes the line, “Sufism has a beginning, an end, and stations (*maqāmāt*)” (al-Sulamī 1979, 25 §1).³ Al-Sulamī later claims that “God disposed the means to arrive at the realities according to stations (*maqāmāt*) and stages (*darajāt*),” specifying that

3 This is the first line of the treatise in the two published versions, but Thibon’s more recent translation includes manuscript evidence that was not available to Kohlberg or Süleyman Ateş (al-Sulamī 1979; 1981) and situates the line in the third paragraph. In anticipation of Thibon’s publication of a new edition of this treatise, it suffices to say here that the additional material does not resolve the ambiguity regarding al-Sulamī’s use of the term *maqām* (al-Sulamī 2012).

some of the stations are the station of health (*ṣalāḥ*), the station of the martyrs (*shuhadāʾ*), and the station of the truthful (*ṣiddīqūn*) (al-Sulamī 1979, 30 §6). Later, at the conclusion of the treatise, al-Sulamī adds that “Sufism has three spheres (*maqāmāt*): ways (*ādāb*), virtues (*akhlāq*), and states (*aḥwāl*). Ways are an acquisition, virtues are an imitation, and states are a gift” (al-Sulamī 1979, 38 §16; cf. al-Sulamī, 2009–2010, 3:136). Al-Sulamī chooses not to wed himself to a technical definition of *maqām*. Jean-Jacques Thibon, author of a magisterial study of al-Sulamī, correctly analyses that in *Manāḥij al-Ārifīn*, the first usage of *maqām* has a dynamic and progressive character; one advances through a series of stations (Thibon 2009, 211–212, 436–440). The latter usage involves enumerating constitutive elements, rendered more complicated by the fact that the constitutive elements named—*ādāb*, *akhlāq*, and *aḥwāl*—can each be further subdivided into different stages or elements. One may summarise by noting that like his contemporaries, al-Sulamī provides lists of some of the virtues and spiritual states, but unlike some of his contemporaries, he neither relies on the term *maqām* nor consistently invests it with technical meaning. He remains committed to the Sufi vision of religio-moral growth as a journey along a path but does not bind himself to the concept of the stations as an expression of this growth.

5 *ʿUyūb al-Nafs*

Among the many texts attributed to al-Sulamī, his authorship of *ʿUyūb al-Nafs wa-Mudāwātuhā* is one of the most secure, extant in two manuscripts copied within sixty years of his death (Böwering 2006, 221). Except for the brief introductory and concluding sections, *ʿUyūb al-Nafs* consists of a long list of different maladies of the soul and concrete strategies to cure them. The treatise begins with a familiar rhetorical device, suggesting that al-Sulamī labours in response to a particular query.

One of the *shaykhs* requested that I compile for him some passages on the maladies of the soul that would indicate what lies behind them. I complied with his request and compiled these passages for him.

AL-SULAMĪ 1976, 70 §2

Al-Sulamī styles several of his treatises as a reply to a request; the novel element here is that the request originates with one of the *mashāyikh*, which could indicate a master on the path or simply an elder resident of the city. If such a request actually existed, in context, the former seems more likely,

although scholars still struggle to articulate precisely how such documents were used in this period. One could imagine *ʿUyūb al-Nafs* serving as a reference work in al-Sulamī’s library—a text that he and others would consult—and this would comport with the idea that the treatise responds to a request from a local spiritual master. Al-Qushayrī recounts a famous episode in which Abū ʿAlī al-Daqqāq (d. 405/1015) identifies the precise location of a book in al-Sulamī’s library without actually being there, suggesting the intimate access to his scholarly resources al-Sulamī granted his colleagues (Thibon 2009, 100–102). More likely, a treatise of this sort was intended as a teaching document, but the manner in which a text like this would be used for instruction is not entirely clear.

6 The Structure of the Soul

Al-Sulamī nowhere provides a fully elaborated physiology of the *nafs* (Chowdhury 2019, 182), but the early section of *ʿUyūb al-Nafs* and his engagement with Qurʾānic passages there offers a window onto his thinking.

So I say, know well that the soul (*nafs*) is divided into three parts (*aqsām*): the soul that incites to evil (*nafs ammāra*), the blaming soul (*nafs lawwāma*), and the soul at peace (*nafs muṭmaʾinna*).

AL-SULAMĪ 1976, 70 §3

In his edition of this treatise, Kohlberg emphasises that here, al-Sulamī speaks of three parts of the one soul, not of three separate souls (*anfus*) or forms of soul (al-Sulamī 1976, 14), but whether al-Sulamī saw this point as important is not clear. Thinkers drawing on the Platonic tripartite conception of the soul were not themselves in agreement about how to articulate the soul’s “threeness.” Galen, whose *Peri Ēthōn* (“On the Passions”) survives only in its Arabic abridgement, *Fī l-Akhlāq*, confesses his ambivalence about whether one should call these three “things” (*ashyāʾ*) separate souls, parts of one soul, or three faculties of the same essence (Kraus 1937 §193; cf. Mattock 1972, 237; Singer 2013, 138). Yaḥyā Ibn ʿAdī had said that that soul has three faculties (*quwā*), but that each of these is still called a “soul” (*nafs*) (Ibn ʿAdī 2002, 14–15). Miskawayh posits three parts (*aqsām*) in the soul, labelling each one a “faculty” (*quwwa*). Exactly how al-Sulamī sees the relationship between these parts of the soul is no more evident than for these philosophers, although al-Sulamī doubtlessly does not frame these three Qurʾānic usages of *nafs* as functional synonyms for the rational (Ar. *nāṭiqā*; Gr. *logistikon*), spirited (Ar. *ghaḍabiyya*; Gr. *thymoeides*),

and appetitive (Ar. *shahwāniyya*; Gr. *epithymēton*) souls. The comparison between Plato's concept of the appetitive soul and the Sufi notion of the *naḥs* as ego-self—the lower self or carnal soul—has been much discussed in modern scholarly literature. It suffices to mention again that, especially by comparison with contemporaries like al-ʿĀmirī (d. 381/992) or Miskawayh, al-Sulamī seems not to have been meaningfully shaped by the Greek philosophical tradition. He frames his portrait of the soul as a reflection upon the Qurʾānic revelation and one needs nothing more than this—along with the dynamics of the *malāmātiyya*, *futuwwa*, and early *taṣawwuf*—to account for his explanation.

Al-Sulamī begins his reflections on the soul at peace by recalling a verse in which the Qurʾānic voice explicitly addresses the *naḥs muṭmaʿinna*.

As for the soul at peace, it has realised with certainty that God is its Lord. It is at peace with what God has promised, accepts as true what God has said, and is patient with God's command. It is a believing soul and God illuminates its countenance. God gives it its register in its right hand and thus it is purified. It is content with God's decree and with God's allotment of affairs, whether for good or for evil, for benefit or harm. It is the soul to which God speaks, saying, *Return to your Lord well-pleased*—meaning well-pleased with God—and *well-pleasing* (Q 89:28)—meaning well pleasing to God by means of pious practice and believing God's promise to be true.

AL-SULAMĪ 1976, 70–71 §3⁴

Al-Sulamī gives this explanation on his own authority but relates similar comments in his Qurʾānic commentaries. In *Ziyādāt Ḥaqāʾiq al-Tafsīr* ("Supplement to the Realities of Qurʾānic Interpretations"), he attributes to an unnamed master the same interpretations of "well-pleased" and "well-pleasing" just given (al-Sulamī 1995, Q 89:28). Al-Sulamī also reports that Aḥmad Ibn ʿAṭāʾ (d. 309/922) taught that the soul at peace is the soul of divine gnosis, which never withholds itself from God even for the blink of an eye (al-Sulamī 2001a, Q 89:27–28).

Al-Sulamī then moves on to the blaming soul, with a brief explanation that immediately evidences the influence of the *malāmātiyya* on him.

4 Citations of the Qurʾān generally follow M.A.S. Abdel Haleem's translation, with modifications when necessary.

It is the soul that blames in good times and in bad and has no patience, whether in prosperity or trial. This soul regrets opportunities that passed by and reproaches itself saying, "If only I had done such and such or not done such and such."

AL-SULAMĪ 1976, 71 §3

Al-Sulamī's Qur'ānic antecedent for the blaming soul is Q 75:1–2, "[I swear] by the Day of Resurrection and by the self-reproaching soul (*al-naḥs al-lawwāma*)!" Al-Sulamī encourages here the subtle and quietist path of self-deprecation that characterises the path of blame. By contrast with the ostentatious public piety of the Karrāmīs, another influential spiritual trend in Nīshāpūr, the *malāmatī* constantly heaps scorn and criticism upon his *naḥs*, which was both corrupt and indestructible (Karamustafa 2007, 49). The methods of the path of blame were excessively introverted, seeking a psychological purity free of avarice and selfishness. Unfortunately, their refusal to display publicly the distinctive elements of their religiosity resulted in the loss of much knowledge about the movement, as their spiritual masters tended not to leave writings behind. Al-Sulamī's *Risālat al-Malāmatīyya* ("The Epistle of the Malāmatīyya") is the most substantial source for knowledge of this group, who functionally disappeared in the next generation as they were absorbed under the larger umbrella of *taṣawwuf*. Although he does not name this trend here, al-Sulamī demonstrates his commitment to its spiritual methods with his fundamentally positive description of the blaming soul, at least in terms of its healing practice: blaming yourself is good for you.

Al-Sulamī concludes this discussion of the soul with the *naḥs ammāra*, the part of the soul that "habitually orders evil-doing" (Kohlberg 1976, 14).

As for the soul that incites to evil, it is what God mentioned in the story of Joseph when God said, *Surely the soul incites to evil* [Q 12:53].

AL-SULAMĪ 1976, 71 §3

To this Qur'ānic verse, which explicitly mentions the *naḥs ammāra bi-l-sū'*, al-Sulamī mentions two other verses that do not do so, clarifying that al-Sulamī himself understands these as references to the *naḥs ammāra*. Q 79:40, "for anyone who feared the meeting with his Lord and restrained himself from base desires," thus reflects in the mind of al-Sulamī not self-restraint in a general sense, but the control of that part of the soul that incites to evil. Q 45:23 asks the Prophet, "Have you considered the one who has taken his own desire as a god ...?" This verse does not explicitly mention the *naḥs* but focuses on the evils of the soul and its lack of inclination to accomplish the good. Al-Sulamī

suggests that other Qur'ānic verses indicate the same, as does a *ḥadīth* on the authority of Abū Hurayra (d. 57/678, or slightly later) (al-Sulamī 1976, 71–72 §3).

Strangely, this distinction between the three *aqsām* of the *nafs* does not do any real work for al-Sulamī later in the treatise and his “topography of the soul” remains ambiguous. He never meaningfully returns to the importance of this distinction, although one may functionally assume that the maladies al-Sulamī discusses throughout the remainder of the treatise adhere to the *nafs ammāra*. That the *nafs muṭmaʿinna* does not recur in the treatise does not surprise—it is the soul at peace, free from malady, and thus need not be discussed in a treatise on maladies—but the subsequent absence of the *nafs lawwāma* does surprise. Al-Sulamī neither presents specific maladies that characterise either the soul that incites to evil or the blaming soul, nor describes a believer progressing from the more serious version of a malady—tied to the *nafs ammāra*—to a milder version of the defect in the *nafs lawwāma*. Al-Sulamī's writings elsewhere unfortunately do not bring clarity to the matter. In his Qur'ānic commentary, for example, al-Sulamī reports Sahl al-Tustarī's (d. 283/896) interpretation of Q 75:2—cited above—that the *nafs lawwāma* is the *nafs ammāra bi-l-sū'* (al-Sulamī 2001a). This tripartite schema of the soul does not play a serious role in al-Sulamī's understanding of the healing process. He never returns to it, other than an oblique reference at the end of the treatise, and the schema does not recur explicitly in his other writings. Likewise, one finds in al-Sulamī's corpus a seminal version of a fourfold schema of spiritual centres, or *laṭā'if*, that other Sufi thinkers would later espouse, but his usage of the terms *nafs*, *qalb*, *sirr*, and *rūḥ* does not engage the three *aqsām* discussed here and leaves many questions unanswered (al-Sulamī 2010, 12–13 §50–54). That this nascent discussion of the spiritual centres occurs primarily in *Risālat al-Malāmatiyya* (al-Sulamī 1945, 100–105; cf. Berger 1998, 51–58) suggests that al-Sulamī has not attempted to integrate the discourse of the path of blame comprehensively throughout *ʿUyūb al-Nafs*. Rather, this influence manifests itself in the form of numerous isolated references.

7 The Maladies of the Soul

Al-Sulamī then immediately launches into sixty-nine different maladies of the soul, which he presents in almost a perfect parallel structure. He begins by naming the *ʿayb*, immediately offering any additional explanatory commentary on the malady in case it could be unclear. He then indicates the remedy, which he nearly always bolsters with some sort of citation from the Islamic tradition: Qur'ānic verses are by far the most common, followed by *ḥadīth*, followed by

wise maxims of Sufi masters. Most paragraphs only contain one such citation: it seems that al-Sulamī favours a Qur’ānic verse if he has one, a *ḥadīth* if he does not, and a Sufi saying as a last resort. The treatise contains eight maladies of the soul for which al-Sulamī does not offer any sort of citation from the tradition. Thibon rightly argues that one may thus infer that al-Sulamī began from the maladies and tried to articulate their remedies. He did not have a set list of Qur’ānic verses and *ḥadīths*—the remedies—for which he reverse-engineered the *‘uyūb* (Thibon 2009, 528–529).

The list of maladies presented here shows some of al-Sulamī’s characteristic points of emphasis, especially those deriving from the influence of the path of blame. He identifies as illnesses of the soul calling attention to oneself, concerning oneself with one’s outward appearance (al-Sulamī 1976, 80 §15–16), seeking positions of authority through knowledge while boasting and glorying in this, making one’s acts of religious obedience and love known to others, and similar defects. Such concerns about public vanity and pride recur (al-Sulamī 1976, 81 and 86 §20 and 26). One paragraph adequately represents the concerns that drive this treatise.

Among its maladies is its love for divulging the maladies of one’s brothers and companions. The remedy is to return to [examine] oneself, and then to love for others what one loves for oneself. It was narrated from the Prophet that he said, “The Muslim is the one who desires for his brother what he desires for himself.” Also, “Whoever conceals the faults of his brother Muslim, God will conceal his fault.”

AL-SULAMĪ 1976, 94 §44

Al-Sulamī’s conciseness here, drawing upon two *ḥadīths* that address the malady from complementary perspectives, characterises many of the paragraphs in *‘Uyūb al-Nafs*. Al-Sulamī’s list shows the distinct concerns of the path of blame, but nonetheless should be considered fundamentally consistent with the lists of vices that characterise other major Sufi figures in the period, beyond the scope of the Khurāsān-based *malāmatīyya*. He includes greed (*ṭama’/hirs*), laxity (*kasal*), anger (*ghaḍab*), dishonesty (*kadhib*), miserliness (*bukhl*), envy (*ḥasad*), etc.

Al-Sulamī occasionally lumps several problems together into the same paragraph, addressing the constellation of them as a whole:

Among its maladies are heedlessness, negligence, persistence [in sin], procrastination, amplifying one’s expectations (*taṭwīl al-amal*), and imagining that one’s final moment remains far in the future (*tabʿīd al-ajal*).

AL-SULAMĪ 1976, 79 §14

A vignette transmitting al-Junayd's teaching about pure *tawhīd* provides the remedy here. Especially in the early paragraphs of the treatise, al-Sulamī catalogues maladies that cannot be reduced to technical terms like "heedlessness," or "negligence," because the malady itself demands explanation. Such longer-form diagnosis of the malady constitutes a more common feature of the treatise's rhetoric than al-Sulamī's occasional willingness to bundle problems together. He reports that one malady of the *nafs* is that it imagines it stands at the door of its own salvation (*tatawahhamu anna-hā qā'ima 'alā bāb najā-tihi*) (al-Sulamī 1976, 72 §4). The next malady is that when the *nafs* weeps, it finds comfort and refreshment in this (*idhā bakat, tafarrajat wa-starwahat*) (al-Sulamī 1976, 73 §5). Immediately following, al-Sulamī says that a malady of the *nafs* is perceiving that harm comes from one who has no control over it, hoping to benefit from one who has no power over it, and being concerned about what has already been provided for it (al-Sulamī 1976, 74 §6, cf. 89 §33). Al-Sulamī's catalogue of *'uyūb* thus does not consist of technical terms that the master then glosses and explains. His writings elsewhere show his willingness to proceed in such a manner: he penned a brief treatise titled *Tafsīr Alfāẓ al-Ṣūfiyya* ("Explanation of Sufi Expressions") to define key technical terms for the mystics, a treatise he redacted from al-Sarrāj's *Kitāb al-Luma'* ("The Book of Illumination") (al-Sulamī 2009, 31–36). By contrast, a key element of al-Sulamī's rhetoric in *'Uyūb al-Nafs* is his tendency to give a verbose synopsis of the malady itself.

Although al-Sulamī structures *'Uyūb al-Nafs* around the maladies, one must immediately acknowledge that he does not organise these maladies in any discernible way. Indeed, several seem to repeat themselves in nearly synonymous mutations and these tend to be scattered throughout the treatise rather than grouped together. Avarice provides one example. Al-Sulamī names *ṭama'* (greed, avarice, or excessive desire) as a malady (al-Sulamī 1976, 86 §27). He indicates that the remedy is to know that coveting causes one to enter into this world (*dunyā*) and to forget the sweetness of worship. In the very next paragraph, al-Sulamī names the pursuit of building up and multiplying worldly things (*hirs*) as a malady. Here again, the nature of the problem is the attachment to the things of this world, remedied by knowing that one has no lasting home in this world and that the world to come will endure. The difference between *ṭama'* and *hirs* is subtle: among the first derivatives for the root *ṭ-m-'* in both Ibn Manẓūr's (d. 711/1312) *Lisān al-Arab* ("The Tongue of the Arabs") and al-Fīrūzābādī's (d. 817/1415) *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ* ("The Comprehensive Dictionary") one finds *ḥaraṣa 'alayhi*, the intense desire or longing for something. One might assume that al-Sulamī intends a meaningful distinction here between *ṭama'* and *hirs*, but *hirs* recurs twice more, later in the treatise. The first of these recurrences indicates *hirs* as a malady remedied by knowing that avarice will

not increase the sustenance that God has decreed for a person (al-Sulamī 1976, 98 §55). Four paragraphs later, al-Sulamī speaks about a particular kind of *hirs* through accumulating wealth and withholding it. For the sake of argument, one could frame this as a type of *takhṣīs*, but other similar examples mitigate the possibility that al-Sulamī has systematically distinguished between shades of avarice. It seems rather that over the course of the treatise al-Sulamī circles around the fundamental problem—attachment to things of this world—and indicates helpful strategies to grow out of that attachment, generally by reawakening oneself to the reality of divine decree. Kohlberg searched for clues as to the treatise's organisation. He discusses a hypothetical distinction between sins as discrete acts at the beginning of the treatise and sins as base qualities at the end of the treatise, but in the end, Kohlberg considers this hypothesis unsatisfying (al-Sulamī 1976, 16). Al-Sulamī was a compiler, not a systematiser. Despite his integral role in preserving much Sufi material that might otherwise be lost, al-Sulamī's jumbled style explains why scholars, past and present, have found some of his near-contemporaries more attractive as matter for study. Part of his rhetorical strategy thus unfortunately becomes a reason why readers may shy away from him: the Nīshāpūrian master sows countless nuggets of wisdom throughout his writings, returning again and again to key attitudes and practices seen from different vantage points.

8 Companionship Revisited

How does *ʿUyūb al-Nafs* fit into al-Sulamī's larger ethical project? First, the treatise provides the only example in al-Sulamī's oeuvre of a work dedicated primarily to vices, defects, or weaknesses and how to overcome them. The title of another treatise, *Kitāb Bayān Zalāl al-Fuqarāʾ* ("The Book of Exposition of the Errors of the Poor"), suggests that it could be a work of this type, but Honerkamp's edition and translation of that treatise—incorporating a previously unstudied manuscript—renders the title as *Kitāb Bayān Tadhallul al-Fuqarāʾ* ("The Book of Exposition of the Humility of the Poor"). Honerkamp's title more accurately expresses the contents of that treatise, which is not an exposition of lapses or mistakes, but a guide that could be characterised as "applied Sufism," uniting practical counsels from *taṣawwuf* in general and the path of blame in particular (al-Sulamī 2003, 107). As a catalogue of maladies, *ʿUyūb al-Nafs* stands alone. Saying this, however, does not imply that *ʿUyūb al-Nafs* contributes material that is totally novel. The types of counsels offered here are consistent with al-Sulamī's writing elsewhere and had the treatise been lost, our understanding of al-Sulamī's spiritual method would not

radically change. The principal novelty of the treatise lies in its format, not in its content.

One striking feature of the treatise is the relative absence of *ṣuḥba* as a prominent concept by comparison with al-Sulamī's other writings. Given the centrality of companionship for the acquisition of knowledge and for religio-moral growth (Welle 2024), one sees why Thibon describes al-Sulamī's understanding of companionship as "therapeutics of the soul" (Thibon 2009, 228–232). Spiritual brotherhood stands at the heart of the Sufi path and *ṣuḥba* can be considered a form of spiritual struggle against the self (*mujāḥadat al-naḥs*). In al-Sulamī's case, one must add the note of caution that *ṣuḥba* does not automatically denote association with the master (*ṣuḥbat al-shaykh*). The biographical dictionary *Ṭabaqāt al-Šūfiyya* generally uses the root ṣ-ḥ-b to indicate the beginning of a relationship between master and disciple (Gril 2012, 40), but other treatises by al-Sulamī use the term with greater flexibility, denoting companionship more broadly. The role of the Sufi master (*shaykh*) in the life of a disciple (*murīd*) evolved throughout the formative period of Sufism. Fritz Meier famously described a shift from the *shaykh al-ta'lim*, or the teaching *shaykh*, to the *shaykh al-tarbiya*, or the directing *shaykh* (Meier 1999; cf. Katz 2018; Silvers 2003; Thibon 2009, 238–244; Knysh 2017, 149–170; Gobillot and Thibon 2012). According to this schema, the former guides the ethical growth of disciples by teaching them in groups; the *shaykh al-tarbiya* engages in personalised spiritual direction, prescribing particular disciplines to individual disciples whom he knows well. Meier argued that al-Qushayrī's writings manifest that the transition from teaching to directing was complete, making al-Sulamī's generation the bridge generation (Meier 1999, 217). Lutz Berger, in assessing whether one should associate al-Sulamī with "classical" or "post-classical" Sufism, suggests that al-Sulamī's approach to the relationship between master and disciple can be considered "modern," insofar as al-Sulamī's concept of Sufi education involves holistic formation: the *shaykh* shaping the whole person of his disciple (Berger 1998, 195).

While subsequent scholars have argued that the transition from teaching to directing was more complicated and perhaps occurred earlier than Meier hypothesised, one may nevertheless identify al-Sulamī with a period in which the exaltation of the *shaykh*'s role and the insistence on magnifying esteem and reverence for the *shaykh* become increasingly commonplace in Sufi literature. This focus on the bond between master and disciple should not, however, eclipse the ongoing consciousness among Sufis of the importance of horizontal bonds. Relationships among brothers of equivalent spiritual rank provide an opportunity for growth in the knowledge of God (Welle 2024). One sees this interest in al-Sulamī's writings elsewhere, but the matter emerges in *Uyūb*

al-Nafs because in that treatise, al-Sulamī never speaks about the *shaykh*. The treatise seems much more like a self-help guide than an “other-help” guide, if the latter were a document encouraging someone with a malady of the soul to seek assistance from others in remedying a defect. In a stark contrast with his approach to companionship elsewhere, al-Sulamī here portrays *ṣuḥba* as dangerous. This hesitance about *ṣuḥba* comes from al-Sulamī’s concern that believers act to win the esteem of others, as well as their forgetfulness of the next life.

Among its maladies is the inclination toward fellowship with one’s peers and companionship with the brothers. The remedy is knowing that any companion he has will be separated from him and any fellowship will be ultimately cut off. It was narrated on the authority of the Prophet that Gabriel said to him, “Live as you will, for you will die. Love whom you love, for you will be separated from him. Do what you will, for you will be called to account for it. Know that the honour of the believer is in performing the night vigil and his esteem is that he has no need of others.” Abū Qāsim al-Ḥakīm said, “Friendship is enmity unless you act with purity, and accumulating wealth is an affliction unless you act with charity, and mingling [with people] causes confusion unless you act with good disposition.”

AL-SULAMĪ 1976, 92 §38

As was the case for several maladies already mentioned, the risk here has to do with attachment. Nothing in this world will last, even companionship and fellowship, and a believer must remember the transient nature of these earthly bonds. Elsewhere in the treatise, the risk in social relations usually adheres to vanity or cognate vices, seeking the praise of others, the attention of others, positions of importance, etc. To be clear, one could never suggest that *Uyūb al-Nafs* encourages a hermetic lifestyle or antisocial behaviour. This would run roughshod over al-Sulamī’s thinking. Companionship with pious people provides healing in a believer’s life. Several of the remedies al-Sulamī describes in *Uyūb al-Nafs* involve associating with righteous people (*ṣāliḥūn*), and here al-Sulamī does not seem to encourage close personal guidance under a spiritual master. Rather, he seems to encourage fellowship and association with good people in a more general sense. The treatise thus runs into a long-standing debate within the Sufi tradition: when does a believer most need a *shaykh* (cf. Knysh 2017, 155ff.)? Is the master most essential at the beginning, to guide a seeker’s initial progress on the path, after which the *murīd* knows what is necessary to make continued progress alone? Or should a believer do

the initial work without a *shaykh*, seeking out and relying on a *shaykh* only for the higher levels of spiritual achievement? Al-Sulamī does not address this question explicitly, but in this treatise, he implicitly seems to favour the latter, at least insofar as the *shaykh* goes unmentioned for initial treatment of these maladies. *ʿUyūb al-Nafs* thus could silently support a vision of the *shaykh* as indispensable in the achievement of the higher levels of spiritual progress. In this schema, a mature disciple depends not only upon God, but must come to realise as a fact his dependence on an earthly master.

We can conclude this discussion of companionship in al-Sulamī's spiritual method with a poignant example from *Kitāb Ādāb al-Ṣuḥba* in which al-Sulamī connects several of the key notions already described.

Among its ways (*ādāb*) is to become endowed with the best of virtues (*yatakhallaq bi-maḥāsin al-akhlāq*) and to excel in companionship (*yatamayyaz fī al-ṣuḥba*). ... Abū Muḥammad al-Jarīrī said, "The perfection of a man consists in three things: voluntary exile (*ghurba*), companionship, and discretion. As for voluntary exile, it is for the ego-self (*nafs*). As for companionship, it is to become endowed with the virtues of [excellent] men. As for discretion, it is for discernment."

AL-SULAMĪ 1954, 47

This brief teaching demonstrates the breadth of companionship in al-Sulamī's religious imagination: any growth in virtue contributes to one's living as an authentic companion. *Kitāb Ādāb al-Ṣuḥba* ("The Book of the Etiquette of Companionship") abounds in discourse about *ādāb* and invokes in several places the importance of *akhlāq*. This prepares the believer for the advanced stages of growth that can occur through companionship with a *shaykh* and for reception of the spiritual states that God may grant to those who persevere in their worship and service.

9 Conclusion

Al-Sulamī's treatise *ʿUyūb al-Nafs wa-Mudāwātuhā* stands as a key work in his own oeuvre and in the formative period of Sufism both for what it contains and for what it lacks. This brief treatise lacks the systematic organisation of some well-known Sufi manuals, lacks the terminological precision that historians of ideas might desire to find, and lacks the focus on companionship and fellowship that broadly characterise the author's approach to ethical growth. *ʿUyūb al-Nafs* contains a unique list of maladies of the soul, contains advice

pertinent both for Sufi adepts and for Muslims generally, and contains a witness to the fusion of the different currents of religious thought and practice in Khurāsān in the period. Responding to a religious milieu in which many believers experienced the acute burden of a soul inciting them to evil—a *nafs* that was unyieldingly corrupt—al-Sulamī offers hope for healing. The therapeutic tactics he suggests to tame one's sinful inclinations catalogue key features of the *taṣawwuf* emerging in Khurāsān and provide a point of comparison not for the heights of mystical experience described in some better-known Sufi texts, but for the rudimentary progress that characterises ordinary believers striving to inculcate the *adab* of the Messenger of God.

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Miskawayh's *Kitāb Ṭahārat al-Nafs* as a Program Leading to Ethicisation of Knowledge

Hans Daiber

1 Introduction

Miskawayh (d. 421/1030) called his monograph on ethics *Tahdhīb al-Akhḷāq wa-Taṭhīr al-A'rāq* ("Refinement of Character and the Purification of Natural Dispositions") (Miskawayh 1966; 2002). An alternative title is *Kitāb Ṭahārat al-Nafs* ("Book on the Purity of the Soul"). These titles are illuminating. We will try to show that his book is a kind of a program of self-education, a constant endeavour to improve self-discipline by learning and practicing virtues, which in Miskawayh's Neoplatonic formulation, leads to "purification of the soul."

2 Miskawayh and His Cultural Background

Miskawayh's concepts and language reflect the spirit of his time. As secretary of the Būyids (r. 334–454/934–1062) in Baghdad and in Rayy near Tehran, he had contacts with many scholars. He was the librarian of the vizier Abū al-Faḍl Ibn al-'Amīd (d. 360/970), whose letters on meteorological, astronomical and psychological questions (Daiber 1993), sent to the Būyid ruler 'Aḍud al-Dawla (d. 372/983), gives an impression of the richness of his library. Miskawayh was especially interested in philosophy, and his books portray knowledge of Greek sources like Aristotle (d. 322 BCE), Galen (d. 216 CE), Alexandrian commentaries of Aristotle, and Neoplatonic adaptations of Aristotelian texts, especially of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, including a summary of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, called in its Arabic-Latin translation by Hermannus Alemanus (d. 1272 CE) *Summa Alexandrinorum* (cf. the new edition and analysis by Woerther 2020, 12n29), doxographical texts like the treatise on the virtues of the soul (*faḍā'il al-naḥs*) attributed to Plato (d. 347/348 BCE); his own collections of proverbs attributed to Greek philosophers and pre-Islamic Persian wises, called *Jāwīdān-Khirad* (= *al-Ḥikma al-Khālida*, "Eternal Wisdom"); Neoplatonic texts like Plotinus (d. 270 CE) in the adaptation of a *Theology* attributed to Aristotle, or Porphyry (d. 305 CE) and his pupil Iamblichus (d. ca. 325 CE). Iamblichus'

commentary, lost in the Greek original, on the pseudo-Pythagorean *Chrysea Epē* ("Golden Verses") is preserved in an Arabic translation (Daiber 1995). Another source of Miskawayh, is a text on education of the youth attributed to the Neopythagorean Bryson (d. between 100 BCE and 200 CE). Some of the mentioned Greek sources became known to Miskawayh through Islamic philosophers like al-Kindī (d. between 247/861 and 259/873) and al-Fārābī (d. 339/950 or 951), or there were common sources, such as, for example, the ethics of the encyclopaedia of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' (Sincere Brethren) from the fourth/tenth century that shares with Miskawayh similar Neoplatonic concepts and propagates the value of love and friendship.¹

The eclecticism from so many Greek and Arabic sources is a mirror image of the open-mindedness of a society which shared their texts and ideas, and was engaged in many discussions organised in learned circles—I mention Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 414/1023) and his correspondence with Miskawayh on ethical and philosophical questions, the *Kitāb al-Hawāmīl wa-l-Shawāmīl* ("Rambling and Comprehensive Questions"), which has been recently edited with an English translation. In the answers on questions by Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī we find several topics discussed by Miskawayh, like knowledge (al-Tawḥīdī and Miskawayh 2019, 1:52–57, 80–83, 206–211), friendship/partnership (al-Tawḥīdī and Miskawayh 2019, 1:98–103, 198–203), fear of death (al-Tawḥīdī and Miskawayh 2019, 1:112–117), justice/injustice (al-Tawḥīdī and Miskawayh 2019, 1:130–135), health and illness of the soul (al-Tawḥīdī and Miskawayh 2019, 1:236f.). The answers given by Miskawayh appear to be preliminary steps of his later written *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*.

All scholars of that time share a similar tendency: The return to the past; to Greek thinkers and their echo in Islamic thinkers who share one common and universal value—the value of knowledge in the context of the Islamic religion. This common value shared by all nations is ethics—it is the ethicisation of knowledge.² The Jewish scholar Joel Kraemer gave his book on the cultural revival during the Būyid age the title *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam* (1986; 1992 2nd ed.) because of the return of this period to Greek models, comparable with the humanistic movement during the European Renaissance in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

This comparison is misleading, as it neglects the background of the Islamic religion. Ethicisation of knowledge means the rediscovery of human dignity in the context of the Islamic religion. As we shall show, the use of Greek sources

1 A first comparison of Miskawayh and Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' can be found in Badawī (1963).

2 In the term "ethicisation," I follow the terminology of al-Khaṭīb (2019a, 116): "Ethicisation of *fiqh*" (*takhlīq al-fiqh*).

is overshadowed by Islamic ethical values. The result is the rise of Islamic humanism during the Būyid age.

3 An Analysis of Miskawayh's *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*

Miskawayh's ethics can be considered as a program of ethicisation of knowledge. In his historical work *Tajārib al-Umam wa-Ta'āqub al-Himam* ("The Experiences of the Nations and the Consequences of their Ambitions"), Miskawayh considers the experiences of history as a valuable moral reference for mankind. Unlike religion, which is neglected in this work by Miskawayh, history is the achievement of a single human being and not primarily the guidance by the saints and prophets who received divine revelation (cf. Rosenthal 1952, 141f.; Bosworth 2002; Endress 2017, 330; Radez 2019). For this reason, in Miskawayh's ethics, the prophetic revelation and al-Fārābī's concept of the ruler as prophet and philosopher in the Perfect State is pushed into the background. Miskawayh rediscovered the role of the individual within society, which is shaped by harmony, love and friendship.

His ethical work *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* is accordingly structured, and in using the philosophical language of his time it is divided into six treatises (*maqālāt*), mainly focused on the human soul.³

3.1 *First Treatise: The Soul, Its Parts and Their Role*

The first treatise (Miskawayh 1966, 3–30; 2002, 5–26) discusses the role of the soul and its three Platonic parts, the rational, the irascible and the appetitive power, for the attainment of the virtues "knowledge" (*ʿilm*) and "wisdom" (*ḥikma*), "temperance" (*ʿiffa*) and "generosity" (*sakhā*), and finally "prudence" (*ḥilm*) and "courage" (*shajāʿa*). The balance of the mentioned three groups of virtues leads to "justice" (*ʿadl*).

3.2 *The Second Treatise: The Soul as Cornerstone of Character and Education*

The second treatise (Miskawayh 1966, 31–73; 2002, 29–65; cf. Endress 2017, 323f. and 338f.) states that the soul is the cornerstone of human character and education. The character, a "state" (*ḥāl*) of the soul, can be trained through education that is oriented by the "law" (*sharīʿa*) (cf. Miskawayh 1966, 35, 13ff.; 2002, 32f.). Its perfection is appropriate for human beings and it is a combination of

3 On Miskawayh's concept of the soul cf. Endress (2017, 334ff.), and on his *Tahdhīb* cf. Endress (2017, 337–344).

knowledge, theoretical perfection and the realisation of knowledge, practical perfection, or perfection of the character (cf. Miskawayh 1966, 39: lines 15ff.; 2002, 36f.). Miskawayh dedicates a long section, taken from the *Oikonomikos* (“Economics”) by the Pythagorean Bryson, to the education of the youth (Miskawayh 1966, 55–63; 2002, 50–56; cf. Endress 2017, 324): This section stresses such values as love of honour, the observance of religious traditions and duties, temperance, dissociation from the bad, learning by heart good traditions, good manners in eating, clothing and behaviour. A perfect character leads to happiness and is reserved for the perfect philosopher or for the prophet who receives divine revelation. Miskawayh does not further elaborate on this idea. Remarkable here is Miskawayh’s allusion to al-Fārābī’s concept of the ruler as a philosopher and prophet. He expands on this idea through his conception of the education of the individual. Education is a constant process of striving for the attainment of knowledge and its realisation. It requires the guidance of teachers. In allusion to al-Fārābī, Miskawayh speaks of “managers of cities,” who should guide every person to intellectual happiness and thereupon to “practical arts and sensible activities” (Miskawayh 1966, 72: lines 10ff.; 2002, 64). Here, education leads to the improvement of the character and happiness.

3.3 *Third Treatise: Virtues and Knowledge*

The third treatise (Miskawayh 1966, 75–91; 2002, 69–91) gives, based on late Greek sources (cf. Endress 2017, 324f.), an enumeration of the degrees of happiness and the virtues leading to happiness. The “spiritual virtue” (*al-faḍīla al-rūḥāniyya*) that leads to perfect happiness, requires the highest degree of knowledge, and the highest level of perfection in man’s actions.

3.4 *Fourth Treatise: Practical Virtues*

In the fourth treatise (Miskawayh 1966, 105–134; 2002, 95–119) Miskawayh turns to the practical aspects that lead to the realisation and attainment of happiness. He discusses the virtues in man’s actions, that lead to justice: Miskawayh gives a detailed exposition of the practices of virtue, courage, abstinence, generosity, and above all, justice. Justice is recognised as the balance of all virtues, which includes the duties towards God, towards fellow human beings, towards the forebears, and towards duties of worship.

3.5 *Fifth Treatise: Love and Friendship*

An expansion of this treatise on virtues is the fifth treatise (Miskawayh 1966, 135–173; 2002, 123–154) on love and friendship. The human individual naturally inclines towards “companionship” (*uns*), which bonds societal relations and

creates solidarity. Miskawayh propagates religion and its gatherings for the worship of God as something resulting not only from the Sharī'a but also from accepted customs. A cornerstone of solidarity is love and friendship which must be regulated by social rules.

3.6 *Sixth Treatise: The Health of the Soul*

3.6.1 Its Preservation

In the last treatise of Miskawayh's book on ethics, in his treatises on the health of the soul, its preservation and its restoration (Miskawayh 1966, 175–222; 2002, 157–196), he takes up and continues the discussion of the first treatise on the soul. Based on his discussion of the cardinal virtues and Galen's doctrine of the four temperaments, Miskawayh gives practical advice for the preservation of the soul's health (Miskawayh 1966, 176–191; 2002, 158–170) and the restoration of it (Miskawayh 1966, 191–222; 2002, 170–196). In the foreword, he explains the diseases of the soul in allusion to the Aristotelian (cf. Aristotle 1991, *De Anima* 403 a 3ff.) and Galenic (cf. Galen 1972; Fichtner 2018, no. 28) doctrine; that man is composed of his body and the "divine, incorporeal faculty," his soul. Diseases might have their origin in the soul, when man is entertaining thoughts of an evil nature, or when he is frightened; or diseases can be caused by man's constitution or his senses. Miskawayh explains this in detail and offers various examples taken from daily life, such as: The health of the soul can be preserved through association of man with good people, and through constant reflection and acting accordingly—by observing such virtues as friendliness, truthfulness, moderation and prudence, diligence, self-control, attentiveness, sincerity, and critical forbearance. Here, we can easily detect Platonic and Aristotelian virtues and explanations taken from Galen's *Ethics*. Moreover, in a passage on the examination of conscience, on man's rebuke of his soul, attributed to the philosopher al-Kindī (Miskawayh 1966, 190, 3ff.; 2002, 169), we detect an echo of the pseudo-Pythagorean *Golden Verses* (verses 40–42). They might have reached al-Kindī through their Arabic translation with Iamblichus' commentary (Daiber 1995), or—in the present case more likely—from Galen's *Peri Diagnōseōs kai Therapeias tōn en tē Hekastou Psychē Idiōn Pathōn* (= *De Propriorum Animi Cuiuslibet Affectuum Dignotione et Curatione*, "The Diagnosis and Treatment of the Passions Peculiar to Each Person's Soul") (Galen 1937, ch. 6 and 10; Galen 1963, 49),⁴ which was translated into Syriac and Arabic (see Fichtner 2018, no. 29), and which Miskawayh quoted on the preceding page as

4 On examination of conscience in antiquity cf. Hadot (1999, 231–233). On the Galenic text cf. Hadot (1999, 232m103).

Ta'arruf al-Mar' Uyūb Nafsih ("Man's Understanding the Defects of His Soul") (Miskawayh 1966, 189: lines 2ff.; 2002, 168f).⁵

3.6.2 Its Restoration

In the following section, Miskawayh discusses the possibilities of restoring the health of a soul. According to him, the health of the soul is dependent upon the presence of an internal balance. This balance between two extremes can be reached through "activity (*ḥaraka*), effort (*sa'y*), and diligence (*ijtihād*)" (Miskawayh 1966, 191: lines 11f.; 2002, 170). The balance between two extremes leads to the four cardinal virtues, which Miskawayh mentions here as "courage" (*shajā'a*), "abstinence" (*iffa*), "wisdom" (*ḥikma*), and "justice" (*ādāla*) (Miskawayh 1966, 193: lines 6–9; 2002, 172). In the footsteps of Galen's *Peri Diagnōseōs kai Therapeias tōn en tē Hekastou Psychē Idiōn Pathōn*, the main cause for the illness of a soul is the irascible part of the soul, which can—considering the temperament of a person—become the seat of "anger," of an "agitation," "as a result of which the blood of the heart boils in a passion for vengeance" (Miskawayh 1966, 193: lines 17f.; 2002, 172).⁶ Miskawayh gives many examples of bad character traits arising from anger. They can be changed through moderation, self-control, sincerity and magnanimity.

3.6.3 Remedy of Fear

The knowledge of possible misfortunes in the future is a strong remedy against fear, which arises if the irascible part of the soul has no "agitation" and if cowardice and a feeling of faintness prevail (Miskawayh 1966, 205: lines 11f.; 2002, 182). Consequently, Miskawayh argues that fear of death can be abolished through knowledge of the shortcomings of life before death and knowledge of the immortality of the soul after its separation from the body (Miskawayh 1966, 216: lines 13ff.; 2002, 191; cf. Endress 2017, 334 and 342). In this regard, we quote a crucial passage:

The intelligent man (*'āqil*), therefore, should shrink from incompleteness and find comfort in being complete. He should seek everything that could make him complete and perfect, that could ennoble him and raise his rank, and that could free him in such a way as to make him safe from falling into captivity rather than tighten his fetters and add to his complexity

5 Zurayk wrongly translates "Man's Understanding of His Own Defects." On the association with virtuous friends cf. Galen (1937, ch. 3; 1963, 31–33).

6 On the comparison with the boiling of blood around the heart cf. Aristotle (1991, *De Anima* 403a 31), and Adamson (2016, 67).

and entanglement. He should also trust in the fact that, when the noble and divine substance is delivered from the thick and corporeal one, in purity and clarity rather than in mixture and turbidity, that substance attains happiness, returns to its heavenly abode, gets closer to its Creator, wins the proximity of the Lord of the universe, associates with its kindred and fellows among the good spirits, and escapes from what is contrary and foreign to it.

MISKAWAYH 1966, 212: lines 18–213, line 3; 2002, 188

3.6.4 Remedy of Grief

Miskawayh ends his book with a section on the “remedy of grief.” About “the loss of a dear one or the failure to fulfill a desire”; similar to the fear of death, grief can be cured by insight into the transience of the world, contrary to the world of the intellect. As a corroboration of this, Miskawayh adds a long excerpt from al-Kindī’s treatise *Dafʿ al-Aḥzān* (“The Repelling of Griefs”): Consolation and remedy from grief about the loss of property is the conscious awareness of a possible loss of possessions, as God has entrusted them to His creatures (Miskawayh 1966, 219: lines 12–222, line 19; 2002, 194–196). Al-Kindī’s text is transmitted in varying versions, which ultimately might go back to a lost Hellenistic treatise with the title *Peri Aλypías* (“On Freedom of Pain/Grief”) perhaps written by Themistius (d. ca. 388 CE) or Plutarch (d. ca. 125 CE).

4 Ethics as Likeness to God: The Way from Plato to Miskawayh (cf. Daiber 2021)

Al-Kindī, in the complete version of his treatise *Risāla fī l-Ḥīla li-Dafʿ al-Aḥzān* (“On the Method of How to Dispel Sorrow”) (cf. Adamson and Endress 2017, 160f. and 193f.),⁷ advises the neglect of worldly things and the concentration on the intelligible world by “imitating God.” This imitation of God is, according to al-Kindī, attained through human virtues, through good behaviour and acting. This will lead to nearness to God and knowledge of Him (cf. Daiber 1996, 844, and on the editions of the Kindī-text 843n24).

The similarity of the al-Kindī text to our quotation from Miskawayh’s chapter on the fear of death, its causes and its remedy is obvious. The quotation mirrors the transformation of the Platonic doctrine of the soul and its three parts

⁷ According to a recently published article there was no direct borrowing from Galen’s recently discovered *Peri Aλypías*, as al-Kindī and Galen follow a common Hellenistic tradition (cf. Pietrobelli 2019).

“irascible” (*thymikon*), “desiring” (*epithymetikon*) and “rational” (*logistikon*) (cf. the references in Daiber 1971, 34f.) into the Neoplatonic concept of the soul returning to its divine origin. Al-Kindī and after him Miskawayh follow the Neoplatonic tradition of Plotinus—and also of Iamblichus (cf. Daiber 1995, 28f). Al-Kindī in his *al-Qawl fī l-Nafs* (“Discourse on the Soul”) had developed a philosophical foundation—possibly following the Neoplatonic tradition of the *Vita Pythagorica* as shaped by Porphyry and his student Iamblichus (cf. Daiber 1995, 32f.). It explains that the soul consists of three parts—as we found them in Miskawayh’s excerpt of the treatise on *Faḍā’il al-Nafs* (“The Virtues of the Soul”) (Miskawayh 1966, 86: lines 7–90, line 21; 2002, 77–81). It is eager to release itself from the body through ethical virtues and to return to its divine origin, the realm of the intelligible world.⁸ Al-Kindī does not offer a fully developed ethical doctrine, this remains reserved to Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d. 313/925), al-Fārābī, and above all, to Miskawayh.

These philosophers have continued the Neoplatonic tradition, insofar as they share the common concept of happiness, which can be reached by the freeing of man’s soul from worldly possessions, by man’s virtuous acting and his increasing knowledge (cf. Daiber 2010, 73f. and 77). According to Miskawayh, this knowledge is perfected in the “perfect man” (*insān kāmil*), who is either a “perfect philosopher” (*hakīm tāmm*) because of his “inspirations” (*ilhāmāt*) in his philosophical attempts and through heavenly support in his “intellectual conceptions” (*taṣawwurāt ‘aqliyya*). Or he is a prophet supported by God, as he obtains divine “revelation” (*waḥy*) in varying grades. He will then become an intermediary between “the higher world” (*al-mala’ al-a’lā*) and “the lower world” (*al-mala’ al-asfal*) (Miskawayh 1966, 70, 15–20; 2002, 62). This formulation is a clear echo of a specification introduced by al-Fārābī, who added the concept of prophecy as a prerequisite for the philosopher.⁹ According to al-Fārābī, the ruler in the Perfect State is a philosopher and he is a prophet who rules the city—inspired by God and emulating God’s rule (Daiber 1986, 17nn79–80). In addition, Miskawayh and al-Fārābī mirror an accentuation in Iamblichus, who combined philosophy with theurgic revelation and herewith, had modified his teacher Porphyry (cf. Shaw 2011, 122–129).

The common Neoplatonic tradition in Miskawayh and al-Fārābī, appears to be mixed in the latter mainly with Platonic and Aristotelian ideas (on al-Fārābī

8 *Al-Qawl fī l-Nafs al-Mukhtaṣar min Kitāb Aristū wa-Falāṭun wa-Sā’ir al-Falāsifa* (cf. Adamson and Endress 2017, 147, 166 and 194).

9 For more details on parallels between al-Fārābī and Miskawayh, see Marcotte (1999, esp. 56–72).

cf. Daiber 2007). This means, al-Fārābī is concentrating on epistemology and the concept of knowledge; of learning and acquiring knowledge.

5 What Is New in Miskawayh's Ethics?

Miskawayh, however, is more focused on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, which he represents combined with Hellenistic, Neoplatonic interpretations (cf. Endress 2017, 322–326 and 337–344). These Neoplatonic interpretations gave his ethics a specific shape. Miskawayh's *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* is not a book on political thought, containing rules for rulers and ruled, like al-Fārābī's *Mabādī' Ārā' Ahl al-Madīna al-Fāḍila* ("The Principles of the Opinions of the Inhabitants of the Virtuous City"). On the contrary, it is a book on the virtues of the individual. And his individual—as formulated by Miskawayh in a passage attributed to Aristotle—is endowed with "wisdom" (*ḥikma*) and "intellect" (*'aql*) and should "aim with all his capacities (*bi-jamī' quwāhu*) to live a divine life (*ḥayāt ilāhiyya*)" (Miskawayh 1966, 171: lines 13–15; 2002, 152).¹⁰ This aim requires, as Miskawayh says in the footsteps of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (Aristotle 1991, book I, ch. 8, 1099: col. A I. 31–col. B I. 7; on the Arabic translation, cf. Akasoy and Fidora 2005, 7–16, 142–143), a "moderate amount of external goods" (*al-qaṣd min al-khayrāt al-khārijīyya*) (Miskawayh 1966, 172; 2002, 153).

Miskawayh's book *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* is not primarily addressed to the citizens, to the rulers and the ruled. It is a guidebook on ethics for the individual, for training his character and teaching him the right behaviour towards his fellow beings. Love, friendship (cf. Miskawayh 1966, 5th treatise)¹¹ and justice (cf. Miskawayh 1966, 4th treatise) are for the benefit of the individual and are the only means for attaining happiness and knowledge. Human virtues, however, are imperfect: Who has knowledge of real happiness and the real good, can "endeavour" (*jahd*) "to gain His (God's) favour" (*yataqarrabu ilayhi*) and can try "to obtain" (*yaṭlub*) God's "pleasure" (*maḍāt*) "as far as he is able" (*bi-qadr ṭāqatīhi*), so that "he resembles (*yataqayyalu*)" (cf. Lane 1863, s.v. *q-y-d*)¹²

10 On the term "divine life" cf. Aristotle (1991, book x, ch. 7. 1177 b 30f.); Akasoy and Fidora (2005, 561: line 12); al-Fārābī (1961, 560).

11 Perhaps, Miskawayh has given some inspiration to his contemporary Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 414/1023), *Kitāb al-Ṣadāqa wa-l-Ṣadiq* ("Book on Friendship and Friends"). However, both authors share a common background, which in addition is mirrored in the contemporary Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' (cf. Daiber 2021, 531n79). On al-Tawḥīdī's *Kitāb al-Ṣadāqa wa-l-Ṣadiq*, cf. Alshaar (2015).

12 Zurayk (2002) translates "imitates."

(God's) acts to the extent of his capacity (*istiṭā'a*)" (Miskawayh 1966, 170: lines 4–7; 2002, 151). According to Miskawayh, there exists a hierarchy between God, the angels and those "who seek to be like God" (*muta'allihīn*) (Miskawayh 1966, 169: line 13; 2002, 151).¹³

This hierarchy reappears in a similar way and read partly with identical terminology, in a commentary on the pseudo-Pythagorean *Golden Verses*, written by the Neoplatonist Iamblichus. Iamblichus distinguishes between God, "the angels who are close (to the Gods)" (*malā'ika muqarrabūn*)¹⁴ and the "godlike" (*ilāhiyyūn*) who are souls which "assumed a human shape" (*ta'annasat*), abandoned worldly pleasures and are looking for their "good" (*maṣāliḥ*) (Daiber 1995, 40–41: lines 5–11, cf. 18f.). Iamblichus recommends a moderate acquisition of possessions, insofar as it is necessary and useful for man (Daiber 1995, 54–55: lines 2–6, cf. 26–28), who is "on the path of virtue" (*sabīl al-faḍīla*) by "reflecting" (*bi-shughl al-fikr*) on the paths leading to virtues, away from the "body" (*badan*). Everyone is obliged to tackle difficult situations and to endure trials as possibilities to learn, to find the right way and to avoid sensual "delights" (*ladhdhāt*), by his capacity (cf. Daiber 1995, 58–59: lines 13–22). Perfect human virtues of man, whose soul participates in the divine being (cf. Daiber 1995, 20f.), pave the way to the divine virtue (cf. Daiber 1995, 88–89: lines 21–23, cf. 20, 26 and 29f.). The reasonable part of the soul urges the disobedient part to keep to the virtues and to become habituated to them. This is a process of "learning" (*dars*), leading to "education" (*takharruj*), "experience" (*tadarrub*, *khibra*) and "patience" (*ṣabr*), also in dealing with others (cf. Daiber 1995, 62 and 63: lines 6–10, and 86 and 87: lines 14–18, 22–25).¹⁵ Iamblichus understood philosophy as "conformity with the divine" (*hē pros ton theion homologia*) and "knowledge of the gods" as perfect virtue, wisdom and happiness, making man "similar to gods" (cf. Daiber 1995, 30f.).¹⁶

13 Walzer (1962, 228) translated *muta'allihīn* with "divine men," giving the Greek equivalents *theioi andres* and *ektheoumenoi*.

14 The term "close (to God)" (*muqarrabūn*) corresponds to Greek συνεχής in Iamblichus' *De Mysterioris*, book 1, ch. 6, 20: lines 2–8, on which cf. Nasemann 1991, 137f. says that It describes the closeness of the "demons" (*daimones*) to God.

15 Echoes of Iamblichus' remarks about the acquisition of experience in dealing with others and the critical reflection about others and oneself (cf. also Daiber 1995, 80–81: lines 10–82/83, line 23) appear in Miskawayh (1966, 190, 4–191, 4; 2002, 169f.), in a quotation attributed to al-Kindī.

16 On the concept of assimilation to God in Greek commentaries to the *Golden Verses* cf. Izdebska (2016). According to Izdebska (2016, 57–60) assimilation to God (apotheosis) does not exist in the Arabic Iamblichus. She considers the text to be "somewhat inconsistent" (Izdebska 2016, 58), and in another passage to be "a strange mixture of Islamic/Christian theology" (Izdebska 2016, 60). With regard to our comparison with Miskawayh and with

Iamblichus' concept of a similarity between man and God and of the existence of the divine soul in man is ultimately Platonic. It instigated him in contrast to his teacher Porphyry to the assumption of theurgic virtues as a way to receive theurgic revelations (cf. Daiber 2021, 530n77).

The Alexandrians and Ammonius (d. 242 CE) did not go as far, and instead spoke of assimilation to God through virtues leading to knowledge of God. Herewith, they deviate from Plotinus and follow the Neoplatonic and Pythagorean tradition of Iamblichus. We found an echo in al-Kindī and above all in the ethics of Miskawayh.

6 Miskawayh's Way from Practical Ethics to "Spiritual Medicine": A Comparison with Abū Bakr al-Rāzī and a Rediscovered Galenic Source

Miskawayh's ethics is a guideline for training the character leading to practical and "spiritual" virtues and leading to knowledge. This deliberates man's soul from the deficiencies of the body and lets his soul return to its divine origin. Miskawayh's book thus became a practical handbook on "spiritual medicine" (*ṭibb rūḥānī*). Preceding him, the famous physician Abū Bakr al-Rāzī had written a book with this title.¹⁷ This book is less extensive and differs in its structure, and has not always used the same sources: Different from Miskawayh's Aristotelianism, mixed up with Neoplatonism and Galenism, Abū Bakr al-Rāzī keeps to Platonism and the Platonic traditions that he found in Galen's Ethics *Peri Ethōn* (*De Moribus*, "On Moral Character"),¹⁸ mixing up the Platonic doctrine of the assimilation to God with the Neoplatonic concept of the soul's liberation from the body through good actions and increasing intellectual insight, thus, leading to nearness to God (cf. Daiber 2017, 404–405).

This interest in ethics as a likeness to God is shared by Miskawayh. And there is another commonality with Miskawayh: At the end of chapter 4 in his *al-Ṭibb al-Rūḥānī* ("Spiritual Medicine") Abū Bakr al-Rāzī states that he used Galen's book *Maqāla fī Anna al-Akhyār Min al-Nās Qad Yantafī'ūna bi-A'dā'ihim* ("Essay

Neoplatonic texts and in view of the contextualisation of Iamblichus' commentary (see Daiber 1995, 17–34) Izdebska's interpretation is not convincing.

17 On its contents and analysis cf. Daiber 2017, 398–400; 401–403; Adamson 2016.

18 Preserved in an Arabic translation only (Fichtner 2018, no. 412). By the way, Galen refers to this text at the beginning of chapter 6 of his *De Propriorum Animi Cuiuslibet Affectuum Dignotione et Curatione* ("The Diagnosis and Treatment of the Passions Peculiar to Each Person's Soul").

on How the Best People Can Benefit from Their Enemies”),¹⁹ and another book by Galen that he epitomised bears the title *Ta’arruf al-Mar’ Uyūb Nafsih* (“How a Man May Uncover the Vices of His Soul”).²⁰ Both Galenic titles were also mentioned by Miskawayh, in a different sequence. Both, Abū Bakr al-Rāzī and Miskawayh here have excerpted only Galen’s *Ta’arruf al-Mar’ Uyūb Nafsih*—apparently independently from each other: The excerpts differ in length and are taken from Galen’s *Peri Diagnōseōs kai Therapeias tōn en tē Hekastou Psychē Idiōn Pathōn* (Galen 1937, ch. 3; 1963, 32–36). Miskawayh adds the remark “that one cannot be satisfied (*yuqna’u*) with what Galen said”—perhaps this criticism is directed against the comprehensibility of the Arabic translation. The original text of Galen contains other conceptions that reappear in different contexts in Abū Bakr al-Rāzī and Miskawayh. It suffices to mention here: The constant improvement of one’s character leads to the likeness to God, diligence, self-sufficiency, moderation and suppression of greediness, association with and consultation of good people, friendship, the fight against anger, fear and grief—all of which are diseases of the soul—, constant reflection, and discipline.

7 Conclusion

The qualities mentioned in Galen’s *Peri Diagnōseōs kai Therapeias tōn en tē Hekastou Psychē Idiōn Pathōn* are expanded in Miskawayh to an elaborate handbook on the education of man and his soul. It uses key terms of Galen’s ethics in his *De Moribus* and integrates Galen in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* and its discussion of virtues, love, friendship, and justice. The Aristotelian text is connected with Neoplatonic comments taken from Greek-Hellenistic texts, partly ascribed to Porphyry and transforming the Platonic doctrine of the soul and its three parts “irascible” (*thymikon*), “desiring” (*epithymetikon*) and “rational” (*logistikon*) into the Neoplatonic concept of the soul returning to its divine origin (for details cf. Daiber 2021). Moreover, Miskawayh uses texts on the “virtues of the soul,” among them a doxographical treatise on the *Virtues of the Soul* ascribed to Plato, and possibly a Pythagorean text on the *Golden Verses* combined with Iamblichus’ commentary. Finally, Miskawayh quotes texts by al-Kindī—not to speak of those texts he might have known without quoting

19 Lost in the Greek original, but translated into Syriac and Arabic (not preserved) (see Fichtner 2018, no. 162).

20 The English translation by Arberry (1950, 37), wrongly has “How a Man May Discover his Own Vices.”

them and which were circulating during his lifetime, like Abū Bakr al-Rāzī's *al-Ṭibb al-Rūḥānī* or the ethical part of the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* ("Epistles of the Brethren of Purity") (cf. Daiber 2021, 531n79).

8 Echoes of Miskawayh's Ethics in the Muslim World

It is not astonishing that Miskawayh's text with its complexity and its configuration of so many texts attracted the interest of many Muslim scholars. Remarkable is the tendency to adduce examples from Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* as confirmation of Miskawayh's philosophical doctrines. Here, I will mention al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (d. fifth/eleventh century) and his religious ethics *al-Dharī'a ilā Makārim al-Sharī'a* ("The Means to the Noble Traits of Sharī'a") (cf. Daiber 1991; Mohamed 1995; 1998; and above all 2006 in which his 2002 and 2003 articles are integrated). Herewith, al-Rāghib became a model for al-Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) ethical work and for al-Ghazālī's critical reception of Miskawayh's ethics (cf. Abul Quasem 1974).²¹ An echo of Miskawayh's ethics can be found in scholars like Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* ("Nasirean Ethics") (cf. Madelung 1985), and through his mediation by Iranian philosophers like Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawwānī (d. 908/1502) (cf. Siddiqi 1963), and the Syriac Bishop and philosopher Gregory Barhebraeus (d. 685/1286) in his *Butyrium Sapientiae* ("Cream of Wisdom"), the part on practical philosophy (cf. Zonta 1998; Joosse 2004). Moreover, in Jewish philosophers like Maimonides (d. 600/1204) and Ibn Falaquera (d. ca. 694/1295) (cf. Harvey 1991; Chiesa 1990),²² in the Shī'ī philosopher and theologian Muḥammad Maḥdī al-Narāqī (d. 1210/1795) (cf. Cole 1989), in the Egyptian writers and intellectuals of the Egyptian renaissance (*nahḍa*) Rifā'a al-Ṭaḥṭāwī (d. 1290/1873) (Cole 1980; cf. also al-Khatib 2019b, 159–161), Muḥammad 'Abduh (d. 1323/1905) and his pupil Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (d. 1354/1935) (cf. al-Khatib 2019b, 163f). We have no clear idea about the relation of Miskawayh's ethics to his contemporary Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) (cf. first observations by Preissler 1980), to the ethics of the Christian Yaḥyā Ibn 'Adī (d. 363/974) (cf. al-Takrītī 1978, introduction), to the Shāfi'ī jurist al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058) in his books on political science (cf. Bin Sa'īd 1982 for comparison with al-Fārābī, Miskawayh and Ibn

21 For a comparison of al-Ghazālī's and Miskawayh's ethics cf. Sourdel (1989); Goodman (2003, index s.n. Miskawayh); Mohamed (2002; 2003, compares Miskawayh, al-Ghazālī and al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī).

22 According to Chiesa, the parallels between Miskawayh and Ibn Falaquera are based on a common source, the *Summa Alexandrinorum*, which is preserved in the Arabic-Latin translation made in 1240 by Hermannus Alemannus. On this translation cf. the new edition and analysis by Woerther (2020).

Khaldūn) and to the political philosopher Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Abī l-Rabīʿ, who seems to belong to the seventh/thirteenth century.²³ Al-Māwardī and Ibn Abī l-Rabīʿ appear to be examples of “ethicisation” of law—a sign of Miskawayh’s influence. In his *Sulūk al-Malik fī Tadbīr al-Mamālik* (“Conduct of the Master in the Management of the Kingdom”) Ibn Abī l-Rabīʿ propagates the way of the Prophet as the way to moral and spiritual reflection, as well as material welfare. Herewith, his book became an early example for the Islamic ethicisation of *fiqh* in the footsteps of Miskawayh’s ethics. Ibn Abī l-Rabīʿ’s inclusion of ethics in politics has a long prehistory, starting with Ibn al-Muqaffāʿ (d. 142/759) in the second/eighth century, who wrote a “mirror of princes” inspired by Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* (cf. Daiber 2015). This “mirror of princes” received a philosophical fundament in Miskawayh’s ethics which gave the individual a new significance by introducing love, friendship and justice as cornerstones of human dignity.

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23 On the date of Ibn Abī l-Rabīʿ cf. Dunlop in the introduction to his edition and translation of al-Fārābī’s *Fuṣūl al-Madani* (“Aphorisms of the Statesman”) in al-Fārābī (1961, 6). On his *Sulūk al-Malik* cf. al-Takrītī (1980). Al-Takrītī compared Ibn Abī l-Rabīʿ with Miskawayh. Cf. also Hasanuz Zaman (1992).

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Meta-Ethical Contributions of Ash‘arī Theological Writings

A Reading in al-Juwaynī’s al-Irshād and al-Shahrastānī’s Nihāyat al-Iqdām

Omar Farahat

1 Introduction

This chapter argues that classical Ash‘arī works of theology (*kalām*) or foundations of religious belief (*uṣūl al-dīn*) were, at a crucial level, projects in theoretical ethics. Specifically, we will see that a guiding objective of the works in question was to uphold the key Ash‘arī claim that knowledge of the moral status of acts, and therefore legal norms, is epistemologically impossible without revelation. This central claim informed both the structure of *kalām* arguments and how they were advanced. To do so, this chapter will introduce and situate two classical Ash‘arī works of theology in their historical and intellectual contexts: *al-Irshād ilā Qawāṭi‘ al-Adilla fī Uṣūl al-‘Itiqād* (“Guidance to the Essentials of Evidence in the Fundamentals of Belief”) by Imām al-Ḥaramayn Abū l-Ma‘ālī al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085), and *Nihāyat al-Iqdām fī ‘Ilm al-Kalām* (“The Ultimate Conclusion in the Science of Theology”) by Abū l-Faṭḥ Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153). This overview will allow us to trace the development of some foundational Ash‘arī doctrines in one of the most active phases of their development. The purpose of this juxtaposition will be to highlight and reconstruct the meta-ethical project advanced by those works. By meta-ethics, I mean reflections on the concepts and general theories that underlie ethical inquiry and judgment.¹

As it shall unfold, much intellectual effort was dedicated to elucidating the idea of a sharp division between divine and human attributes, and, more broadly, all that is divine from all that is human. This sharp division, which also informs discussions on divine states, will, and (freedom from) accidents, was ultimately directed at establishing the overall alterity of divine attributes, which, for Ash‘arīs included revelation. This, in turn, was fundamental to the belief that no other created phenomenon, including human reason

¹ Or, to put it more simply, a query about “where the requirements of ethics come from” (Davis 2007, 22).

and intuition, could be seen as analogous to (*yushbih*) divine revelation in its moral authority, which is the crux of the Ash'arī response to their theological opponents.

To advance my argument, the chapter will proceed in two sections. The first section introduces the authors and their works, providing a brief biographical overview of both of these founding Ash'arī figures and a contextualisation and a brief comparison of both works. The second section advances the substantive claim of the chapter, namely that ethical concerns were central to those treatises. The second section will proceed in three steps. First, the centrality of the claim that revelation is indispensable for moral reasoning to the arguments of each treatise will be highlighted in the first sub-section. Second, we will explain how this moral-theoretical commitment rested on the idea that divine revelation, like everything divine, was non-analogous to any phenomenon in the immanent world. Finally, we will focus on a problem specific to Ash'arī meta-ethics, namely the difficulty of tracing a link between a profoundly transcendent divine attribute and the very concrete needs of practical reasoning, which will lead us to explore how each of our authors addressed this concern.

2 The Authors and Their Works

Imām al-Ḥaramayn, Abū l-Ma'ālī 'Abd al-Malik ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Juwaynī is a towering figure in the classical theological and legal traditions. A Shāfi'ī jurist and Ash'arī theologian, he made major contributions to classical Islamic theology (*kalām*), substantive law (*fiqh*), and legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), among other fields such as ethics, epistemology, and dialectics. Al-Juwaynī's influence on his successors, including al-Shahrastānī, cannot be overstated. Al-Juwaynī was born in 419/1028 near Nishāpūr to a father well-versed in legal knowledge and instruction, who was his first teacher in *fiqh* (al-Subkī 1964, 5:169). Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 771/1370) sums up al-Juwaynī's influence in the following terms: "No one with knowledge has any doubt that he [al-Juwaynī] was the most knowledgeable and well-versed scholar on earth in theology, legal theory, and law. All other scholars are [merely] building on his work." (*bal al-kullu min bahrihi yaghtarifūn*) (al-Subkī 1964, 5:169). At the young age of twenty, al-Juwaynī replaced his late father as professor of *fiqh*, all while continuing his studies in *uṣūl al-fiqh*. Following some political disturbances, he left Nishāpūr for a journey to Mecca and Medina, where he successfully taught law and theology, before returning to settle into his position in the Niẓāmiyya school in Nishāpūr for the following thirty years (al-Subkī 1964, 5:171). During

that time, he was the uncontested authority in all areas of law and theology (al-Subkī 1964, 5:171).

Al-Juwaynī wrote two treatises in the genre of *uṣūl al-dīn*, the primary genre in which classical Islamic theology was produced. The longer book, appropriately titled *al-Shāmil fī Uṣūl al-Dīn* ("The Comprehensive [Treatise] in the Principles of Religion"), which will not be the focus of this study, has only appeared in a handful of editions, mostly based on allegedly incomplete manuscripts (al-Juwaynī 1969; see also al-Juwaynī 1989). Conversely, his shorter book, *al-ʿIrshād*, reached us in a fuller form and constitutes a coherent and often-studied account of classical Ashʿarī theological doctrines. In addition, al-Juwaynī has left us with some of the most important works in Shāfiʿī law, such as the encyclopaedic *Nihāyat al-Maṭlab* ("The Ultimate Objective") (al-Juwaynī 2007), and a work of legal theory titled *al-Burhān* ("The Proof") (al-Subkī 1964, 5:177).² This book, al-Subkī explains, was written in an innovative and non-conformist style by al-Juwaynī, which led to misunderstandings, including on the issue of God's omniscience (al-Subkī 1964, 5:192).

Al-Juwaynī's work can be said to have established the classical iterations of Ashʿarī theological doctrines in their clearest form. His meta-ethical doctrines constitute the foundations of this project. These doctrines are focused on a key dichotomy: the omnipotence and perfection of the Creator on the one hand and the limitations of the mind and abilities of the Created on the other hand. Such dichotomy had vast epistemological and moral ramifications. For example, among the most central ideas that were related and contested by Shāfiʿī biographers is the claim that God knows the universals and particulars in their entirety, which al-Subkī insists is a view defended by al-Juwaynī, as it pertains directly to divine omniscience, a doctrine central to Ashʿarism. This assertion of al-Subkī's was intended as a response to some allegations by al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348), who claimed that al-Juwaynī had failed to properly uphold divine omniscience (al-Subkī also defends al-Juwaynī against other allegations, such as the fact that he was not well-versed in *ḥadīth*) (al-Subkī 1964, 5:178–180).

Our second author, al-Shahrastānī, is an immediate successor of al-Juwaynī. He pursued a remarkably similar career, although, as per most bibliographical sources, he did not attain the same level of prominence in the traditional sciences considered most critical for the classical Muslim scholar, namely *uṣūl al-fiqh*, *uṣūl al-dīn*, and *fiqh*. The similarity in life events and affiliation to the Shāfiʿī and Ashʿarī schools grants us a unique opportunity to see how al-Juwaynī's work was received by an immediate follower and successor.

2 For a reliable edition of his legal theory work, see al-Juwaynī (1999).

Al-Shahrastānī, whose biographical information is generally scarce, was also born near Nīshāpūr, in 469/1077,³ and died in 548/1153. He moved to the metropolis of Nīshāpūr to study legal theory and theology with Abū Naṣr (d. 514/1120?), son of Abū l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072), and Abū l-Qāsim al-Anṣarī (d. 514/1120), all disciples and followers of al-Juwaynī (al-Subkī 1964, 6:129). He thus became well-versed in legal theory, theology, law, and logic. He also travelled to Mecca for pilgrimage, then settled in Baghdad where he maintained scholarly activities for several years before returning to Nīshāpūr once the political unrest subsided (see Monnot 1996). Al-Shahrastānī's most famous work is the encyclopaedic *al-Milal wa-l-Niḥal* ("Religious Sects and Their Creeds"), a very extensive study of various schools, sects, and groups of thought in Islam. Al-Subkī declared this treatise to be the supreme work in its genre (al-Subkī 1964, 6:128). Like prominent scholars of his era, al-Shahrastānī dedicated much of his time to the study of law, legal theory, and theology, and produced a theological treatise in the Ash'arī tradition titled *Nihāyat al-Iqdām fī 'Ilm al-Kalām*, which is the focus of our current study (al-Subkī 1964, 6:129). Despite it being a highly elaborate defence of Ash'arī doctrines against a range of detractors, including philosophers in the Hellenistic tradition, *Nihāyat al-Iqdām* has largely been overshadowed by *al-Milal wa-l-Niḥal* in modern scholarship.

Al-Shahrastānī's meta-ethical project, as we will see below, aligns with al-Juwaynī's, as his theological work is largely a systematic defence of the framework cemented by his predecessor. This framework was centrally concerned with divine omnipotence, omniscience, and the necessity of divine revelation for ethical knowledge. A controversy surrounding al-Shahrastānī concerned his alleged Ismā'īlī tendencies, which is an accusation that was reported by al-Dhahabī and later related by al-Subkī. This allegation is simply and rightly dismissed by al-Subkī as irrelevant, since there was, in fact, nothing in his theological work, especially *Nihāyat al-Iqdām*, that indicates anything other than his ardent adherence to Ash'arī doctrines (al-Subkī 1964, 6:130). Some have argued that his commentary in *Mafātīḥ al-Asrār* ("Keys to the Mysteries") shows some traces of Ismā'īlī conceptions of the divine. This debate shall not concern us here, as al-Shahrastānī's Ash'arī affiliation is quite evident in *Nihāyat al-Iqdām* as far as his theological and meta-ethical vision is concerned. Al-Shahrastānī's book is an elucidation of twenty fundamental

3 Biographers disagree on the specific year of his birth. Interestingly, they all reference one of his students, Ibn al-Sam'ānī (d. 569/1166), who provided the year of his birth. However, some sources state it as 467/1075, while others claim it to be 479/1087. In Ibn al-Sam'ānī's book, the year is recorded as 469/1077 (see Ibn Ḥajar 2002, 7:311).

Ash'arī theological principles. A look at the scope and organisation of these principles reveals that al-Shahrastānī remained faithful to the meta-ethical idea of the centrality of revelation, without copying the same format of his predecessor's work. For example, while al-Sharastānī paid significant attention to the metaphysics of divine alterity that we find in al-Juwaynī and went to great lengths to elucidate the Ash'arī conceptions of divine attributes in general, and speech as an attribute in particular, he did not pay much attention to matters traditionally associated with *kalām* such as repentance and political representation.

Al-Juwaynī's *al-Irshād*, unlike *Nihāyat al-Iqdām*, is a widely published and frequently studied treatise (examples of studies dedicated to this treatise include Ajhar 1995; Tijani 2005). This article is based on a version published in Cairo in 1950 by Maktabat al-Khānjī. The editing, introduction, commentary, and indexes were all produced by Muḥammad Yūsuf Mūsā (d. 1963), professor of *uṣūl al-dīn* at al-Azhar University, and 'Alī 'Abd al-Mun'im 'Abd al-Ḥamīd (d. 1986) a then teaching fellow at the same university. The editors note that the book was, in a sense, intended as a shorter version of al-Juwaynī's *al-Shāmil*, the more expansive work of theology. It is important to note, however, that *al-Irshād* is not a mere summary. It is a self-contained defence of al-Juwaynī's account of Ash'arī theology that partakes in the tradition of mid-length treatises (*waṣīf*), which was prevalent in all Islamic traditional sciences. As a mid-length work in the genre of *uṣūl al-dīn*, *al-Irshād* offered an account of Ash'arī doctrines complete with their justifications that is comprehensive enough to be of help to the expert, but not so extensive as to make it prohibitive to those looking to familiarise themselves with the whole range of subjects discussed. This clearly differs from summaries which were generally intended for student memorisation. The editors of this volume explain the purpose of the book as "the elucidation and justification of religious beliefs, followed by a defence thereof, and a rebuttal of the doctrines of those who advance teachings contrary to [proper] belief, which were ubiquitous within the Muslim world at that time" (al-Juwaynī 1950, ʃ-q). The editors here are writing as insiders to those debates, in which they position themselves as successors of the Ash'arī classical thinkers. The intense nature of theological debate during al-Juwaynī's times, the editors explain, reflected an age of intellectual vitality, but also the spread of a multitude of theological positions against which Ash'arīs developed their ideas, most notably the Mu'tazilis and Shī'īs of al-Juwaynī's time. In addition to being a comprehensive account of al-Juwaynī's defence of Ash'arī theology without being overly long, the attention *al-Irshād* received in modern scholarship may also be attributable to the fact that several complete and consistent manuscripts of the book have survived (al-Juwaynī 1950, ʃ-q). In the editor's introduction, Mūsā indicates that this printed version is

primarily, but not solely, based on the manuscript produced and published in 1930 by Jean-Dominique Luciani. Luciani's manuscript, in turn, was based on manuscripts found in France, Algeria and Tunisia. Mūsā and his co-editor also studied Luciani's manuscript against three others, two of which were handily found in the Egyptian Dār al-Kutub.

The structure of al-Juwaynī's *al-Irshād* is, in itself, an indication of the centrality of the idea of the necessity of revelation to his entire project. The first part of the treatise, significantly, begins with an exploration of human cognition: what constitutes reasoning (*naẓar*), the appropriate ways of attaining knowledge, followed by an inquiry into what constitutes knowledge (al-Juwaynī 1950, 3–16). As we will see in the next section, prefacing the treatise with a discussion of epistemology aligns with our findings that epistemology was in fact the foundation and central pillar of al-Juwaynī's meta-ethics. The treatise proceeds with the second major piece of its meta-ethical framework, namely the contingency and createdness of the world (*ḥidath al-ʿālam*) in opposition to the necessary existent, who is the eternal creator (*al-ṣāniʿ, al-qadīm*) (al-Juwaynī 1950, 17–29). This is especially significant in al-Juwaynī's meta-ethical framework given his specific framing of divine revelation, studied in the next section. Having established the epistemological and metaphysical foundations, al-Juwaynī proceeds to elucidate some of the matters that were especially contentious with contemporary Muʿtazilis. This includes demonstrating divine attributes (*ithbāt al-ṣifāt*) and arguing that God's attributes are neither accidents nor identical with the divine self (al-Juwaynī 1950, 30–51). Moving from the more abstract to the more specific, al-Juwaynī focuses on God's attributes of oneness, eternity, and being a Willing Creator (al-Juwaynī 1950, 52–78). Importantly, al-Juwaynī pays particular attention to the attribute of speech (*kalām*) and argues that divine speech is an eternal attribute, in opposition to the Muʿtazili belief that divine speech is a created act (al-Juwaynī 1950, 99–140). The reason for the special care al-Juwaynī gives to this discussion of divine speech will become evident when we address the centrality of this conception of revelation to his meta-ethical model. The remainder of the treatise, besides discussing some topics that were typical in the genre of *kalām* at the time such as divine names and the possibility of seeing God (al-Juwaynī 1950, 141–186), repentance (al-Juwaynī 1950, 401–10), and political leadership (al-Juwaynī 1950, 411–434). Al-Juwaynī pays particular attention to questions at the intersection of divine omnipotence and theoretical ethics. These include the creation of human actions (al-Juwaynī 1950, 187–214), the impossibility of knowing good and evil without revelation and of claiming that God is bound by human notions of obligation (al-Juwaynī 1950, 257–286), and a response to the Muʿtazilis' views on the idea that God must reward the believers and punish the sinners (al-Juwaynī 1950, 381–395).

Al-Shahrastānī's *Nihāyat al-Iqdām* has received less attention in modern scholarship, both with regard to secondary studies and printed editions. This chapter is based on a 2009 print of Alfred Guillaume's edition, published by Maktabat al-Thaqāfa al-Dīniyya in Cairo. Alfred Guillaume's edition appears to command a degree of authority as it is the basis of many of the available printed versions of the book, including one published in Lebanon by Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya. Guillaume's pioneering work appeared with a translation (al-Shahrastānī 1934). Some differences can immediately be observed between *al-Irshād* and *Nihāyat al-Iqdām*. In the former, the author's authoritative voice and original argumentation are front and centre, and the Mu'tazilīs, Shī'īs and Khārijīs are the main opponents against which al-Juwaynī builds his arguments. Al-Shahrastānī argumentation, by contrast, defers to a more diverse range of authorities, including al-Juwaynī himself, but also his great predecessor Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1013), but also incorporates rebuttals against a greater array of methods and beliefs, including, most significantly, the philosophers operating within the Greek tradition (Guest 1936). This shift is congruent with the increase in incorporation and response to Greek philosophical thought in Islamic theological and jurisprudential disciplines in the generation immediately following al-Juwaynī, notably in the work of his illustrious disciple al-Ghazālī.⁴

These two differences between the treatises explain the structural differences we can see between the two works. Whereas *al-Irshād* is designed as a traditional work of *kalām* that sets out, expansively, the author's view on the most foundational matters of Ash'arī theology, *Nihāyat al-Iqdām* is more systematically organised around several selected topics, or principles (*qawā'id*) which the author deemed the worthiest of exploration given his historical and intellectual context. Whereas al-Juwaynī appeared to consciously lay the foundations for the Ash'arī theology of his time, al-Shahrastānī's work has a more modest ambition: to defend the doctrines of his great Ash'arī predecessors and respond to the most dangerous opponents of his time, namely the philosophers. A definite marker of the difference in reception between the two books is the fact that *al-Irshād*, despite its complex nature, was the subject of a multitude of commentaries by al-Juwaynī's successors (an example can be found in Ibn Maymūn 1987). Commentators include al-Juwaynī's disciples Abū l-Qāsim al-Anṣārī (d. 511–512/1118) and Abū Ishāq ibn al-Mar'a (d. 611/1214). Al-Juwaynī's influence, in addition to commentaries and subsequent *kalām* work such as

4 For an account of the complicated relationship between Hellenistic philosophy and philosophical theology, and the corresponding disagreements and debates in modern Western scholarship on the nature of this relationship, see Shihadeh and Thiele (2020, 1–8).

Nihāyat al-Iqdām, can also be seen in defences of Ash'arī doctrines, such as the proof of an eternal Creator of the world, in opposition to Neo-Platonic influences in Islamic thought, defences which were popularised by his student al-Ghazālī (al-Juwaynī 1950, q).

3 Fundamental Meta-Ethical Principles in al-Juwaynī's and al-Shahrastānī's Thought

My claim in this section is that *al-Irshād*, despite being a treatise in the genre of *kalām* or theology, was centrally concerned with establishing Ash'arī meta-ethical principles which, as we will see in the next section, were embraced and developed by his Ash'arī successors. The most fundamental meta-ethical position, which guides much of the epistemological and theological conversations in the treatise, is that no proper moral knowledge can arise without some level of reliance on divine revelation. Principally, al-Juwaynī was concerned with moral epistemology. To defend this view, al-Juwaynī advanced a range of epistemological and ontological positions, all of which were designed to align with this meta-ethical commitment. The centrality of revelation as a guiding principle highlights the limitations of some modern accounts of Ash'arī ethics, which view them as fundamentally concerned with “anti-realism,” in their attempt to refute Mu'tazilī meta-ethics (Shihadeh 2014). That is not to say that viewing Ash'arī meta-ethics through the lens of anti-realism is altogether inaccurate. While responding to Mu'tazilī theoretical ethics and denying that objective moral values are inherent in actions were certainly pieces of the broader Ash'arī meta-ethical framework, they ultimately served the greater purpose of justifying their revelation-centrism. In other words, my point is that the stakes were higher than “anti-realism.” The ultimate stakes of this project were described by al-Juwaynī in the following terms:

Human reasoning [i.e., without revelation] cannot inform us of moral values in a categorical sense (*fī ḥukm al-taklīf*). Our minds [merely] receive (*yatalaqqā*) moral knowledge through the revelatory sources (*mawārid al-shar'*) and transmission (*sam'*).

al-Juwaynī 1950, 258

3.1 *No Ethical Knowledge Without Revelation*

The first element in this meta-ethical framework is an understanding of knowledge itself, and the processes that are available for attaining it. In fact, the primacy of epistemology, or knowing what knowledge is, is often asserted

in treatises in that genre. Al-Juwaynī's idea of reasoning is characterised by a specific purpose: it is a mental process that has as its *aim* the attainment of knowledge or an informed guess, that is, probabilistic knowledge.⁵ The difference between knowledge (*ʿilm*) and probability (*ẓann*) is that the first accords with the object of knowledge "as it is" (*ʿalā mā huwa bihi*), whereas the second type may or may not accord with objective truth. The claim that Ashʿarīs did not believe attaining objective truth was possible, therefore, is only in part true (Shihadeh 2014). This claim typically stems from a singular focus on reasoning to attain moral values, which al-Juwaynī did argue may not result in objective knowledge. This, however, was an exception to the general principle that knowledge of the objective world was possible in a factual sense. Such knowledge can be reached either through the senses (*ḥawāss*) or systematic reflection (*naẓar*) (al-Juwaynī 1950, 3). Knowledge acquisition follows "habitual patterns" (*mustaqarr al-ʿāda*) and is divided into that acquired by necessity or by reasoning. Knowledge obtained by necessity means that it may not be dismissed or questioned (al-Juwaynī 1950, 14). Beyond this realm of self-evident truths, humans must use their God-given ability to investigate indicants (*al-naẓar al-ṣaḥīḥ fī dalīl*) (al-Juwaynī 1950, 14).

In fact, the insistence on the objectivity of non-evaluative knowledge obtained through the senses and sound reasoning was foundational for al-Juwaynī's meta-ethical project. Since knowledge *proper* can be observed or deduced with certainty, no proper knowledge of that kind can be said to arise in matters of moral assessment. That is because we are unable to deem things good (*lā yuḥassan*) because of their own nature, or a property attached to them (*ṣifa lāzima lahu*) (al-Juwaynī 1950, 258). Note that, even when refuting the claim that actions may have inherent moral values, al-Juwaynī was centrally concerned with the kinds of moral claims that may follow from such refutation, that is, whether or not a positive or negative moral assessment (*taḥsīn aw taqbiḥ*) may follow from mere observation. The driving concern behind his project was the impossibility of justifying moral claims without revelation. If good and bad are not attributes that follow from a thing or act's nature, what are they? Al-Juwaynī explains that "good" simply refers to an attribute that attaches to an act by revelation, which makes doing it praiseworthy, and omitting it blameworthy (al-Juwaynī 1950, 258). This, again, is not an inherent attribute in any sense: "goodness is not external to divine revelation [...]. Rather, it is the revelation itself which praises those who perform such act (*bal huwa naḥs wurūd al-sharʿ bi-l-ṭhanāʾ ʿalā fāʿilih*)" (al-Juwaynī 1950, 259).

5 "yaṭlubu bihi man qāma bihi ʿilman aw ghalabat ẓannin" (al-Juwaynī 1950, 3).

An idea that al-Juwaynī develops further in his work of legal theory, expanding on the doctrines expounded by his illustrious predecessor al-Bāqillānī (1998, 1:172), is the distinction between factual and evaluative attributes, which further reinforces the Ash'arī theory of objective knowledge in non-moral assessments. Al-Juwaynī, like al-Bāqillānī in his *al-Taqrīb wa-l-Irshād* ("Facilitation and Guidance"), defines goodness as "an attribute of required acts, setting them apart from those that are not" (al-Juwaynī 1950, 259). Commanded or required here is a general category that includes both strictly obligatory and merely laudable actions. The main point for al-Juwaynī is that when we say "good" in a proper sense, we mean to refer to the evaluative attribute attached to acts by divine revelation, which is to be distinguished from other relative or hypothetical uses of the word "good." Again, we see that the central point for al-Juwaynī was what kinds of moral claims can be validly made with and without revelation.

What we have labelled the "primacy of epistemology" is less evident in al-Shahrastānī's theology. For one, al-Shahrastānī skips the habitual epistemological preface and begins his treatise with the "first principle," that is "the createdness of the world, the impossibility of creation without beginning, and the impossibility of bodies that are not restricted in space" (al-Shahrastānī 2009, 3).⁶ The metaphysical distinction between the created contingent world and the eternal necessary existent is critical to al-Juwaynī's system also, as we will see in the next section. What we should note here is that, whereas al-Juwaynī clearly separated epistemological and ontological questions and granted priority to the former, al-Shahrastānī grouped all those issues together under an explicit meta-ethical framing. For al-Shahrastānī, human minds can know without revelation the ontological status of moral value and the fact that God is under no obligation; which are all different facets of the same Ash'arī doctrine. Al-Shahrastānī treats this cluster of topics together under the heading of the "seventeenth principle," which consists of "making moral judgments, demonstrating that [human reason] neither indicates duties upon God, nor imposes duties upon humans without revelation" (al-Shahrastānī 2009, 262). This grouping of topics proves even more clearly the point we have made thus far, namely that the ultimate question of classical Ash'arī theologians was not realism or the ontological or epistemological status of moral values *per se*, but centrally the fact that no such judgment can be made regarding human actions without revelation, a position that is evident from al-Shahrastānī's framing of his seventeenth principle.

6 On the practice of beginning theological works with an epistemological discussion, see Abrahamov (1993, 20).

The way al-Shahrastānī presents this set of questions is illustrative of how al-Juwaynī's teachings evolved only two generations or so later. Since al-Shahrastānī is not advancing an initial elaboration, but a systematic defence of specific Ash'arī teachings, the exact stakes of the debate become more explicit in his writing. The centrality of the role of revelation to his defence of Ash'arism is demonstrated in how he explains the parameters of this principle:

The view of the People of Truth [i.e., the Ash'arīs] is that human reasoning cannot lead to knowledge of the good or evil nature of anything insofar as divine legislation is concerned. What that means is that good and evil are not inherent attributes of human acts in a way that, once committed or omitted, would make it necessary for God to reward and punish accordingly [...] This also means that good is what revelation praises, and evil is that from which revelation discourages.

AL-SHAHRASTĀNĪ 2009, 326

In this passage, al-Shahrastānī treats as equivalent four positions which, as we saw and will continue to discuss below, al-Juwaynī treats as different but related. The first is epistemological: human minds are incapable of reaching conclusions on the moral values of actions in the *shar'ī* sense. The second is ontological: good and evil are not inherent attributes of acts. The third is theological: God is under no duty to reward or punish an act just because humans believe it to be good or evil. Finally, all of these positions lead to the central conclusion: good and evil are attributes that are imposed upon human acts by divine revelation. Even once such attributes are attached to acts by revelation, they do not become intrinsic to them, as they are not contingent upon any of the acts' intrinsic attributes nor do they follow from them in any way.

Al-Shahrastānī also presents the opposing view as a set of related positions that cut across various questions. The opponents of the Ash'arīs argued that human reasoning is sufficient to attain moral knowledge, which implies that God is obligated to reward or punish actions according to their inherent value, that actions have inherent moral properties (*ṣifa nafsīyya min al-ḥusn wa-l-qubh*) and therefore revelation informs of, rather than establishes, moral values, and that values are known either by necessity or by reasoning based on necessary knowledge (al-Shahrastānī 2009, 363). What is noteworthy in this account is that not all of these positions are logically dependent. For example, while the fact that revelation is informative rather than foundational follows from the view that moral properties are intrinsic to acts, the epistemological and ontological aspects of these positions do not have a necessary connection. On the one hand, it may be possible to know moral values without revelation

and without assuming that they are inherent properties, for example through consistent human intuition. On the other hand, it is conceivable that, even if moral values were inherent attributes of action, we would require divine revelation to reveal these attributes to us. In short, there is no necessary link between the ontological and epistemological components of these arguments. The only feature of each set of doctrines that makes them coherent is that one argues for the necessity of revelation, whereas the other denies it.

Even in his polemics against Mu'tazilī claims, al-Juwaynī's main concern was what can be known without revelation, rather than merely or primarily, what properties are inherent in actions. For example, al-Juwaynī's response to the Mu'tazilī claims that the evil nature of certain acts (e.g., lying) can be known by necessity was centrally focused on the possibility of moral disagreement. Al-Juwaynī explained: "any moral value you claim is evident has been disputed. [...] It is unsound to believe that an assessment is necessary when those disputing it are everywhere. Any minor sample (*shirdhimatun*) from those dissenters would satisfy the minimum requirement for mass knowledge (*aqall al-tawātur*)" (al-Juwaynī 1950, 260). Al-Juwaynī's response to the Mu'tazilīs appeared to be fuelled in part by a concern for the potential of moral tyranny, or at least a deep suspicion towards the universalising tendencies of Mu'tazilī naturalism. He asked: "If, as the Mu'tazilīs claim, the attainment of knowledge is a process available to all, how could only one faction be in possession of [moral] truth?" (al-Juwaynī 1950, 260).

A central case study that is often invoked by theologians of different schools to illustrate their moral epistemologies is the question of whether aimless lying is inherently evil. The question is whether a reasonable person, when faced with the option of reaching the same outcome by either lying or telling the truth, would naturally choose telling the truth as the morally superior choice. If the answer is in the positive, as the Mu'tazilīs hold, then truthfulness must be inherently good (al-Juwaynī 1950, 263). It is worth noting that this argument, as related and refuted by al-Juwaynī, does not in itself conclusively classify the Mu'tazilīs as realists. It is possible to hold that position on the basis of moral intuition, for example, as opposed to the inherent moral properties of actions. Al-Juwaynī's response, interestingly, was not to simply deny the inherent goodness of truth-telling, but to observe that this hypothesis advanced by Mu'tazilī theologians is impossible: "the Mu'tazilī situation is self-contradicting. If lying was necessarily bad, a liar would deserve reprimand in all situations according to them. How, then, can we imagine a hypothesis where truth and lying would have similar outcomes in the first place?" (al-Juwaynī 1950, 264).

The crux of the objection that al-Juwaynī is levelling against this scenario is that the hypothesis in which we might imagine that truth or lying might

produce the same benefit or harm in a given situation is impossible, and impossible hypotheticals are not an acceptable method for moral knowledge. The Mu'tazilī position could, however, be defended by pointing out the distinction between immediate or mundane benefits as opposed to properly moral benefits, a distinction al-Juwaynī appears to reject. The idea behind the Mu'tazilī argument is that if the non-moral effects of truth and lying are, in a particular case, all equal, the moral goodness of truthfulness will tip the scale towards telling the truth. In addition to explaining that the idea of truth and lying is in itself relative, al-Juwaynī held that this can never occur since we already have revelation on the matter, and the attribution of moral value by revelation will pre-determine an agent's motivation in lying or telling the truth: "to grant that truth-telling is inherently superior all else being equal, we must imagine a situation in which no divine revelation was sent on the matter" (al-Juwaynī 1950, 264). Since we already have revelation attributing positive value to truthfulness, such scenario could never occur. The bottom line for al-Juwaynī is that it is not possible to reach decisive moral values without some aid from divine revelation.

Al-Shahrastānī also centred his discussion of the unavailability of moral judgments to the revelation-independent mind on the Mu'tazilī claim that we know by necessity that lying is bad. Al-Shahrastānī's response was primarily an elaboration of al-Juwaynī's second objection (al-Shahrastānī 2009, 363), pertaining to the possibility of disagreement on this and all other moral judgments. According to the Ash'arīs, al-Shahrastānī explains,

If we assume that a human has perfect intuition and rationality altogether without being influenced by the mores of particular people, parents, legislation, or a teacher, and we tell that human that two are greater than one and that lying is evil in that it is blameworthy from a divine standpoint, such person would not doubt the first statement, but might doubt the second.

AL-SHAHRASTĀNĪ 2009, 363

Rather than dismissing the Mu'tazilī claim as a practical impossibility as al-Juwaynī did, al-Shahrastānī focused his effort on exposing its inconsistency. This addresses the epistemological side of the argument, wherein the Mu'tazilīs claim that the evil nature of lying is known by necessity. Second, al-Shahrastānī explains that "truthfulness is stating something as it really is, whereas lying is stating something contrary to its reality" (al-Shahrastānī 2009, 364). Nothing in this notion of truth and lying entails *knowledge* of their moral value by necessity, which proves that they do not have inherent moral

properties. We see, once again, that al-Shahrastānī treats the ontological and epistemological aspects of this argument as equivalent and inseparable, but, in that instance, he suggests that the ontological position follows from an epistemological reality, i.e., we know truth and lying are devoid of moral properties because we cannot realise these properties just by learning their true nature (al-Shahrastānī 2009, 364).

3.2 *The Fundamental Alterity of Revelation*

If revelation, commonly understood as a communication from God, can be easily accepted as a source of moral knowledge, how could we justify the Ash'arī position that it is an *indispensable* source of moral knowledge, i.e., that it is epistemologically impossible to reach moral assessments in the proper sense without relying on revelation? If God is the Creator of all things, why is it not possible to find moral guidance elsewhere in His creation, such as in human intuition, or the beneficial or harmful consequences of our actions? To answer this, al-Juwaynī developed in *al-Irshād* a notion of revelation that sets it apart ontologically from the rest of the world that manifests to us. Determining what is revelation requires a determination of what is divine speech and divine knowledge. Moral epistemology, which I maintain is the central concern driving this treatise, is therefore reliant on theological positions. Seemingly obscure theological discussions of divine will, power, and attributes ultimately serve the foundational meta-ethical principles explained in the previous section. For example, al-Juwaynī explains divine knowledge in *al-Irshād* as “the eternal knowledge” (*al-‘ilm al-qadīm*), which he defines as “God’s attribute (*ṣifat al-Bārī*) *ta‘ālā*) co-eternal with the divine self. It relates to all things that can be known, and it neither follows by necessity (*ḍarūrī*) nor acquisition (*kasbī*)” (al-Juwaynī 1950, 13). Divine knowledge, above all, is completely unlike human knowledge. As we have previously mentioned, holding that God is omniscient in the most absolute sense was a critical Ash'arī doctrine, which we see expounded here by al-Juwaynī. But perhaps most importantly, divine knowledge is *divine* in the deepest sense, it follows none of the “habitual” processes of knowledge acquisition that are familiar to humans and is wholly different altogether.

The theological framework set up by al-Juwaynī to explain divine knowledge is expanded to explain other divine attributes, which, in the Ash'arī view, include speech. This has major meta-ethical implications. The controversy surrounding the ontological nature of divine speech in itself (as opposed to the way it is *perceived* by humans), centres on whether or not such speech is eternal. While the Ash'arīs defended the eternity of divine speech, many other schools understood divine speech to occur in time or having a moment of occurrence

(*muftataḥ al-wujūd*) (al-Juwaynī 1950, 100). The Muʿtazilīs, he explained disapprovingly, identified divine speech with its actual linguistic manifestation that is available to human senses (al-Juwaynī 1950, 104). His position, by contrast to the Muʿtazilīs, was that divine speech was situated within the divine self (*qāʾim bi-l-naḥs*). The concrete utterances observed by humans as scriptures (*ʿibārāt*) are mere indicants (*adilla*) that point to such transcendent speech, not the speech itself. The way the signs refer to the proper divine speech as meaning is entirely up to linguistic convention (*iṣtilāḥ*) (al-Juwaynī 1950, 104).

If God's speech is so unlike ours, that it is to be understood rather than an act, how could it be characterised as speech at all? Al-Juwaynī explains that to say that God is speaking (*mutakallim*) is to say that He is in a perpetual state of speech (al-Juwaynī 1950, 109). The idea of a state of speech (*ḥāl*) helps explain the notion that speech is an eternal attribute. It follows that the meanings that constitute divine speech are associated with the divine self perpetually. He contrasts this notion of divine speech with the Muʿtazilī understanding of speech as an act of will, which makes it separate from the speaker's self (al-Juwaynī 1950, 109). This distinction however raises a critical disagreement with the Muʿtazilīs on whether speech is an act of divine will. This disagreement evokes the Muʿtazilī criticism that the Ashʿarīs are denying that divine revelation is a reflection of God's will, which, al-Juwaynī explains, the Muʿtazilīs believe is inconsistent with their view of God as identical with his attributes (al-Juwaynī 1950, 115).

Al-Juwaynī's response, once again, highlights the Ashʿarī insistence on divine omnipotence. He answered that, to him, it is fine to say that something is a reflection of divine will as long as we grant that such will must by necessity encompass all conceivable things. His problem with the Muʿtazilī idea of divine will as a source of commands is, therefore, not just the assumption of identity between God and his will, but also, perhaps more centrally, their claim that God only wills certain things (i.e., good things) but not others (al-Juwaynī 1950, 115). It is not, therefore, completely inaccurate to say that revelation was created by God's will, if what we mean by that is that the concrete manifestation of revelation through the life of the Prophet is God's creation, just like everything else in the world (al-Juwaynī 1950, 116). This manifestation however, is not God's speech *proper*, which is the "inner speech," an eternal divine attribute (al-Juwaynī 1950, 117).

The idea of the fundamental alterity of divine revelation was not only a central concern in al-Shahraṣṭānī's *Nihāyat al-Iqdām*, but it appears to have been an explicit point of contention that he dedicated much of his treatise to elucidating. It would not be an exaggeration to say that much of the first sixteen principles leading up to the discussion of moral epistemology studied in the previous section was dedicated to establishing the radical divide between human and divine speech, attributes, and states in one form or another. After

dedicating the first three principles to discussing the divide between God the eternal Creator characterised by oneness, and the necessarily contingent world, which, Ash'arīs believe, is caused by divine will (rather than mere emanation), al-Shahrastānī drives the point home under the fourth principle, titled *Fī Ibtāl al-Tashbīh* ("On the Invalidation of Analogousness") (al-Shahrastānī 2009, 97). The idea of non-analogousness rests on the Ash'arī principle that God may not be the recipient of accidents (*maḥall ḥawādith*). Al-Shahrastānī, however, elucidates the stakes of this discussion quite explicitly:

The People of Truth [i.e., Ash'arīs] are of the view that God—most exalted—is entirely unlike any of the creatures, and none of his creatures is like him in any sense of similarity or analogousness [...] The Creator is neither substance, body nor accident".

al-Shahrastānī 2009, 97

This contrasts with some views al-Shahrastānī attributes to Shī'īs, who held that God was comparable to humans either in form or in attributes, or that humans may be partially divine.

This discussion serves as a preamble to the key debate to which al-Shahrastānī, like al-Juwaynī, dedicates much of his treatise, that is the fact that divine attributes are nothing like human attributes (principles eight through eleven) and, more precisely, that divine speech is unlike human speech, that is, it is not a created act of will, but an eternal attribute. To this last point alone, al-Shahrastānī devotes three of his twenty sections (twelve through fourteen). This is an area in which al-Shahrastānī's primary interlocutors are Hellenistic philosophers (*falāsifa*) rather than classical theologians from opposing schools. He explained that the fact that God is speaking is not contentious among all Muslims and that those who deny that are invariably either deniers of prophecy or philosophers (al-Shahrastānī 2009, 256). Ash'arīs, on the other hand, were of the view that it follows necessarily from what we know about God that he must be speaking (al-Shahrastānī 2009, 256). This specific Ash'arī view portrays some level of analogousness between the divine and humans, since it assumes that the divine attribute of speech can be demonstrated by reference to God's other attributes, such as authority, omnipotence, and life (*ḥayyan*) for many, or from the attribute of knowledge according to Abū Ishāq al-Isfārāyīnī (d. 418/1027) (al-Shahrastānī 2009, 257).

Al-Shahrastānī contrasted the Ash'arī idea of inner speech, on which he agrees with al-Juwaynī, to the one advanced by the *falāsifa*. The latter, according to al-Shahrastānī, advanced an understanding of speech that only partially aligned with the one al-Juwaynī attributes to the Mu'tazilīs. Speech for them consists of "organised letters of disconnected sounds syntactically linked to

reflect the meaning residing in the mind by way of common usage or positive assignment" (al-Shahrastānī 2009, 307). This was the gist of the Mu'tazilī view to which al-Juwaynī opposed the Ash'arī understanding of speech as an inner attribute. Al-Shahrastānī, however, by incorporating philosophical insights into his argument, expands his formulation of opposed views to include an analysis of different reasoning faculties on the one hand, and the specific physical characteristics of speech-as-sound on the other hand (al-Shahrastānī 2009, 307–309).

For example, since speech originates internally (*fī l-nafs*) it could be either a rational distinction between true and false beliefs, or a mere representation which may itself be true or false (al-Shahrastānī 2009, 307–308). To this extent, al-Shahrastānī does not object much to the philosopher's conception of speech. Physical speech, by contrast, must accord with cultural principles of speech, and consists of vibrations in the air between two or more individuals. These vibrations reach the listener's mind, thus leading the faculty of representation (*khayāl*) to assess the speech, and then the faculty of reason (*naẓar*) to reflect upon it, thus turning the sensory stimulus into thoughts (al-Shahrastānī 2009, 308). The Ash'arī view, which al-Shahrastānī defends, is that "speech is a meaning residing within the speaker's self. It is neither letters nor sounds. It is, rather, the statement found within the self and imagination" (al-Shahrastānī 2009, 309). The Ash'arī definition, according to al-Shahrastānī, differs from the philosophers despite some apparent similarities, and, of course, differs drastically from the Mu'tazilīs. What sets apart the Ash'arī conception, according to al-Shahrastānī, is that speech, which resides within the self, is not identical to reasoning and representations, which are specific faculties of the mind. Speech, therefore, is a third category that arises in one's mind as inner statements, which might be indicated by physical speech, but are not identical to it (al-Shahrastānī 2009, 314–315).

3.3 *How Could an Eternal Attribute Guide Practical Reasoning?*

One of the most persistent problems in Ash'arī meta-ethics pertains to its practicability. The question is: how could a set of transcendent divine attributes be of any help in determining what is good, bad, right, or wrong? One approach, which al-Juwaynī does not embrace, is to say that these practical distinctions occur at a purely human level, whereas divine attributes are homogenous (al-Juwaynī 1950, 123). Al-Juwaynī appears to reject this view since it fails to explain how these distinctions occur at our immanent level. Rather, al-Juwaynī held that there was a fundamental moral distinction at the level of divine speech in its divine form: transcendent divine speech, understood as inner meaning, consists of a set of requirements (*iqtidā'*) and non-requirements (al-Juwaynī

1950, 120). A requirement or commandment is a moral concept that indicates that an action should rather be performed than not performed. This basic distinction at the level of divine speech is conducive to practical reasoning since this distinction follows Islamic legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) where required acts are further divided into obligatory and recommended, and required abstentions into prohibitions, among other distinctions. In al-Juwaynī's thought divine speech as an eternal attribute does not mean it is entirely devoid of practical potential (al-Juwaynī 1950, 120).

If divine speech is a transcendent attribute that is internally divided into moral categories, how does our concrete experience of such speech through the reading or recitation of revealed words relate to divine speech in its transcendent sense? This is a complicated question that is not fully resolved in al-Juwaynī's theology, but he does attempt to present a conceptual framework through which this critical relationship can be understood. Al-Juwaynī explained that the recitation of the Qur'ān, which is the physical manifestation of divine speech, is a human act like any other. It could, be the subject of moral assessment. In other words, it is not an extension of divine speech, but a human action (al-Juwaynī 1950, 130). The distinction between divine speech and its earthly manifestation retains the basic ontological divide that al-Juwaynī and other Ash'arīs hold as fundamental. Divine speech is eternal and immutable, whereas our experience of it is variable and in constant flux (al-Juwaynī 1950, 131). He elaborates on this point as follows: "One person's recitation could be seen as pleasant by one and unpleasant by another. It could take a melodic or flat form. In all cases, there is nothing eternal about it" (al-Juwaynī 1950, 131).

What is, then, the precise relationship between the Qur'ān and divine speech *proper*? The closest we come to an answer is in al-Juwaynī's distinction between the recitation itself (*qirā'a*) and the subject of recitation (*maqrū'*). The written, read, recited, and memorised words of the Qur'ān are nothing but mutable sensory experiences. Each recitation, reading, or recollection of the words is different for each person. The subject of recitation, reading or recollection, however, is the same: that is divine speech (al-Juwaynī 1950, 131). A helpful analogy that can clarify this distinction can be made with remembrance of God (*dhikr*) or prayer (*ṣalāt*). In both acts, we do our best to summon a feeling or thought of the divine in our minds. Even though each action and experience of prayer or remembrance is necessarily different, it *points towards* God, who is immutable (al-Juwaynī 1950, 131). Similarly, each instance of recitation of the Qur'ān, or legal reasoning (*ijtihād*) points towards the moral distinctions inherent in divine speech but are not identical to it. Legal reasoning and assessment are variable and imperfect when done by humans but

is acceptable as long as it aims to reproduce, to the extent humanly possible, the moral distinctions between requirement and non-requirement that divine speech includes.

If it has been established that divine revelation is necessary for moral knowledge due to its unique nature as a set of indicants referring to divine speech, which in turn is understood as an eternal attribute, this raises another preliminary moral question concerning the accessibility of revelation. How can revelation give rise to moral obligations universally if many did not encounter it, or chose not to encounter it? If there is an obligation to learn about revelation for moral guidance, how could this obligation exist independent of revelation? Would that not create a fatal circularity in al-Juwaynī's reasoning? Al-Juwaynī's response to this question is that, once God sends revelation backed by miracle, this creates a *rational* (non-revelatory) obligation to investigate the content of revelation (al-Juwaynī 1950, 10). No categorical obligation exists prior to revelation, and the only requirement is imposed by mere reason. The substance of this requirement is not to accept revelation, but simply to "look into it" (*naẓar*) (al-Juwaynī 1950, 10). The only factor that disturbs the primordial pre-revelatory state that is devoid of obligations is *miracle* (*i'jāz*), understood as an interruption of the habitual operation of the world, which is sustained through a habit of divine will (al-Juwaynī 1950, 11). Miracle only makes it obligatory to *reflect* upon the arrival of revelation and investigate its veracity. Following this event of revelation, subsequent generations only have the consensus of the community (*ijmā'*) to rely upon, which, for al-Juwaynī has the same moral authority as a miracle (al-Juwaynī 1950, 11).

Like the understanding of attributes themselves, al-Shahrastānī's elucidation of the content of divine speech reflects a greater degree of analogousness (*tashbīh*) between divine and human ways of producing commandments and legislation. This, al-Shahrastānī explains, is indicative of a method of argumentation that is prevalent among the theologians (*mutakallimūn*) of his time:

the way we [i.e., the theologians] choose to establish divine attributes is to reason based on evidence found in the immanent world (*fī l-shāhid*). For example, the fact that God legislates indicates knowledge, the same way acts indicate ability, and the fact that some possibilities become actualised and not others demonstrates divine will. In the same manner, the fact that God imposes obligations upon creatures endowed with reason and capacity is proof that He commands and prohibits, and that He promises reward and punishment based on these commands and prohibitions.

Al-Shahrastānī proceeds to explain that this type of reward and punishment attached to command, and prohibition is a kind of (eternal) speech, not an act. It would seem, based on that understanding of divine speech as necessarily consisting of commands, prohibitions, rewards, and punishments, that al-Shahrastānī did not consider the link between speech as an inner attribute and practical reasoning to be a significant obstacle to his theoretical model. Rather than belabour the fact that divine speech included intrinsic categories in its eternal state, al-Shahrastānī simply proceeded from his inductive method attributed to “the theologians” of his time, which allowed him to posit that God, as legislator, commands and prohibits in a way shared by all authoritative legislators. In that sense, it would seem that, with time, some aspects of Ash'arī theology witnessed a certain degree of concession that nuanced the initial categorical rejection of any possible similarity between divine and human attributes, as seen in al-Juwaynī, and moved towards the acceptance of a certain degree of analogy, as illustrated in al-Shahrastānī's understanding of authoritative speech.

4 Conclusion

This chapter offered an overview of two significant but, in important ways, different classical Ash'arī treatises of theology with particular attention to their moral-theoretical contributions. The first treatise we studied, *al-Irshād* by Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī, is a landmark work that established many of the classical Ash'arī theological doctrines and formulated their justifications. *Al-Irshād* was one of two works that al-Juwaynī wrote in the genre of *kalām* and was intended as a comprehensive but not overly complicated account of Ash'arī thought on key epistemological and theological topics. Al-Juwaynī's work, as we saw, centred his own voice and argumentation, especially in response to the Mu'tazilis of his time. The second treatise we explored is al-Shahrastānī's *Nihāyat al-Iqdām*, which offers an excellent insight into the development of Ash'arī theological writing in the generations immediately following al-Juwaynī's death in major Arabic and Persian centres of learning. An important difference in form between the two treatises is that al-Shahrastānī's book was not meant as a comprehensive elaboration of the foundations of Ash'arī doctrines, but rather a targeted defence of twenty specific “principles” chosen by al-Shahrastānī, which still largely corresponded to the topics typically addressed in classical *kalām*. As a result, al-Shahrastānī's book shows both a deference to his predecessors, such as al-Juwaynī, al-Isfarāyīnī, or al-Ash'arī himself, and also more elaborate elucidation of philosophical views that were

irreconcilable with Ash'arism, often in a descriptive and characteristically encyclopaedic style. Substantively, this paper argued that classical Ash'arī works of theology were, in a very important sense, works of theoretical ethics. That is because, taken globally, the vast majority of arguments of those treatises served as building blocks towards defending the Ash'arī belief in the supremacy of revelation and its indispensability for moral knowledge. Whereas some current studies on Ash'arī meta-ethics attempt to boil down those debates to specific ontological positions, we have attempted to show that, on the one hand, the epistemological impossibility of knowing moral judgments without revelation tended to be the Ash'arīs' main concern, and that, in the final analysis, it was the defence of revelation-centrism which motivated and organised such works, rather than specific ontological positions regarding the existence or not of moral properties.

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Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī

Taneli Kukkonen

1 Introduction

This chapter delves into *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (“The Revival of the Religious Sciences”) by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), emphasising its ethical dimensions and the conceptual possibilities it presents. Divided into three sections, the chapter begins by introducing al-Ghazālī as a significant thinker with an ethical focus and delves into four recurring ethical themes within the book. It then offers brief remarks on the broader context of the *Ihyā'*, including al-Ghazālī's use of sources, the placement of the *Ihyā'* within al-Ghazālī's authorship, and the impact of the *Ihyā'*.

2 Author

Al-Ghazālī stands as one of the most influential thinkers in Islamic history. During his early career as a law professor at Baghdad's Nizāmiyya College, al-Ghazālī gained fame for his brilliance in deploying polemics and dialectic, often in defence of the Shāfi'ī-Ash'arī establishment. Al-Ghazālī's attacks against the Ismā'īlīs, a chief ideological and political rival to the Seljūq empire, are remorseless and unsparing.

Al-Ghazālī's engagement with Arabic Aristotelianism is more nuanced, as evident in *Tahāfut al-Falāsifa* (“The Incoherence of the Philosophers”). Al-Ghazālī purports to isolate twenty philosophical doctrines that do not align with orthodox Sunnī Islam and to show—using only resources internal to philosophy—that the philosophers are incapable of demonstrating their truth. This leaves other aspects of philosophy uncensored and in principle open to endorsement. Intriguingly for our present purposes, the *Tahāfut*'s closing remarks indicate that much of the moral psychology of the *falāsifa* might be compatible with orthodox Islam as al-Ghazālī sees it (2000, 208–14). In fact, concurrently with the *Tahāfut*, al-Ghazālī produced an exposition of eudaimonistic ethics titled *Mīzān al-'Amal* (“The Scale of Action”), replete with philosophical elements albeit not labelled in those terms (Garden 2014, 30–59).

Al-Ghazālī's lasting reputation is built on what happened next. In 488/1095, al-Ghazālī suffered a life-altering existential crisis. He subsequently left his post, only to emerge a few years later with a radically different public profile. By al-Ghazālī's own testimony, whereas previously he had traded in the kind of knowledge that earned its exponent public plaudits, he now taught his readers to devalue fame and worldly fortune (al-Ghazālī 1967, 123; 1990a, 60–61). Al-Ghazālī's subsequent authorship is both prolific and varied, but with a focus always on reforming the existing orders of knowledge in order to restore their God-centeredness. Al-Ghazālī's direct prose and keen psychological insight have garnered him countless admirers ever since, and his readers today number in the millions.

What has intrigued many modern scholars is the extent to which al-Ghazālī's philosophical fascination shows in his mature theology, cosmology, and epistemology. But such a theoretical orientation risks distorting the picture. We would do well to remember with George Hourani that al-Ghazālī's "central concern throughout his life ... may fairly be described as an ethical one: right conduct and the purification of the soul by the individual, as means to a harmonious relation with God and the attainment of everlasting joy" (Hourani 1976, 69).

This characterisation may seem so commonsensical as to appear unnecessary. After all, what could be more evident than al-Ghazālī being invested in how we are to live? There is nary an account of al-Ghazālī's life and career that would not emphasise, just as the man himself did, that knowledge (*'ilm*) needs to be balanced by action (*'amal*) and a thirst for the truth by a commitment to righteous living.

Yet it is worth pausing to consider what it would mean to take seriously what Hourani says. If the ethical imperative was indeed central to al-Ghazālī, then it would be reasonable to anticipate discovering a substantial body of materials in his works that pertains to "right conduct and the purification of the soul," as indeed one does. One might also expect to find in the pages put out by al-Ghazālī reflection on ethics a form of ethical theorising, that matches what he contributed to more theoretical topics (logic, cosmology, philosophical theology, psychology). And one would expect to find among al-Ghazālī scholars an equivalent interest in engaging with his ethics. To put it differently: if we are serious about the notion that al-Ghazālī was primarily an ethicist, then should we not seek to understand how his ethics function?

If such is our expectation, then recent scholarship will serve mostly to frustrate. Earlier monograph-length studies on al-Ghazālī's ethics, though valuable, veer toward the expository (Umaruddin 1949; Sherif 1975; Abul Quasem 1978). Recent studies add welcome context, insofar as it is now much more common

to evoke the full scope of the many debts al-Ghazālī owes to earlier authors (Platonic, Aristotelian, and Galenic; Shāfiʿī, Ashʿarī, and Sufi) and to acknowledge the inherent tensions in al-Ghazālī's authorship. What we lack is a fresh overview.¹

3 The Work

Given the earlier discussion, it is helpful to study al-Ghazālī's magnum opus, *Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn*, in a frame that foregrounds the ethical component. By common consensus, the *Iḥyāʾ* is al-Ghazālī's principal achievement as an author. Al-Ghazālī himself elevates the *Iḥyāʾ* in his later writings, and this is how the *Iḥyāʾ* has been regarded by Muslim readers ever since. It has been reported that al-Ghazālī read from the *Iḥyāʾ* on a brief stop made back in Baghdad in 490/1097.

3.1 General Considerations

The reputation of the *Iḥyāʾ* rests on its comprehensive and panoptic scope. Across forty books, al-Ghazālī aims to provide a comprehensive guide to understanding the contours of a Muslim's religious life—which is almost to say, a Muslim's life in general, seeing as he contends that at least for the person aspiring to be counted among the friends of God, nearly everything one does can incorporate a greater or lesser degree of God-consciousness.

Throughout the work, al-Ghazālī offers glimpses of how those sincerely and wholeheartedly committed to God will be provided divine disclosures or unveilings (*kashf*) as a result of their striving. Al-Ghazālī thereby recreates a familiar dichotomy between the common folk and a spiritual elite. However, as al-Ghazālī's principal message addresses the whole of a Muslim's life as containing mysteries and divine gifts for anyone with eyes to see, the *Iḥyāʾ* in effect acts as an invitation for every reader to appreciate the inner or hidden (*bāṭin*) aspect of outward (*ẓāhir*) religious practices or commands. Part of the *Iḥyāʾ*'s allure has to do with al-Ghazālī's not-so-covert hints at placing precious secrets on the page, the significance of which will become the more apparent the farther along the path the reader advances.

Despite all this, al-Ghazālī's prose remains punchy and his mode of address is direct. The author wears his erudition lightly; the *Iḥyāʾ*'s practical deliberations reveal an insightful observer of the everyday (Ormsby 2008, 111–138).

1 As this essay was being completed, I was made aware of a new study by Dhibi (2018), which, however, I have not been able to consult.

Although al-Ghazālī draws on a range of sources, he digresses and meanders less than many of the authors from whom he borrows, whether in the literary genres of theology, law, or Sufi handbooks. Readers and scholars alike praise the *Iḥyā'*'s organisation and the way it catalogues and highlights the contributions made by five centuries of Muslims to the understanding of their religion. It is thanks to this that one finds hyperbolic statements to the effect that if all other books of Islam were lost but the *Iḥyā'* preserved, that would suffice to preserve Islam itself.

3.2 Structure

The *Iḥyā'* is divided into four quarters of roughly equal length. The first two quarters illuminate two categories of acts that bear upon our relation to God and the way our worldly affairs and interactions are arranged. These are the acts of worship (*'ibādāt*) and our mundane customs (*'ādāt*), respectively. The third and fourth quarters deal with the cultivation of character, which is to say, the imperative for us to divest ourselves of those traits that threaten to destroy our spiritual integrity (*muhlikāt*) and attain those that contribute to our salvation (*munjiyāt*).

According to al-Ghazālī, the first two quarters relate to what is external or manifest (*ẓāhir*), i.e., outward actions, while the latter two target what is interior or hidden from plain sight (*bāṭin*), i.e., character (al-Ghazālī 2011, 1:14–15; al-Ghazālī 2011, 5:11). The *Iḥyā'* as a whole presents the basics of the “science of action” (*'ilm al-mu'āmalā*), which in itself forms the first half of the “science of the path of the hereafter,” the second half being the “science of unveiling” (*'ilm al-mukāshafa*). In their basic uses, these two terms mirror Aristotelian practical and theoretical philosophy, respectively (Gil'adi 1989). While the scope and ambit of the “science of unveiling” is left deliberately ambiguous by al-Ghazālī, all four quarters of the *Iḥyā'*—worship, customs, destructive character traits, salvific character traits—can, in perfectly ordinary terms, be seen as falling under the rubric of ethics.

Terminologically speaking, what al-Ghazālī appears to have done is replace the standard term “science of character traits” (*'ilm al-akhlāq*) with his preferred “science of the states of the heart” (*'ilm aḥwāl al-qalb*). Al-Ghazālī's *'ilm al-mu'āmalā*, meanwhile, becomes the broader and more universal term, as it encompasses concrete acts as well as moral psychology. Al-Ghazālī takes pains to underline that the science of action as he understands it encompasses both knowledge about right conduct, and action in accordance with that knowledge (2011, 1:13). For al-Ghazālī, as for Aristotle, the deep grammar of ethical knowledge contains the imperative to practice what one takes to be right (al-Ghazālī 2011, 6:636–637, 6:694). Alongside Aristotle, al-Ghazālī additionally

contends that authentic ethical knowledge can only be arrived at through practice of what one purports to examine.

The titles of the forty books of the *Ihyā'* give an idea of the breadth of materials it treats. Where current Islamic Texts Society or Fons Vitae translations exist or have been announced, these have been marked with an asterisk and their translated titles are used in the following list. For untranslated volumes, an attempt has been made to retain terminological consistency.

Al-Rub' al-Awwal: al-Ibādāt ("First Quarter: Acts of Worship")

1. *Kitāb al-ʿIlm* ("The Book of Knowledge")*
2. *Kitāb Qawā'id al-ʿAqā'id* ("The Principles of the Creed")*
3. *Kitāb Asrār al-Tahāra* ("The Mysteries of Purification")*
4. *Kitāb Asrār al-Ṣalāt* ("The Mysteries of Prayer")*
5. *Kitāb Asrār al-Zakāt* ("The Mysteries of Charity")*
6. *Kitāb Asrār al-Ṣawm* ("The Mysteries of Fasting")*
7. *Kitāb Asrār al-Hajj* ("The Mysteries of Pilgrimage")*
8. *Kitāb Ādāb Tilāwat al-Qurʿān* ("On Proper Conduct for the Recitation of the Qurʿān")*
9. *Kitāb al-Adhkār wa-l-Daʿawāt* ("[On] Invocations and Supplications")*
10. *Kitāb Tartīb al-Awrād wa-Taḥṣīl Ihyā' al-Layl* ("On the Assigned Times")

Al-Rub' al-Thānī: al-Ādāt ("Second Quarter: Customs")

11. *Kitāb Ādāb al-Akl* ("On the Manners Relating to Eating")*
12. *Kitāb Ādāb al-Nikāḥ* ("On Marriage")
13. *Kitāb Ādāb al-Kasb wa-l-Maʿāsh* ("On Acquiring and Earning")
14. *Kitāb al-Ḥalāl wa-l-Ḥarām* ("On the Lawful and the Unlawful")*
15. *Kitāb Ādāb al-Ulfa wa-l-Ukhuwwa wa-l-Ṣuḥba wa-l-Muʿāshara* ("On Friendship and Brotherhood")
16. *Kitāb Ādāb al-ʿUzla* ("On Seclusion")
17. *Kitāb Ādāb al-Safar* ("On Conduct in Travel")*
18. *Kitāb Ādāb al-Samā' wa-l-Wajd* ("On Responses Proper to Listening to Music and the Experience of Ecstasy")*
19. *Kitāb al-Amr bi-l-Ma'rūf wa-l-Nahy ʿan al-Munkar* ("On Enjoining Right and Forbidding Wrong")
20. *Kitāb Ādāb al-Ma'isha wa-Akhlāq al-Nubuwwa* ("The Book of Prophetic Ethics and the Courtesies of Living")*

Al-Rub' al-Thālith: al-Muḥlikāt ("Third Quarter: Destructive Character Traits")

21. *Kitāb Sharḥ ʿAjā'ib al-Qalb* ("[On] the Marvels of the Heart")*
22. *Kitāb Riyāḍat al-Nafs* ("On Disciplining the Soul")*

23. *Kitāb Kasr al-Shahwatayn* ("On Breaking the Two Desires")*
24. *Kitāb Āfāt al-Lisān* ("On the Evils of the Tongue")*
25. *Kitāb Dhamm al-Ghaḍab wa-l-Ḥiqd wa-l-Ḥasad* ("On Condemnation of Anger, Malice, and Envy")
26. *Kitāb Dhamm al-Dunyā* ("On Condemnation of the World")*
27. *Kitāb Dhamm al-Bukhl wa-Dhamm Ḥubb al-Māl* ("On Condemnation of Greed and the Love of Wealth")
28. *Kitāb Dhamm al-Jāh wa-l-Riyāʾ* ("On Condemnation of Fame and Ostentation")
29. *Kitāb Dhamm al-Kibr wa-l-ʿAjab* ("On Condemnation of Pride and Self-Admiration")*
30. *Kitāb Dhamm al-Ghurūr* ("On Condemnation of Delusion")

Al-Rubʿ al-Rābiʿ: al-Munjiyāt ("Fourth Quarter: Saving Character Traits")

31. *Kitāb al-Tawba* ("[On] Repentance")²
32. *Kitāb al-Ṣabr wa-l-Shukr* ("On Patience and Thankfulness")*
33. *Kitāb al-Khawf wa-l-Rajāʾ* ("[On] Fear and Hope")³
34. *Kitāb al-Faqr wa-l-Zuhd* ("On Poverty and Abstinence")*
35. *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Tawkīl* ("[On] Faith in Divine Unity and Trust in Divine Providence")*
36. *Kitāb al-Maḥabba wa-l-Shawq wa-l-Uns wa-l-Riḍā* ("[On] Love, Longing, Intimacy, and Contentment")*
37. *Kitāb al-Niyya wa-l-Ikhlāṣ wa-l-Ṣidq* ("On Intention, Sincerity, and Truthfulness")*
38. *Kitāb al-Murāqabawa-l-Muḥāsaba* ("On Vigilance and Self-Examination")*
39. *Kitāb al-Tafakkur* ("On Contemplation")*
40. *Kitāb Dhikr al-Mawt wa-Mā Baʿdah* ("[On] the Remembrance of Death and the Afterlife")*

The depth and breadth of the issues treated in the *Iḥyāʾ* resist easy summary. While a few books stand out—book 1 for knowledge, 21 for cognitive psychology, 22 for character formation, 36 for love, 40 for eschatology—passages that carry systematic weight are strewn across the *Iḥyāʾ*. These are leavened with reams of text dedicated to what the foregone tradition has said about the

2 Marc S. Stern released an English translation of this book in 1990 under the title of *Al-Ghazzali on Repentance*. There have since been unauthorised reprints of the translation.

3 Willam McKane released an English translation of this book in 1965 under the title of *Al-Ghazālī's Book of Fear and Hope*. There have since been unauthorised reprints of the translation.

essentials of a particular practice or character trait. Four ethical themes that carry through the entire work are highlighted in what follows.

3.2.1 Divine Command and Human Happiness

It is worth tackling, first, the metaethical question regarding the source of normativity, that is, what defines the good and what is to be done. On one level, al-Ghazālī holds fast to the classical Ash‘arī analysis, which amounted to a kind of divine command ethics: the obligatory (*wājib*) simply is that which God has commanded, and obedience is due to God simply because of His absolute sovereignty over that which He has created. In the so-called *al-Risāla al-Qudsiyya* (“Jerusalem Epistle”), a self-standing treatise interpolated into the second book of the *Iḥyā’*, al-Ghazālī affirms in customary Ash‘arī fashion God’s absolute freedom to act. Specifically, (prop. 4) God was in no way obligated to create anything, let alone create beings who would be held responsible for their actions; (prop. 5) God is not constrained to place upon humans only such burdens as they can bear; (prop. 6) God can do what He wills with that which is His, which is everything—specifically, he can impose pains and torments on creatures without those being somehow merited; (prop. 7) God is under no obligation to bring maximal benefit to humans. To claim that it would be bad (*qabīḥ*) of Him to do anything other, or contrary to wisdom, as the Mu‘tazilīs had done, is to misuse and misunderstand both terms (al-Ghazālī 2011, 1:408–411). In the domain of creatures, it may make sense to use “good” as shorthand for what benefits a thing and “bad” for what harms it (or, to frame the matter in subjectivist rather than relativist terms, that which one finds agreeable and repugnant). But neither of these applies to God, who stands beyond harm and benefit.

Taken together, these proclamations look like a straightforward affirmation of divine voluntarism in metaethics. As the proof text favoured by al-Ghazālī would have it, “He is not questioned about what He does, but they will be questioned” (Q 21:23). There is a more extensive treatment, closely resembling contemporaneous accounts in theology (*kalām*) and Islamic legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), in the third treatise in *al-Iqtīṣād fī l-‘Itiqād* (“Mean in Belief”), which al-Ghazālī himself recommends as a companion piece on creedal matters.

However, on another level, al-Ghazālī affirms in several places that the prescribed acts of worship do have a *telos* (*ghāya*). They prepare the heart for intimate acquaintance and insight into the realities of the Real, i.e., God (al-Ghazālī 2011, 5:302). Put another way, pious deeds are the nourishment of the hearts (al-Ghazālī 2011, 9:26). God’s commandments relating to people’s social relations and customs (*‘ādāt*) likewise have numerous and discernible salutary effects. Thus, God’s commandments are not wholly inscrutable, rather,

they have been posited for the improvement of humankind, both individually and collectively.

In terms of legal theory, some have dubbed al-Ghazālī's stance "soft natural law," on account of al-Ghazālī's willingness to entertain the notion of the law having purposes (*maqāṣid*), even if such purposes are created freely by God (Emon 2010, 131–146). Al-Ghazālī furthermore contends, in the *Iḥyā'* and elsewhere, that "there is in possibility nothing better, more complete, or more perfect" than what God has created (al-Ghazālī 2011, 8:244). This is not the place to delve into the theological and metaphysical puzzles engendered by any of these formulations (see Ormsby 1984; Frank 1992). In the present context, it suffices to underline that a certain metaphysical optimism and ethical naturalism pervades the *Iḥyā'* project. Al-Ghazālī paints a picture of a God who has set humans on their earthly journey so that they may acquire the means to achieve this worldly safety and ultimate happiness (*sa'āda*) in the hereafter. But how is this to be understood? And why do so many people go astray?

3.2.2 Knowledge and Pleasure, Vice and Error

Throughout the *Iḥyā'* al-Ghazālī falls back on a basic anthropological principle: each person loves what she or he knows (al-Ghazālī 2011, 7:527, 8:372). Growing familiarity with some aspect of reality, anything that conforms to an aspect of our basic nature, will lead us to enjoy it more and more, as habituation breeds comfort. This, according to al-Ghazālī, is entirely natural. All facets of our constitution have been created for a purpose, whether this be our basic appetites of nutrition and reproduction, the more evolved drive for self-defence and recognition, or our various cognitive capacities. Al-Ghazālī thus affirms the basic Platonic tripartite division of the soul into appetite, spirit, and reason. To this is added the Peripatetic explanatory framework of the cognitive and motive psychic faculties as powers or potentialities (*dunamis/quwwa*, see Kukkonen 2012). Beginning with raw sensation and proceeding through our powers of discernment, deliberation, and (finally) insight, the exercise and actualisation of these capacities is coupled with a concomitant pleasure (al-Ghazālī 2011, 8:372–386; Kukkonen 2015, 141–145).

Al-Ghazālī maintains that for anyone with eyes to see, the pleasures of knowledge both outweigh and outlast the pleasures of sensation, appetite, and spirit. He further claims that ultimately, only knowledge of God brings true and everlasting happiness (al-Ghazālī 2011, 6:288, 8:387–408). Al-Ghazālī construes such knowledge in a fairly expansive manner as including God's attributes and acts. Much of the work done in the sciences can thereby be salvaged under the heading of praising God through praising His creation (El Shamsy 2016). Even undertakings such as travel can be meritorious if undertaken in the cause of

learning about the wonders of God's creation or seeking out a spiritual instructor (al-Ghazālī 2011, 4:333–339).

The same naturalistic framework helps to explain why God's original purpose for us—to sojourn through our earthly existence with an eye always on our otherworldly destination—can become clouded from our sights. Al-Ghazālī weds the emerging neo-Ash'arī analysis of how humans subjectively define good and evil (i.e., as that which they find agreeable and disagreeable) to the Aristotelian and Galenic picture of habituation. The ancient standby of the apparent vs. the real good allows al-Ghazālī to explain how people can perceive something as desirable that in reality will prove detrimental or destructive to their long-term happiness. Love of this world, in whatever shape it takes, evolves naturally alongside an individual's deepening engagement with it (al-Ghazālī 2011, 6:90–93). But the process may leave no room for the love of God, since the human heart cannot be set on two things at once (al-Ghazālī 2011, 8:51–52, 185, 433). Further, the non-evident nature of the immaterial pleasures may lead to a lack of appreciation for them or even a denial of their existence (al-Ghazālī 2011, 8:422–432). Some even deny the afterlife entirely; overestimate grossly their own goodness; or choose to gamble on God's forgiveness rather than take seriously the need to relinquish the present world (al-Ghazālī 2011, 6:611, 625–635, 643–644, 7:197–198).

This may well be wilful delusion (*ghurūr*). The mere conceivability of a Day of Judgment is enough to refute any purported rational calculus that privileges finite pleasure over infinite joy or condemnation (al-Ghazālī 2011, 6:611–618, 9:206–224). But heedlessness (*ghafla*) plagues humankind nonetheless, from the simplest people to the most exalted scholars. In fact, it is a snare of Satan's to turn even a love of knowledge—whether frivolous like chess, useful like medicine, or religious like the minutiae of law—into a distraction from a God-oriented life. Knowledge that is sought for the sake of the world is by definition worldly knowledge (al-Ghazālī 2011, 6:82), a condemnation that is multiplied for those who desire to lord it over others or to win debates rather than earnestly seek the truth (al-Ghazālī 2011, 6:655–656). Such a subjugation of the rational impulse to the temptations of power and fame represents a rank perversion of the natural order of things. In the use of reason, therefore, as much as in indulging one's appetite and spirit, there is excess as well as defect. Moderation, courage, and wisdom represent the healthy mean for each of these; they, together with justice (which, rather than being located in a single part of the soul, is manifested in the soul's proper ordering, and which only has a single opposing vice, tyranny (*jawr*)), form the four cardinal virtues, as per the Platonic tradition (al-Ghazālī 2011, 5:188–198).

The *Ihyā'* contributes to the Islamic analysis of how reason can be put to evil ends (Kukkonen 2016a, 12–20). Ratiocination in service to self-deception

and delusion is labelled by al-Ghazālī as the true Satanic impulse within us. The whisperings of Satan, evoked in the Qur'ān, are a combination of false presentations of the apparent good and its worth, brought on by the workings of the so-called inner senses (imagination, estimation, and memory), plus the motivated reasoning that allows the soul to cling to its own mistaken evaluations (al-Ghazālī 2011, 5:96–144). Individual misdeeds therefore occur, not because humans would not constantly be involved in ethical reasoning (they are), but because ethical premises are inescapably contingent and vulnerable to misstatement, arising out of a mixture of subjective predilections and learned responses. Even ethical precepts communicated through religion have this character (Marmura 1969; see al-Ghazālī 1961, 193–198).

Of the lower soul's drives, appetite is the more foundational since it is associated with those functions from which no one can ever be entirely free. The spirited part of the soul is at once more refined—it requires discernment (*tamyīz*) and responds to the demands of reason, meaning that it can be harnessed to rein in the demands of the baser appetites—but at the same time it is the “ghoul of reason” because of its ability to twist reason to do its bidding (al-Ghazālī 2011, 5:114; 1998, 42). Much of the *Iḥyā*'s third quarter details the excesses of the soul's spirited part and the resulting evils: rancour, envy, pride, ostentation, vanity, and the rest. Al-Ghazālī has trouble fitting the religious virtue of humility into a Greek framework in which the greatness of the soul is the virtuous mean (Vasalou 2019, 30–48). But in general, much of the *Iḥyā*'s most incisive ethical work is done in cataloguing the kinds of ethical pitfalls to which a man of al-Ghazālī's own ken—knowledgeable, educated, self-assured, covetous of honours more than possessions—is naturally subject.

Al-Ghazālī's explanation of ethical lapse, then, encompasses both rational and non-rational aspects: it is about erroneous judgments as well as unhealthy proclivities. It also involves both individual experience and a societal component. The formation of misguided attachments receives a boost, oftentimes decisive, from the way individuals associate with others of their kind and support one another's prejudices, so that soldiers can learn to revel together in aggression, death, and destruction; criminals in their resilience to just punishment; and so on (al-Ghazālī 2011, 5:210–211). “Each party rejoices in what it has,” as al-Ghazālī's preferred Qur'ānic proof text has it (Q 23:53, 30:32), even if this is ultimately based on corrupt fantasies (*al-khayālāt al-fāsida*: al-Ghazālī 2011, 6:103–106).

3.2.3 Character and Action

Against these depredations, al-Ghazālī positions the *Iḥyā*' squarely in the spiritual medicine genre, positing that its program leads to the health of heart and soul, which enjoys vast preference over the health of the body. As

per the work's title, the crucial distinction is that al-Ghazālī claims his four-fold treatment to provide the blueprint for *religious* practice in particular (al-Ghazālī 2011, 1:15). According to al-Ghazālī, the art of religious practice was the Prophet's original mission and was well attested in early Islamic times but had since fallen into disrepair with the scholars' growing love of the world (al-Ghazālī 2011, 7:171–173). The evocation of Prophets as the proper physicians of the soul, specifically in the context of arguing for the incompleteness of philosophical education for attaining salvation and/or felicity, goes back at least to the time of al-Tawḥīdī (d. 414/1023) (Griffel and Hachmeier 2010–2011). A steady undercurrent of the *Iḥyāʾ* and al-Ghazālī's mature authorship, as a whole, is to underline how the practices disclosed by God through His Messenger are uniquely capable of effecting the reformation of the soul (Kukkonen 2016b).

Some of the efficacy of these practices is readily explicable, such as the direction of prayer calming the body and focusing attention so that singular intent (*niyya*) has a better chance at emerging and taking hold (al-Ghazālī 2011, 1:615). Some of their secrets will remain known only to God; while others may become disclosed to His saints in the fullness of time and with the insight afforded to the purified soul. What seems safe to conclude is that if even a ritual practice such as the obligatory giving of alms is explained primarily in terms of bolstering faith, combatting covetousness, and engendering gratitude in the *giver's* soul (al-Ghazālī 2011, 2:31–35), rather than duty or benefit (both are evoked in the *Iḥyāʾ*, but neither is presented as the overriding principle), then al-Ghazālī must be a virtue ethicist above everything else (Sherif 1975; Farina 2015; Zargar 2017, 79–105).

Rather than virtue and vice (al-Ghazālī 2011, 5:196), al-Ghazālī prefers to speak of good and bad character traits as the target of the Prophetic program of improvement (*iḥsān*). Following Galen (d. 216 CE) by way of Miskawayh (d. 421/1030) and al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (d. fifth/eleventh century), he defines character (*khulq*) as a “stable disposition of the soul from which actions issue without deliberation or forethought” (al-Ghazālī 2011, 5:190). At the same time, al-Ghazālī stands firm on the point that character is formed through repeated action and habituation (al-Ghazālī 2011, 1:442). It is due to this feedback loop that (a) moral improvement is possible in the first place, in a manner that goes deeper than a forcible policing of outward words and deeds (al-Ghazālī 2011, 5:199–206). (b) One also needs guidance by parents, society, spiritual teachers, and ultimately the prophets, to ensure that the formation of character gets on the right track.

The reciprocal nature of acts and character can be construed as inviting a question regarding which one is more foundational in the end. Is “generosity” analysable simply as shorthand for a pattern of generous behaviour,

and “generous character” at most an explanatory scheme for the kind of psycho-physiological makeup that will reliably produce favourable outcomes? If so, virtue would not be good in itself. Alternatively, should one wish to foreground an Islamic ethics of duty, one might argue that “good character” is to be commended and pursued only insofar as it can be shown to secure obedience to the divine command. Here, too, virtue would be a means rather than an end.

Al-Ghazālī's views on these issues may be gleaned from the *Iḥyā'*'s treatment of avarice, niggardliness, and generosity. Al-Ghazālī first defines liberality (*sakhā'*) and generosity (*jūd*) as the praiseworthy mean between spending too little (i.e., miserliness) and spending too much (extravagance). To spend in a praiseworthy manner is to spend when that is called for and to save when that is required. Now, although any mention of a praiseworthy mean immediately calls to mind Aristotle's definition of virtue, it bears noting that all that al-Ghazālī has said thus far still has to do exclusively with acts. Generosity is about spending according to the correct degree, neither extravagantly nor tightfistedly. Al-Ghazālī, however, next changes tack: simply following the law is not enough, instead, if one spends generously but still feels a pull in one's soul to withhold from spending, then this is a matter of making a show of liberality rather than truly being liberal (al-Ghazālī 2011, 6:208). In line with the Aristotelian distinction between acting out of virtue and merely acting in accordance with virtue, al-Ghazālī repeatedly emphasises the point that intentional action is more laudable than unreflective or externally motivated enactment of what is expected or legislated (al-Ghazālī 2011, book 37).

This time, however, al-Ghazālī circles back to a counterargument. Does a correct calibration between stinginess and extravagance nonetheless not rely on a prior understanding of what is required (*ma'rīfat al-wājib*)? In other words, does not the divine decree still remain paramount? Al-Ghazālī does not deny this, instead, he leans into a distinction between what is required by law and what is required by wholesomeness (*murū'a*) and insists that true liberality must fulfil both requirements. While what is legally required may be more or less universally fixed, what wholesomeness dictates will depend on “states and individuals” (*aḥwāl wa-ashkhāṣ*), so that what is required of the rich person is different from the poor; what one should readily spend on family members is different from what one's duty is to strangers; what liberality looks like in sharing food is different from other possessions; and so on and so forth. All these situational factors add up to something that looks like civic virtue along Aristotelian lines (al-Ghazālī 2011, 6:208–209).

Additionally, Al-Ghazālī insists that no one can truly be regarded as liberal or generous if they do not surpass both legal and societal expectations. This supererogatory component (*zīyāda*) is chosen for the sake of pursuing virtue

and the attainment of higher degrees (*al-faḍīla wa-nayl al-darajāt*): it consists of giving and keeping for the sake of God and the hereafter, not for any worldly recompense or reputation. While utterly disinterested giving may be beyond the ken of humankind and only applicable to God, who alone is truly deserving of the epithet “Generous,” giving for the sake of drawing close to God is the height of praiseworthiness in human terms. Both al-Ghazālī’s remarks in the *Iḥyāʾ* and his treatment of the subject in *al-Maqṣid al-Asnā fī Sharḥ Maʿānī Asmāʾ Allāh al-Ḥusnā* (“The Best Goals in Explaining the Meanings of the Beautiful Names of Allāh”) help to clarify that such an effort has to do with imitating and taking on God’s noble attributes, to the extent that this is possible for a human being (al-Ghazālī 1982, 87–88, 127–128, 156).

Al-Ghazālī’s ethical commitments run in the direction of virtue, then, with the twin provisos that (a) his is a eudaemonistic project and that (b) without the divine command to set humanity on the right track and keep it on the straight path, the virtuous cycle of acts and character formation would never be possible. What remains to be resolved is whether the different degrees of happiness obtainable by different people connote different degrees or even sets of virtue.

3.2.4 Perfection and Moderation

The perfectionist streak in al-Ghazālī’s ethics is plain to see. Al-Ghazālī elevates exemplars of spiritual athleticism in the foregone ascetic-contemplative tradition. At such lofty heights, even “the virtues of the pious are sins to those who draw near” to God (al-Ghazālī 2011, 1:470). This is pointedly not an endorsement of religious antinomianism (*ibāḥiyya*), a fatal mistake against which al-Ghazālī warns repeatedly (al-Ghazālī 2011, 6:107–108; see also al-Ghazālī 1998, 32–34; al-Ghazālī 1967, 118–120; cf. al-Ghazālī 2000, 1–2). But al-Ghazālī uses the key concept of a God-directed life to organise a series of responses to questions about how certain rituals and acts are to be carried out.

Every God-fearing person will naturally seek to fulfil all that religious law requires. Yet the person whose true purpose is to draw closer to God will not be overly distracted by the minutiae of ritual or custom. The advanced aspirant will not obsess even over asceticism, since a negative concern with one’s appetites still signals a concern with self rather than God (al-Ghazālī 2011, 8:15–16). The purpose of quieting one’s own desires and submitting to the will of God is that this allows the soul’s mirror to be stilled, clarified, and polished, so that God’s truth may find clear reflection on it.

This brings al-Ghazālī to an unconventional interpretation of virtue as the mean. Al-Ghazālī likens this to skin-temperature water that one barely feels. The implication is that an optimal calibration of the worldly virtues is one

that will interfere minimally with one's pursuit of God and the life to come: for instance, virtuous generosity and asceticism are actually about utter indifference to wealth (al-Ghazālī 2011, 5:224, 8:49). This is clearly very different from the Peripatetic ideal, which has to do with learning to care the correct amount about the right kinds of things at the appropriate times, as befits the worldly gentleperson (Kukkonen 2015, 151–156). In contrast, al-Ghazālī's would-be saint appears dispassionate and imperturbable (al-Ghazālī 2011, 6:290–291), reserving genuine passion solely for the love of God. As for the genuinely virtuous individual, mastering the balance initially demands meticulous calibration by adapting to varying degrees of discomfort on either side of the optimum (al-Ghazālī 2011, 5:223–225, 6:435). Over time, this equilibrium evolves into second nature—seamless to the extent of being imperceptible, if not actively pleasurable. Those who have reached the highest station are no longer preoccupied with the self at all, only with God and with doing God's will (al-Ghazālī 2011, 8:127–131, 9:256–257).

For all this, in al-Ghazālī's providential view of creation, the appetitive and spirited parts of the soul play a positive role in people's ordinary lives, and so the primary emotional manifestations of these two—namely appetite and anger—each must have a useful place, too (al-Ghazālī 2011, 5:345, 358, 596–597, 8:409). Any attempt to extirpate the passions will prove not only futile but counterproductive: such a feat is impossible and therefore liable to produce desperation and (paradoxically) result in ethical slackness (al-Ghazālī 2011, 5:604–605). Moderation of the passions and attenuated striving provides a realistic path for the majority of people. Al-Ghazālī is committed to the Islamic standby of religion's practical requirements being reasonable and responsive to what human nature requires: marriage not only protects the family unit but provides a healthy and ethical framework for sexual needs to be met, and so on. Even the rhythms of religious services, with their assigned times and frequencies, and their shifts between mental focus and bodily gestures, have been set so as not to overburden the soul or strain the average person's concentration. This applies equally to the ordinances of individual religious acts such as the ritual prayer and to the way that rituals and mundane life alternate at intervals (al-Ghazālī 2011, 2:459–460).

The tiered approach to religious observance has profound eschatological consequences. According to how seriously people take their religion, they will be divided on the Day of Judgment into those who sit on God's left hand and those who sit on the right. While the latter, too, will be saved, there is no felicity promised to them such as awaits "those who draw near." Significantly, al-Ghazālī explains this separation based on the ethical naturalism developed across the *Iḥyā'*. As long as the fulfilment of the law's requirements happens on

the basis of a faith adopted on the basis of authority (*taqlīd*)—that is, through an external execution of the command without an effort to understand its significance or perfect its practice—the purification of the soul simply cannot get properly underway, let alone be completed to the point that the divine disclosures would have occasion to descend on the heart. For those to whom such gifts can flow, an infinite progression of grades is on offer (al-Ghazālī 2011, 7:94–96). Those consigned to suffer the pains of hellfire, whether for a short or a long time or all eternity, also have effectively condemned themselves by their disbelief and misdeeds. The very worst off have turned away from God; others, while retaining a modicum of faith, allow their sins to tarnish the mirror of their soul to the point that their happiness becomes fatally entwined in the enjoyment of the present world. People's own benighted state, in other words, causes their suffering.

While acknowledging these stratifications, it is important not to lose sight of the way al-Ghazālī's prose unsettles any preconceptions readers may have about their own standing in the eyes of God and how his chief aim—that of dislodging any false moral complacency—translates into a fluid field of action. On the one hand, al-Ghazālī's tireless exposure of the lowly motives underlying high-minded behaviour follows in the footsteps of Sufism's school of blame (*malāmatiyya*). On the other hand, his habit of always outlining further steps on the ladder to perfection has the tantalising effect of putting each and every reader in the shoes of the would-be saint, whatever their concrete station in life may be, and allowing imaginative projection. Perfection in this life in any case will prove elusive: and because there is no way to uproot altogether the occurrent notions (*khawāṭir*) in the course of this life, Satan always retains a ledge from which to resume his attack with evil suggestions. Even the most advanced aspirant therefore must remain vigilant and on guard until the end of her or his days (al-Ghazālī 2011, 5:154–159, 9:206–224).

4 Broader Context

Contextualising al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā'* at a minimum must encompass three dimensions: (a) al-Ghazālī's use of his sources, (b) the placement of the *Iḥyā'* within al-Ghazālī's authorship, (c) the impact of the *Iḥyā'*. Any of these topics would merit a major study. Only minimal remarks can be offered here.

4.1 Sources

Al-Ghazālī weaves philosophical and Sufi ethics themes throughout the fabric of the *Iḥyā'*. The crucial difference is that al-Ghazālī never evokes any of the

philosophers by name, whether Greek or Arabic, whereas foregone Muslim authorities are foregrounded in al-Ghazālī's treatment both of acts and of spiritual states and character traits. These follow a set sequence, in descending order of priority: first the Qur'ān, then the *ḥadīths*, then the Prophet's companions, then the saints and scholars. Al-Ghazālī also incorporates large swathes of actual text from the emerging Sufi literature, above all Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī's (d. 386/996) *Qūt al-Qulūb* ("Nourishment of Hearts") (see Gramlich 1984; 1991–1995). Traces of al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1075), al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857), and numerous others have also been identified. All in all, it is clear that al-Ghazālī wishes us to see his ethics as drawing on the practices of the Prophet and the early Muslim community most of all—this notwithstanding his somewhat shaky reputation as a *ḥadīth* scholar.

In terms of philosophical ethics, the largest influence is Galen, the second-century CE philosopher-physician. Galen's treatises *Peri Ethōn* (*De Moribus*, "On Character Traits") and *Peri Diagnōseōs kai Therapeías tōn en tē Hekástou Psychē Idíōn Pathōn* (*De Propriorum Animi Cuiuslibet Affectuum Dignotione et Curatione*, "On the Affections and Errors of the Soul") furnished Muslim readers with a synthesis of Platonic and Aristotelian themes: al-Ghazālī most likely came to them via al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī's adaptation of Miskawayh's *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* ("On Reformation of Character") (Mohamed 2006). Al-Ghazālī's readings in Ibn Sīnā (d. 427/1037), al-Fārābī (d. 339/950), and the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā* (fl. third-fourth/ninth-tenth century) ("Letters of the Brethren of Purity")—possibly, too, the school of al-Kindī—provided tools for generating the theoretical matrix in which to thread the necessary connections between human physiology, cognitive psychology, character formation, epistemology, and even politics. It is in al-Ghazālī's description of contemplative bliss that Ibn Sīnā's influence is most keenly felt (Kukkonen 2012; Treiger 2012).

Yet to label al-Ghazālī's thought a composite ethics, as Mohamed Abul Quasem (1978) and others have done, can obscure from sight the *sui generis* nature of al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā'*. The *Iḥyā'* is not a Sufi work, nor does it read as an exercise in crypto-philosophy. Al-Ghazālī's subversion of existing disciplinary expectations and boundaries is felt no less keenly in his appropriation of philosophical and Sufi ethics than in the way he undercuts *kalām* and Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). While al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī provided al-Ghazālī with a partial model for how aspects of philosophical ethics can be presented under the Islamic guise of the soul's purification, *Kitāb al-Dharī'a ilā Makārim al-Sharī'a* ("The Path to Virtue") comes nowhere close to al-Ghazālī, either in terms of panoptic vision or systematic innovation. The *Iḥyā'* cannot be simply distilled from its source materials, despite numerous attempts to do so (see section 4.3 Impact).

4.2 *Internal Comparisons*

A second perspective is to situate the *Iḥyāʾ* within al-Ghazālī's own authorship. While the *Mizān al-Amal*, published in 488/1095, previews many of the *Iḥyāʾ*'s more systematic aspects, the *Iḥyāʾ* forms the foundation for al-Ghazālī's mature career. Most of al-Ghazālī's later writings can be classified under the rubrics of either reworking the *Iḥyāʾ*, expanding on it, or responding to its critics. That is to say:

The *Kīmīyā-yi Saʿādat* ("Chemistry of Happiness") essentially rearranges the *Iḥyāʾ*'s raw materials for a Persian readership. *Kīmīyā-yi* adds a lengthy introductory section; it also places the book on love (al-Ghazālī 2011, book 36) at the culmination of the salvific virtues, adjacent to a consideration of the afterlife and the soul's final fate. The *Kitāb al-Arbaʿīn* ("Book of Forty"), an add-on to the *Jawāhir al-Qurʾān* ("Jewels of the Qurʾān"), summarises many of the *Iḥyāʾ*'s central themes. Finally, the *al-Lubāb min al-Iḥyāʾ* ("Kernels of the Revival"), an epitome sometimes ascribed to al-Ghazālī's brother Aḥmad (d. 520/1126), appears to have been authored by Abū Ḥāmid himself (Griffel 2009, 306n7).

Most of al-Ghazālī's own expansions on the *Iḥyāʾ*'s themes proceed in a more theoretical direction, intimating that he regarded the *Iḥyāʾ*'s ethics as being largely complete. The one significant exception is *al-Maṣṣid al-Asnā*, a treatise in which al-Ghazālī explores the tradition of reflecting on and imitating God's ninety-nine revealed names (Casewit 2020). Al-Ghazālī restates many of the *Iḥyāʾ*'s core tenets, including a graduated scale of excellences and the human being's ultimate inability to comprehend or to manifest the divine qualities in full, to say nothing of attaining to the divine essence (Kukkonen 2010). Al-Ghazālī's conception of *takhalluq* (acquiring moral character traits) in *al-Maṣṣid al-Asnā* nonetheless expands considerably on the *Iḥyāʾ*'s list of desirable character traits. And because the divine perfections provide a hortatory framing device, the tone struck by *al-Maṣṣid al-Asnā* is more in line with the tradition that treats virtue as an ethics of excellence. This amplifies an elision in the Greek sources between the beautiful and the good (Gr. *to kalon kai to agathon*), a conflation further bolstered by the multivalence of the Arabic term *ḥasan*. Al-Ghazālī's *Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk* ("Counsel for Kings"), an exemplar in the "mirrors for princes" genre, can reasonably be considered an extension of the *Iḥyāʾ* as it concentrates on the virtuous attributes of a pious ruler.

Al-Ghazālī's response pieces centre on the theological and cosmological controversies generated by the *Iḥyāʾ* since these dominated the *Iḥyāʾ*'s earliest reception. However, al-Ghazālī's semi-autobiographical *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl* ("Deliverer from Error") includes a section that explicitly argues for the religious provenance of what ostensibly looks like philosophical ethics. *Al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl*'s argument for the unique efficacy of the Prophet's

mission supplies a more explicit *post facto* rationale for the *Iḥyā'*'s overall shape than the *Iḥyā'* itself provides (Kukkonen 2016b). Apparently, sometime between writing the *Iḥyā'* and the publication of *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl*, al-Ghazālī was made aware of the need to burnish his ethical theory's and especially its attendant moral psychology's Islamic credentials.

4.3 *Impact*

The European fixation on al-Ghazālī's autobiography and on *Tahāfut al-Falāsifa* has had a distorting effect on the Western perception of al-Ghazālī, one that undervalues al-Ghazālī as a virtue ethicist. Any face-value reading of al-Ghazālī's mature authorship, by contrast, and certainly of the *Iḥyā'*, will readily foreground al-Ghazālī's ethical preoccupation. Yet the *Iḥyā'*'s placement in the broader history of Islamic ethics presents us with multiple paradoxes. The work's spectacular successes are inextricably conjoined to the ways in which its impact also became blunted. Consider the following:

Part of the mystique of the *Iḥyā'* derives from its status as the work with which al-Ghazālī emerged from his self-imposed wilderness years, a "from the mountaintop" narrative that did much to enhance al-Ghazālī's standing as a religious reformer. Al-Ghazālī's relative devaluation of the established disciplines (*fiqh* and *kalām* above all, see Gianotti 2011) positions the work as a new kind of intervention. But while the *Iḥyā'* allowed al-Ghazālī to reinvent himself as a public intellectual with a reforming mission (Garden 2014), the institutional resilience of the traditional disciplines meant that no thoroughgoing upheaval of the religious sciences was ever on the cards. Instructive is the early Andalusian controversy. Sixth-twelfth-century Maghrebi scholars rightly perceived a challenge to their authority in the *Iḥyā'*'s overtones of 'amal and the purification of the soul being privileged over science (*ilm*) as a painstakingly built-up body of knowledge and expertise. Countermeasures ranged from book burnings, through censure, to an eventual domestication of al-Ghazālī's ideas (Casewit 2017, 50–56).

It is doubtful that al-Ghazālī expected any overt revolution. Even his own students each went in different directions; none carried forward the *Iḥyā'* project in any straightforward sense (Griffel 2009, 61–95). What happened instead is that the uses to which credentialed Muslim experts put the *Iḥyā'*'s materials tended to reflect their needs precisely as credentialed experts. For instance, a Sufi writer would find in the *Iḥyā'* a validation of the supremacy of the Sufi path, while a theologian would seek confirmation either of al-Ghazālī's orthodoxy or his heresy (whatever that meant to the scholar in question). The dozens of epitomes of the *Iḥyā'* written by different hands each represent re-inscriptions and re-imaginings of various sorts (Badawī 1961, 114–18). Even a Christian reworking

of the *Iḥyā*'s themes exists in the *Ktobo d-Itiqun* ("Ethicon") of Barhebraeus (d. 685/1286), a Syrian Orthodox bishop (Takahashi 2015, 309–314).

The pattern repeats up to the present day. Modernising Muslims find in al-Ghazālī a proto-modernist; historians of philosophy persistently pick up on the *Iḥyā*'s Avicennian underpinnings; while even a re-inscription of the *Iḥyā*' that hews close to the original, aiming to integrate Sufism with the Muslim everyday life, still finds occasion to tweak the material to suit twenty-first-century sensibilities (Garden 2016). Meanwhile, the elements in al-Ghazālī's synthesis that are less palatable to a reader of a given background continue to confound and intrigue. If, for instance, al-Ghazālī's place in the history of Islamic metaethics was to bridge classical Ash'arī deontology with the neo-Ash'arism that under Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) took on consequentialist characteristics, as has been suggested (Shihadeh 2016), then one can readily understand how neither virtue ethicists, nor consequentialists, nor again proponents of divine command ethics will easily make the *Iḥyā*'s materials wholly fit their respective agendas.

But what has proved equally as important is the way the *Iḥyā*' provides individual readers, regardless of background and training, the tools with which to reimagine their place in the existing religious order(s). Scholars have spoken in this connection about the prominence of "technologies of the self" in al-Ghazālī (Moosa 2005). By this, it is meant first, a certain reciprocity between knowledge and (em)power(ment). Paradoxically, it is through subjecting oneself to the project of disciplining oneself, in the framework of an existing discipline, that one gains access to subjecthood and the possibility of personal re-creation.

Al-Ghazālī's legacy in this regard points in two directions. Some readers have picked up on al-Ghazālī's deployment of the ages-old Platonic trope of self-knowledge as a recognition of one's higher self, and consequently linked up the *Iḥyā*' with various orders of rational mysticism. But because the *Iḥyā*' encourages the reader to focus on the movements of her or his own lower soul, said motions being endlessly variegated and personalised, and because al-Ghazālī insists that Satan will find ever cleverer ways to ensnare the practitioner and that unceasing vigilance, his project takes on an ever-evolving and perpetually self-overcoming quality (Kukkonen 2008). This is one way to read the *Iḥyā*' "as a script": reinterpretation through performative realisation (Ormsby 2008, 115–116).

The *Iḥyā*' also invites a similar reaction to weighing elements of one's inherited traditions against one another, as more or less helpful tools to assist in the crucial task of self-examination. Al-Ghazālī's ideal religious aspirant—the

one for whom he provides a model in his own *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl*—extends her or his critique inside, but also out. The fleet-footed way with which al-Ghazālī wields his vast knowledge, and the deftness with which he executes his perspectival shifts between the granular and the general, the exalted and the mundane, practically invites the reader to engage actively with the many traditions on which the *Iḥyā'* relies the same way al-Ghazālī does.

5 Conclusion

There is a dimension to all this with which it is appropriate to close this chapter. Ken Garden has remarked that in the *Iḥyā'* al-Ghazālī “truly stands philosophy’s Practical Science on its head” by prioritising individual perfection over the right ordering of the household or the political order (Garden 2014, 54). And it is certainly true that the latter two are only treated obliquely in the *Iḥyā'*. Garden views the turn taken by al-Ghazālī’s thought in terms of the upheaval of the Seljūq period. In Garden’s telling of the story, disillusionment with the possibilities of political power led al-Ghazālī to privilege the private domain over the communal and societal. Yet, as Michael Cook points out and as Garden himself acknowledges, in the nineteenth book of the *Iḥyā'*, which takes as its subject the injunction *Kitāb al-Amr bi-l-Ma'rūf wa-l-Nahy 'an al-Munkar* (“On Enjoining Right and Forbidding Wrong”), al-Ghazālī views moral responsibility as expanding from querying one’s own conduct and motivations (which always comes first) to one’s household and neighbours, city, potentially until the ends of the world (Cook 2000, 445). This picture is confirmed by al-Ghazālī’s self-presentation in *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl* (al-Ghazālī 1967, 123); it can help to explain the continued appeal of al-Ghazālī’s demanding ethical vision in an age characterised by the contending forces of globalism and solipsism. We have only begun to understand what the reception history of the *Iḥyā'* as ethics may look like, once we appreciate the conceptual possibilities it opens up in this regard.

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Ethical Dimensions of al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s *al-Shifā*

Matthew M. Anderson

1 Introduction

In modern scholarship, one frequently encounters impressive accolades attributed to ‘Iyāḍ ibn Mūsā al-Yaḥṣubī’s (al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ, d. 544/1149) *Kitāb al-Shifā bi-Ta’rīf Huqūq al-Muṣṭafā* (“The Cure in Knowing the Rights of the Chosen One”) and its significance within Islamic history. In her classic study, *And Muhammad is His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety*, Annemarie Schimmel described *al-Shifā* as “perhaps the most frequently used and commented-upon handbook in which the Prophet’s life, his qualities, and his miracles are described in every detail” (Schimmel 1985, 33). More recently, Camilo Gomez-Rivas has similarly noted that “the book became so famous that it was accorded a kind of sacredness of its own, reputedly bestowing the gift of protection upon any house in which it was found” (Gomez-Rivas 2013, 331). Of unknown provenance, a popular North African proverb expresses simultaneously the significance of al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ and his most famous work: “Were it not for ‘Iyāḍ, the Maghrib would not have been mentioned. Were it not for *al-Shifā*, ‘Iyāḍ would not have been mentioned” (Albarran 2015, 39; Kassas 1988, 49). There is little question that *al-Shifā* succeeded in presenting a vision of the Prophet Muḥammad which achieved a kind of canonical significance across much of the Islamic world.

After the accolades have been noted, however, it becomes clear that much remains opaque about the book. At least within Western academic scholarship, there remains a significant degree of ambiguity about the book’s precise historical context and purpose. Following a brief overview of al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s life and a survey of some of the more important theories related to the historical and thematic provenance of *al-Shifā*, the present study introduces and explores three ethical dimensions of the book. First, it explores the ethical vision of the Prophet Muḥammad as it is presented in the first part of *al-Shifā*. Particular attention is devoted to the sources that al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ may have utilised in composing this section, a question which remains unresolved in Western scholarship. More briefly, the study then introduces the individual and societal ethics embedded in *al-Shifā*. For al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ, the proper response to the image of the Prophet Muḥammad delineated in the beginning of the book is found in the

ethical and spiritual praxes presented in the second part of *al-Shifā*. Likewise, there are societal or communal ethics represented by the work's prohibition on blasphemy and defamation of the Prophet. The conclusion reflects on the significance of these ethical dimensions for understanding *al-Shifā* and considers how they may relate to its unique authority within a tradition that generated a vast number of works celebrating the virtues and accomplishments of the Prophet Muḥammad.

2 *Al-Shifā* in Context

Born in 476/1083 in Ceuta, a strategic political and commercial city located on the North African coast of the Strait of Gibraltar, al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ rose to become a leading Mālikī jurist and theologian in an era of intense doctrinal challenge and tumultuous political transition in the Maghrib and al-Andalus. Shortly before his birth, Ceuta was overtaken by the ascendant Almoravids (al-Murābiṭūn, r. ca. 446–541/1054–1147), a Berber dynasty inspired by the charismatic Mālikī jurist, 'Abd Allāh ibn Yāsīn (d. 450/1059) (Viguera Molins 2010, 37). After subduing the disparate tribes of the Maghrib, the movement crossed the Strait of Gibraltar into al-Andalus. Following the collapse of the Andalusian Umayyad caliphate in 422/1031, the Islamic regions of the Iberian Peninsula had been ruled by a collection of tribal lords (Ar. *mulūk al-ṭawā'if*) who proved incapable of fending off advancing Christian armies from the north. In 479/1086, the Almoravids came to the aid of their Muslim neighbours at the Battle of Zallāqa against Alfonso IV of Castile (r. 1327–1336 CE), eventually consolidating and expanding their rule to Cordoba, Murcia, Granada, and Valencia, among other significant urban centres (Viguera Molins 2010, 38–39).

By all accounts, al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ was loyal to the Almoravid dynasty throughout his career as a student and a jurist. After completing his studies, he served as chief *qāḍī* in Ceuta from 515/1121 to 530/1136, followed by a brief and troubled stint in Granada in 530/1136. He spent the next several years in private life, finally returning to his former position in Ceuta in 540/1146 (Gomez-Rivas 2013, 326–329). Throughout almost the entirety of his public career, the Almoravid dynasty faced the growing threat of a new religious movement within the Maghrib, the Almohads (al-Muwahḥidūn, r. 524–667/1130–1269). After returning from his studies in al-Andalus, Baghdad, and Alexandria, the founder of the new movement, Ibn Tūmart (d. 524/1130) initiated open military conflict against the Almoravids in 515/1121. Described by his followers as “the impeccable leader and acknowledged rightly guided one, the heir of the station of prophecy and infallibility” (Fierro 2016, 679), Ibn Tūmart's movement was

a provocative admixture of Sunnī and Shī'ī theological emphases, which offered a new religious alternative to the mainstream Mālikī commitments of the Almoravids.¹ It was during the ascendancy of this puritanical movement (ca. 514–539/1120–1145) that al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ probably composed *al-Shifā*, a treatise which offered a comprehensive theological “cure” (*Shifā*) by presenting the unsurpassable greatness of the Prophet Muḥammad. Maribel Fierro, a leading scholar of the period, has identified the theological challenge posed by Ibn Tūmart (d. 524/1130) and the Almohads as perhaps the precipitating factor behind the writing of *al-Shifā* (Fierro 2011, 19–34).

A distinct but complementary theory suggests that Mālikī anxieties about emergent Sufism in the Maghrib and al-Andalus may help explain the reason behind the writing of *al-Shifā*. The most famous controversy over Sufism at the time related to Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) and the reception of his magnum opus, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (“The Revival of the Religious Sciences”), within the Islamic West. Ibn Ḥamdīn (d. 507/1114), the chief judge of Cordoba and one of al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's teachers, wrote a refutation of the *Iḥyā'* and publicly burned the work in 502/1109 (Casewit 2017, 50–56). While there is no question that there was sustained regional resistance to al-Ghazālī, al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's exact posture has proven more difficult to ascertain. The claim that Sufi saints could perform miraculous acts touched, perhaps inadvertently, on the definition and nature of prophecy, an important apologetic field. By al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's era, a complex discourse with several competing positions had emerged around the possibility of miracles and their relationship to saints (*awliyā'*) and prophets (*anbiyā'*). In general, mainstream Sunnī Islam distinguished between the miracles of the saints (*karāma*, pl. *karāmāt*) and those performed by prophets (*mu'jiza*, pl. *mu'jizāt*), although the challenges involved in identifying the precise nature of this distinction gave rise to multiple explanations (Fierro 1992, 236–249; Brown 2012, 123–168). In view of this context, it is not unreasonable to see *al-Shifā*, at least in part, as an attempt to assert and clarify the primacy of the Prophet's status in relation to other saints and their miraculous acts.

A third possible inspiration for *al-Shifā* relates to interreligious tensions in the region. It has been proposed that the frequent occurrence of Christians blaspheming the Prophet in al-Andalus might explain the unique emphasis of the book and its concerns with blasphemy (Wagner 2015, 531). The most commonly cited historical episode involved the execution of forty-eight Christians for blasphemy in Cordoba between 235/850 and 245/859. The history and significance of these events is complicated by the fact that they are only narrated

1 Ar., *al-imām al-ma'sūm al-mahdī al-ma'lūm, wārith maqām al-nubuwwa wa-l-iṣma* (Fierro 2016, 679). On the Almohads in general, see Fierro (2012).

in Christian sources. Nevertheless, as Christian Sahner has recently argued, the accounts provided by Eulogius (d. 243/857) and Paulus Alvarus (d. 247/861) are too detailed and plausible to be simply dismissed as martyrological fabrications (Sahner 2018, 140–159). Assuming these or similar incidents occurred, it certainly would have raised the profile and legal significance of blasphemy in the Islamic West, a conclusion broadly supported by other documentary evidence (Fierro 1991, 103–117). However, even if recurrent interreligious tensions served as an important motivation for al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ in writing *al-Shifā*, it is important to carefully interpret this factor. Much of *al-Shifā*, which explains the Qur’ānic testimony to the Prophet, along with his physical and ethical virtues, greatest miracles, sinlessness (*‘iṣma*), and veneration, appears to be written for the spiritual benefit and instruction of Muslims.² It is only the fourth and final part of the book which treats the judgment of those who blaspheme or denigrate the Prophet. Even here, the focus of the work appears more oriented toward internal challenges (e.g. heretical Muslims), rather than those generated outside of the Muslim community (e.g., from Jews or Christians). Of the twenty-six individual sections comprising the fourth part, only two are explicitly focused on non-Muslims (i.e., *dhimmiyyūn*) (‘Iyāḍ 2006, 821–827, 861–863). Significant portions of the fourth part are concerned with adjudicating the blasphemous speech of those who identify as Muslims, including apostates, poets, and duplicitous unbelievers (i.e., *zindīq*, pl. *zanādiqa*) (‘Iyāḍ 2006, 765–771, 794–800, 846–861).

It would appear reasonable to see all these contextual factors at work in motivating al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ to write *al-Shifā*. The doctrinal challenges posed by Ibn Tūmart and the Almohads, emergent Sufism and Sufi miracle claims, as well as the intrareligious and interreligious dimensions of heresy and blasphemy, helped catalyse al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ to compose a new kind of Prophetic handbook which powerfully shaped the broader Islamic tradition. Although *al-Shifā* became his most famous and influential work, al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ is also recognised for an important biographical dictionary of the Mālikī school, *Tartīb al-Madārik wa-Taqrīb al-Masālik li-Ma’rifat A’lām Madhhab Mālik* (“Organising the Faculties and Simplifying the Paths to Get to Know the Notable Figures of the School of Mālik”), commentaries on *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*,

2 In an earlier section of the book, al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ comments to this effect:

The one who reflects will realise that we did not write our book for the one who denies the prophecy of our Prophet nor the one who attacks his miracles ... rather, we composed it for his people, those following his call, and believing in his prophecy, in order that it confirm their love for him, and the flourishing of their actions, and in order that they increase their faith with faith.

‘Iyāḍ 2006, 307

Mālik's (d. 179/795) *al-Muwatta'*, and one of the foundational texts of Mālikī *fiqh*, Saḥnūn's (d. 240/854) *al-Mudawwana al-Kubrā* ("The Great Codification"), along with several smaller legal works and poetry.³ Although sources vary considerably on the exact circumstances, his death in 544/1149 was contemporaneous with the decisive triumph of the Almohads in the Maghrib (Gomez-Rivas 2013, 329–332).

3 Prophetic Ethics in *al-Shifā*

In terms of structure, *al-Shifā* is divided into four parts. The first and longest of these is a synthetic consolidation of core material from "noble features" (*shamā'il*) and "miraculous signs" (*dalā'il*) literature which outlines the divine praise and commendation offered to the Prophet in the Qur'ān, surveying his virtues in terms of both physical beauty and qualities of internal character, and concludes with a detailed treatment of his diverse salvific roles and most definitive miracles.⁴ The second part transitions to delineate the ethical and spiritual impact an encounter with a figure of this stature should have on believers and their duties toward him. They should be characterised by their obedience, love, and reverence toward the Prophet. The third part serves as a significant theological anchor for the book, presenting an extended argument for the Prophet's comprehensive protection (*'isma*) from sin. The final part of *al-Shifā* is primarily devoted to the regulation and punitive consequences of blasphemy against the Prophet.

In seeking to understand the ethical vision of the Prophet presented in *al-Shifā*, this study focuses on the second chapter (*al-bāb al-thānī*) of the book's first part (*al-qism al-awwal*), entitled *Fī Takmil Allāh lah al-Maḥāsin Khalqan wa-Khuluqan, wa-Qirānih Jamī' al-Faḍā'il al-Dīniyya wa-l-Dunyawīyya fīh Nasafan* ("Concerning God's Perfection in Him of Physical and Ethical Qualities and His Ordered Joining in Him of Worldly and Spiritual Virtues," 'Iyāḍ 2006, 97–207). In introducing the chapter, al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ classifies the different virtues and qualities that may be attributed to a person. Some attributes are natural and innate, such as one's physical form or lineage, while others are acquired and more clearly meritorious, such as aspects of one's ethical character. In some cases, specific virtues or qualities are a mixture of innate disposition and meritorious acquisition. In addition, in the case of the Prophet

3 For a useful list of al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's major extant and non-extant works, see Arḥila (2019, 34–35) and 'Iyāḍ (2006, 34–40).

4 For an introduction to *shamā'il* and *dalā'il* literature, see Schimmel (1985, 32–45).

Muḥammad, certain qualities relate more to his natural human existence while others are more clearly connected to his miraculous role as a divine messenger (‘Iyāḍ 2006, 97–105). Much of *al-Shifā* seems to have been written in order to explain and document how the Prophet Muḥammad excelled in all of these categories, whether innate or acquired, whether as a natural human or a miraculous Prophet, to a unique and unparalleled degree. The various subdivisions of the book thus explore his qualities, accomplishments, and exalted status from these different vantage points.

Although the physical qualities of the Prophet and those that might be considered naturally innate, such as his lineage, intellect, and eloquence, are treated at the beginning of the second chapter, more than half of it is devoted to those ethical traits or characteristics which al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ classifies as “acquired” (*muktasab*). His initial list of these traits includes the following:

As for the other acquired traits, the rest of the elevated ethics and lawful etiquette, these are related to religion, knowledge, clemency, patience, thankfulness, justice, abstinence, humility, forgiveness, virtue, generosity, courage, modesty, chivalry, quiet dignity, friendship, solemnity, mercy, good etiquette, social relations, and other related virtues, and those traits which when combined make for good morals.

‘IYĀḌ 2006, 98

In brief, these qualities and attributes summarise al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s essential ethical vision of the Prophet. With few exceptions, al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ devotes a section to each of these qualities, often defining them, and then documenting them with relevant Qur’ānic verses, *ḥadīths*, and a modicum of his own commentary.

Before elaborating on these qualities individually, al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ returns to the question of whether they should be considered innate or acquired in the special case of the Prophet. Somewhat unexpectedly, he suggests that in the Prophet’s case even these traits are more appropriately classified as innate dispositions granted by God:

According to what the scholars who investigated this have said, he was naturally predisposed toward these traits from his original constitution and nature. They were not obtained for him by acquisition or effort, but rather by divine generosity and special dispensation.

‘IYĀḌ 2006, 141

All previous prophets were similarly endowed, a fact which can be understood through the study of the lives of Jesus (‘Īsā), Moses (Mūsā), John (Yaḥyā), and

Solomon (Sulaymān), among others. The prophetic biographies of these figures reveal that they were all uniquely endowed with virtue and wisdom from childhood. In the Prophet Muḥammad's case, these innate dispositions were indicated by his avoidance of pagan idolatry even in his youth.

Al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's emphasis on the innate origins of even those attributes or dispositions normally classified as acquired helps to make sense of his starting point, the Prophet's sound mind and mental acuity (*'aql*) ('Iyāḍ 2006, 146). The Prophet's expansive mind (*wufūr al-'aql*) and intelligence (*dhakā*) were previously discussed in his treatment of natural or innate capacities, but here he underlines again that these components are foundational to the establishment of all other virtues. The Prophet's knowledge, whether of previous sacred scriptures, judicial rulings, medicine, or other fields, all demonstrate that his intelligence and comprehension were miraculous divine endowments to one otherwise unlettered and unschooled.

Perhaps the dominant themes permeating al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's ethical survey relate to the Prophet's mercy, patience, and forgiveness. The longest section is devoted to his clemency (*ḥilm*), ability to endure suffering (*iḥtimāl*), patience (*ṣabr*), and forgiveness even when he possessed the right not to forgive (*al-'afw ma'a al-quḍra*) ('Iyāḍ 2006, 147–148). After defining these virtues, al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ appeals to several Qu'rānic verses:

As for clemency, forbearance, and forgiveness when he possessed the right not to forgive, and patience in the face of what is hated, there is a distinction between these attributes. Clemency is a condition of dignified bearing and endurance when faced with instigating factors. Forbearance is self-control in the face of suffering and insults. And likewise with patience and its related meanings. As for forgiveness: it is to set aside blame.

All of this is from what God used to refine and instruct His Prophet. So God said: "Be tolerant and command what is right: pay no attention to foolish people" (Q 7:199).⁵ It is narrated that when this verse descended, the Prophet asked the Angel Gabriel about its interpretation. So Gabriel said to him: "I will ask God, the all-knowing." He went and came back to him and said: "O Muḥammad, God is certainly commanding you that you unite with those who cut you off, and give to those who withheld from you, and forgive those who oppressed you." And God said to him: "Bear anything that happens to you steadfastly: these are things to be aspired

5 Qur'ānic translations are from M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (2004).

to" (Q 31:17). And: "Be steadfast, like those messengers of firm resolve" (Q 46:35). And: "Let them pardon and forgive. Do you not wish that God should forgive you? God is most forgiving and merciful" (Q 24:22). And: "If a person is patient and forgives, this is one of the greatest things". (Q 42:42)

ʿIYĀḌ 2006, 147–148

The Prophet's forgiveness and patience are then further demonstrated through several *ḥadīth* narrations:

It was narrated that when the Prophet's tooth was broken and his face was fractured at the Battle of Uḥud, this disturbed his companions and they said: "If only you would curse them." And he replied: "I was not sent to curse, but I was sent to call to God and as a mercy. O God, guide my people because they do not understand!"

ʿIYĀḌ 2006, 149

Several narrations include instances where the Prophet forgave individuals who threatened or attempted to assassinate him (ʿIyāḍ 2006, 150). A later section devoted to the Prophet's compassion (*shafaqa*), pity (*raʿfa*), and mercy (*raḥma*), echoes similar themes. There, al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ references the iconic Qurʾānic verse from *sūra* 21, al-Anbiyāʾ (The Prophets): "It was only as a mercy that we sent you to all people" (Q 21:107).

Several sections focus on virtues or attributes which might be understood as more explicitly communal or social. These include the Prophet's benevolence (*jūd*), generosity (*karam*), and open-handedness (*sakhāʾ*). According to a *ḥadīth* contained in al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870) and Muslim (d. 261/875), the companion Jābir ibn ʿAbd Allāh (d. 74/697) never heard the Prophet respond negatively to something that was asked or requested of him (ʿIyāḍ 2006, 154–155). His good relations (*ḥusn al-ʿishra*) and manners (*adab*) drew others into his presence (ʿIyāḍ 2006, 162–166). Likewise, he was known for his integrity in contracts (*ḥusn al-ʾahd*), his strong relationships with kin (*ṣilat al-raḥim*), integrity (ʿ*iffa*), sincere speech (*ṣidq al-laḥja*), and courage (*shajāʿa*). Despite all of the superlatives, al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ includes a lengthy discussion dedicated to the Prophet's humility (*tawāḍuʿ*) (ʿIyāḍ 2006, 173–177).

The last three sections of the survey draw attention to the Prophet's spiritual and contemplative side, including his silence (*ṣamt*), quiet dignity (*waqār*), abstinence from worldly things (*zuhd fī l-dunyā*), and reverence for God (*khawf min al-rabb*). It was reported that he was constantly sorrowful and that he prayed for forgiveness from God seventy or a hundred times a day (ʿIyāḍ 2006,

191). Despite his great fame and conquests, the Prophet died with few possessions ('Iyāḍ 2006, 184–188).

4 The Sources for al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's Ethical Vision

Due to the popular impact and influence of *al-Shifā*, modern scholarship has devoted some attention to the question of the degree to which the treatise was innovative or whether it was primarily modelled after earlier sources. The search for al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's sources has been conducted in relation to *al-Shifā* as a whole as well as for its component parts (Eggen 2021, 56–57; Naguchi 2021, 163). This study is primarily concerned with the possible sources behind al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's ethical vision of the Prophet outlined above. At one level, if one looks to certain explicit indications in *al-Shifā*, the question of sources may appear to have a simple resolution. In many cases, al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ has included the full chains of narrations (*isnāds*) that are contained in the central *ḥadīth* collections of the Sunnī tradition. At times, he further clarifies that he has drawn from “authentic” (*ṣaḥīḥ*) books or from “reliable compositions” (*muṣannafāt thābita*) ('Iyāḍ 2006, 153). While it is true that important aspects of al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's ethical vision can ultimately be traced back to the raw materials of the core Sunnī *ḥadīth* canon, this does not adequately account for the unique emphases and contours of his vision. As noted earlier, al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ commented on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, and Mālik's *al-Muwaṭṭa'*. A survey of the most relevant chapters in these *ḥadīth* collections such as the chapters on good manners (*adab*) or virtues (*manāqib*), does not indicate that al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ was simply replicating or reproducing an ethical vision already formulated within these earlier works. Rather, the ethical vision presented in *al-Shifā* comprises a unique distillation and editorial organisation of the Prophet's virtues and ethical qualities which would appear to be several steps removed from the raw materials of the Sunnī *ḥadīth* canon.

In the search for possible intermediate sources which may further account for the distinctiveness of al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's vision, two important candidates often surface. Modern attempts to identify possible precursors to *al-Shifā* have noted that al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ was credited with a *mukhtaṣar*, or summary presentation, of a much larger work, *Sharaf al-Muṣṭafā* (“The Elevated Nobility of the Chosen One”), composed by the Persian Sufi Abū Sa'd al-Kharkūshī (d. 405/1015).⁶ Like several other works devoted to the Prophet, *Sharaf al-Muṣṭafā* is a sprawling

6 For a brief discussion of al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's *Mukhtaṣar*, which is no longer extant, along with a survey of his other works, see Serrano Ruano (2009, 417–434) and Fierro (2011, 21).

and voluminous compilation, gathering together a multitude of reports on such diverse topics as the Prophet's extended relatives, military expeditions, the virtues of his companions, the glories of Mecca and Medina, along with his miracles and the testimony to his salvific role given by previous scriptures, former Prophets, and the Qur'ān. When a work like this is compared to *al-Shifā*, it becomes clear that al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ determined to produce a rather different kind of book. Whereas *Sharaf al-Muṣṭafā* reads more like an encyclopaedia, *al-Shifā* presents as a practical handbook summarising the essentials of the exalted identity of the Prophet with a focus on the impact this should have on the believer and broader society.

Despite these differences, it is still possible to examine *Sharaf al-Muṣṭafā* in order to assess whether it played a significant role in shaping al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's ethical vision of the Prophet. Al-Kharkūshī's lengthy treatment of the Prophet's ethics (*akhlāq*) and manners (*adab*) offers the most natural starting point for comparison between the two works (al-Kharkūshī 2003, 4:335–567). By beginning with several brief statements highlighting the Prophet's merciful character (*ra'ūf al-qalb*), modesty (*ḥayā*), and continual sadness (*ṭawīl al-ḥuzn*), al-Kharkūshī initially strikes a similar tone to al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's description. While the emphasis on the Prophet's mercy and compassion is not demarcated as clearly or consistently, these descriptors appear recurrently in this part of *Sharaf al-Muṣṭafā*. Like *al-Shifā*, al-Kharkūshī devotes a section to the Prophet's humility (*tawādu'*), but there appears to be very little overlap in the evidences both authors cite for this virtue. Several of al-Kharkūshī's sections, on the Prophet's etiquette around food or in the mosque, for example, have no real parallels in *al-Shifā*. In summary, while *Sharaf al-Muṣṭafā* may have informed or inspired *al-Shifā* in some ways, and while it may prove to be the case that a closer textual relationship exists between other parts of both works, its resemblance appears too distant to be considered a central source for al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's ethical vision of the Prophet.

A second source that is sometimes proposed as a possible influence on *al-Shifā* is al-Tirmidhī's (d. 279/892) *al-Shamā'il al-Muḥammadiyya* ("The Beautiful Qualities of Muḥammad"). Al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's academic autobiography, *al-Ghunya* ("The Riches"), records that he learned this book from the *ḥadīth* specialist Abū 'Alī l-Ṣaḍafī (d. 514/1120), apparently one of the first scholars to bring al-Tirmidhī's famed work to the Maghrib (Noguchi 2021, 163). Much of al-Tirmidhī's work is oriented towards various details of the Prophet's physical appearance and his possessions, matters which are not of central importance to al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ in *al-Shifā*. Towards the end of the work, al-Tirmidhī does include chapters on the humility (*tawādu'*), modesty (*ḥayā*), and character (*khuluq*) of the Prophet (al-Tirmidhī 2017, 248–272). While a careful reading of

the two works on the Prophet's humility could suggest that al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ relied on it to some degree, the broader disconnect between *al-Shifā* and *al-Shamā'il al-Muḥammadiyya* should preclude the latter from being considered a primary source.

A third possible source for al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's ethical vision also intersects with his biography, albeit in a somewhat more complicated way. As noted previously, al-Ghazālī's magnum opus, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, generated considerable controversy in the Islamic West. Some later sources, such as the Egyptian Shāfi'ī 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī (d. 972/1565), reported that al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ actively supported the suppression and burning of al-Ghazālī's treatise (Eggen 2018, 89–100). On this view, along with other members of the conservative Mālikī legal establishment aligned with the Almoravid regime, al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ was opposed to al-Ghazālī's apparent demotion of *fiqh* and promotion of esoteric knowledge.⁷ As Nora Eggen has recently demonstrated, sources closer to the time period present a significantly more complex picture. In particular, *al-Ta'rīf bi-l-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ* ("A Biography of al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ"), a biography authored by his son, Muḥammad ibn 'Iyāḍ (d. 576/1180), makes no mention of his involvement in the suppression or destruction of al-Ghazālī's treatise. Rather, Ibn 'Iyāḍ reports that his father was generally favourable toward the work and that he even contemplated the possibility of composing an abridgement of it (Eggen 2018, 100). While al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ was critical of al-Ghazālī in places, the evidence as it stands does not suggest that he offered a blanket condemnation of the *Iḥyā'* (Eggen 2018, 101; 'Iyāḍ 2006, 846).

A close reading of book twenty of the *Iḥyā'*, *Kitāb Ādāb al-Ma'isha wa-Akhlāq al-Nubuwwa* ("The Book of the Etiquettes of Living and the Ethics of Prophethood"), reveals some intriguing structural and textual resonances. As with *al-Shifā*, al-Ghazālī includes individual sections on the Prophet's forgiveness (*al-'afw ma'a al-qudra*), benevolence (*jūd, sakhā'*), courage (*shajā'a*), and humility (*tawāḍu'*). In his first chapter, al-Ghazālī begins with the *ḥadīth* of 'Ā'isha (d. 58/678) which equates the Prophet's character with the Qur'ān and then transitions into a list of several Qur'ānic verses (Q 7:199, 16:90, 31:17, 42:43, 51:3, 24:22, 41:34, 31:34, 49:12), most of which emphasise forgiveness, patience, and forbearance. This serves as the foundational point from which al-Ghazālī begins his exploration of the Prophet's ethical attributes. In important respects, it is also where al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ begins his exposition. As noted previously, after his brief discussion of the intellect (*'aql*), the first attributes highlighted by al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ are the Prophet's forgiveness, patience, and forbearance. In fact,

7 For specific criticisms of al-Ghazālī in the Islamic West, see Garden (2005, 144–189).

he appeals to several of the same Qur'ānic verses (Q 7:199, 31:17, 46:35, 24:22, 42:43) (ʿIyāḍ 2006, 147–148). Viewing both works together, the reader is left with the impression that both authors wanted to strike a similar tone as they commenced their discussion of the Prophet's ethics. The similarities between the two works are perhaps at their most pronounced in the traditions that both appeal to in order to exemplify the Prophet's forgiveness. In al-Ghazālī's section, we read the following:

The Messenger of God—God bless him and grant him peace—was in a battle when the enemies noticed a moment of heedlessness among the Muslims, whereupon a man advanced brandishing his sword over the head of God's Messenger—God bless him and grant him peace—saying, "Who will defend you against me?" He said, "God," whereupon the sword fell from his hand and God's Messenger grabbed it and said, "Who will defend you against me?" He said, "Be quick with me." He said, "Say: I bear witness that there is no God but God." He said, "No. Rather I will not fight against you nor be with you, and I will not be with any people who are fighting against you." He let him go his way and then the man went back to his people saying, "I have come back to you from the presence of the best of men."

Anas reported that a Jewish woman brought the Prophet—God bless him and grant him peace—some poisoned mutton that he might perchance eat it, whereupon she was brought to the Prophet—God bless him and grant him peace. He questioned her about it, and she said, "I wished to kill you." He said, "God did not empower you to do so." They said, "Shall we not kill her?" He said, "No."

A Jewish man cast a spell on him and he was informed of it by Jibrīl—upon whom be peace. Thus he drew forth the charm and unravelled its knots, whereupon he felt a lightness. He did not mention the matter to the Jew nor reveal it to him at all.

AL-GHAZĀLĪ 2019, 44

While *al-Shifā* utilises slightly different language in describing these events, it includes all three accounts in precisely the same order (ʿIyāḍ 2006, 150).

While the similarities between the two works should not be overstated, it appears likely that both authors are at least operating within a similar discursive tradition which emphasises certain ethical attributes of the Prophet, not least of which are his forgiveness and mercy. Both al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ and al-Ghazālī appear to be at work within a religious and intellectual milieu where the ethical

attributes of the Prophet are crystallising into a discrete field of inquiry.⁸ The image of the Prophet presented in *al-Shifā* resembles the presentation in book twenty of al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā'* more than anything found in either *Sharaf al-Muṣṭafā* or *al-Shamā'il al-Muḥammadiyya*. It remains to be seen if further research will permit a more comprehensive picture to be drawn of al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's sources, whether for this or other parts of *al-Shifā*.⁹

5 Individual and Societal Ethics in *al-Shifā*

Centring attention solely on a specific segment of *al-Shifā*, such as its ethical portrayal of the Prophet might inadvertently overshadow the broader interconnected themes that define the entirety of the work. A noteworthy attribute of *al-Shifā*, which sets it apart in a saturated and expanding landscape of literature centred on the Prophet is its ability to intricately expound upon and apply the ethical ramifications that appear to emanate from its elevated depiction of this eminent persona. Expressed differently, the extended description of the Prophet contained in the first part of *al-Shifā* is foundational to the ethical framework operative in the remainder of the work.

While this study has focused primarily on the ethics described in the second chapter of the first part of *al-Shifā*, when read in its entirety, the first part presents a comprehensive vision of the *shamā'il* and *dalā'il* of the Prophet. This latter category extends across the third and fourth chapters of the first part and includes his most important miracles, such as the inimitability (*i'jāz*) of the

8 An earlier work also operating within a similar discursive tradition is Ja'far ibn Ḥayyān al-Aṣbahānī's (d. 980/369) *Akhlāq al-Nabī wa-Ādābuh* ("Ethics of the Prophet and His Manners") which contains chapters of *ḥadīth* on the Prophet's forbearance (*iḥtimāl*), forgiveness (*'afw*), generosity (*jūd/sakhā'*), courage (*shajā'a*), and humility (*tawādu'*). Further research is required to determine how this work might relate to that of al-Ghazālī or al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ (see al-Aṣbahānī 1998, 1:178–343).

9 This section has focused on textual sources that may have shaped al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's ethical presentation in *al-Shifā*. A somewhat different but important line of inquiry concerns the conceptual framework utilised in *al-Shifā*. In particular, one might ask whether the list of ethical virtues and qualities discussed in *al-Shifā* derive from Sufi ethical paradigms or elsewhere. As noted, al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's relationship with emergent Sufism in the Maghrib and al-Andalus is difficult to determine and his major works indicate a rather decisive focus on *ḥadīth* and jurisprudence. At the same time, the list of descriptors and ethical qualities that he applies to the Prophet Muḥammad resemble categories used in Sufi manuals (e.g., Fakhry 1991, 200). In my view, further research is required to clarify the relationship between Sufi ethical paradigms and *al-Shifā*.

Qur'ān, his night journey to Jerusalem (*isrā'*), splitting of the moon (*inshiqāq al-qamar*), and multiplication of food (*takthīr al-ṭa'ām*), and his central salvific roles, such as his intercession (*shafā'a*) and privileged position (*maqām maḥmūd*) on the day of judgment ('Iyāḍ 2006, 213–463). It is this holistic vision of the Prophet's *shamā'il* and *dalā'il* depicted in the first part of *al-Shifā* which serves as a foundation for the individual and societal ethics that al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ delineates in the second and fourth parts of the book.

More modest in size, the second part (*al-qism al-thānī*) of *al-Shifā* outlines a series of ethical and spiritual dispositions oriented toward the Prophet which are incumbent upon those who have grasped his significance ('Iyāḍ 2006, 471–602). The logical structure of the first sentence explains the essential relationship between the book's first two parts: "Since the certainty of his Prophethood and the truth of his message are confirmed by what we have presented before, then faith in him and belief in what he brought is obligatory" ('Iyāḍ 2006, 472). In turn, faith or belief in the Prophet requires obedience to his commands: "As for the obligation of obeying him, since faith in him and affirming what he brought is obligatory, so is obeying him, as this is from what he brought. As God says: 'Believers, obey God and his Messenger'" ('Iyāḍ 2006, 476).¹⁰ This posture of obedience flows into a broader adherence to the Prophet's example (Sunna).¹¹ In general, al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ does not engage in a detailed discussion of exactly how the Sunna is identified and where it might be found, but rather seems content to demonstrate the basic obligation.

At the same time, this obedience is not to be cold or detached, but is to flow from a deeper love (*maḥabba*) for the Prophet. The entire second chapter of part two treats various aspects of what it means to love the Prophet. Al-Bukhārī and Muslim both include the following tradition: "Not one of you believes in me until I am more beloved to him than his son, and his father, and indeed all people" ('Iyāḍ 2006, 493). Signs that indicate a person's love for the Prophet include their obedience and emulation of him, their frequent mention of him, their respect for him and his family, their opposition toward those who oppose him, and their asceticism in this world ('Iyāḍ 2006, 499–505).

10 Beyond Q 8:20, al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ also cites the following verses which appear to equate or at least closely relate obedience to the Prophet with obedience to God: Q 3:32, 3:132, 24:54, 4:80, 59:7, 4:69, 4:64 ('Iyāḍ 2006, 476).

11 It is in this section that al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ references Q 33:21 and the *uswa ḥasana* ("beautiful model/example") of the Prophet. Although arguably a central concept in Islamic history and even to *al-Shifā* itself, al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ cites it here as simply one among several evidences for the necessity of obeying and emulating the Prophet. For further reflections on this concept, see Schimmel (1985, 24–55).

After devoting a chapter to the respect that is due to the Prophet, his family, and his companions, al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ concludes the second part of *al-Shifā* with a discussion of several key spiritual or ritual practices related to the Prophet. The most important of these, based on Q 33:56, is the practice of praying blessings over the Prophet: "God and the angels bless the Prophet—so you who believe, bless him too and give him greetings of peace" ('Iyāḍ 2006, 544). Citing various authorities, al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ understands this verse to be in the form of an imperative which makes it obligatory for all Muslims to perform at least once, while doing it routinely is recommended in Islam ('Iyāḍ 2006, 546). Al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ does not appear to endorse one canonical formulation of this type of prayer, but seems to recognise multiple variations that are appropriate in a variety of contexts.¹²

The point of the preceding section is not to offer a comprehensive overview of the contents of the second part of *al-Shifā*. Rather it is to illuminate one of the unique ways that the different parts of the work integrate and cohere. For al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ, the appropriate response to the image of the Prophet depicted at the beginning of *al-Shifā* is found in the ethical and spiritual praxes presented in the book's second part. In a similar way, it seems clear that for al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ there is also a kind of communal or societal ethic which relates to this vision of the Prophet. Viewed from this perspective, the fourth and final part of *al-Shifā* on blasphemy jurisprudence should not be understood as an incongruous addition to the rest of the work. Rather, the comprehensive legal protection surrounding the Prophet is both theological in the way it further sacralises this figure and pragmatic in its societal implications. If the second part of the work outlines the appropriate response of an individual believer to the Prophet, the fourth part can be interpreted as pointing toward a broader societal ethic.

The fourth part of *al-Shifā* is organised into three primary chapters which, as has been noted, are further subdivided into twenty-six sections ('Iyāḍ 2006, 760–884). The first two chapters, comprised of sixteen sections, are devoted to explicating the scriptural and jurisprudential dimensions of blasphemy against the Prophet. The third and final chapter addresses more concisely the topics of blasphemy against God, angels, previous prophets, the Qur'ān, the family of the Prophet, and his companions. At the beginning of the first chapter, al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ delineates an expansive conception of blasphemy against the Prophet and its judicial consequences:

12 A useful introduction to prayers of blessing over the Prophet is found in Puente (1999).

It should be known, may God grant us and you success, that everyone who curses the Prophet, or blames him, or attaches a defect to him, or his lineage, or religion, or any of his qualities, or alludes to him or compares him with something similar, or shows contempt for him, or belittles or diminishes him, or criticises him: he is a blasphemer. And the judgment for such a person is that of the blasphemer: as we will show, he is put to death. And we do not make exceptions for any such case and have no reservations, whether such blasphemous expressions were made directly or by allusion.

This same judgment is for anyone who curses or desires harm for him or attaches to him that which is not appropriate to his stature by blaming him or finding fault with his exalted place by foolish, ugly, prohibited, or deceitful speech, or who denigrates him for the trials and affliction he experienced or criticises him for normal human frailties. All of this is the juristic consensus arrived at by the leading scholars from the period of the Prophet's companions until our own time.

‘IYĀḌ 2006, 765–766

Drawing primarily from Mālikī authorities, al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ attempts to demonstrate that a broad juristic consensus has been reached on the matter (‘Iyāḍ 2006, 766–771).

While *al-Shifā* drew substantially on a variety of previous sources and legal precedent, the fourth part of the work stands out as the most influential treatment of blasphemy jurisprudence generated during the formative centuries of Islam. Within the context of the book itself, however, it may be understood as a kind of social or communal ethic formulated in response to al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ's exalted vision of the Prophet.¹³

6 Conclusion

Despite its acclaim and popularity, *al-Shifā* has remained a somewhat enigmatic work that defies easy categorisation. While it may be simply described as a *shamā'il* and *dalā'il* work dedicated to the Prophet Muḥammad, even a cursory reading reveals that it is more than that. Alternatively, some readings of *al-Shifā* seem to approach it as a book comprised of somewhat disparate parts that are only loosely related. This study has approached *al-Shifā* as a work

¹³ Despite the authority of *al-Shifā*, many modern scholars have critiqued its stern formulation of blasphemy jurisprudence (e.g., Masud et al. 2021; Kamali 1997; and Wahid 2013).

possessing ethical dimensions. An obvious and important place to begin such a reading is with the ethics of the Prophet as *al-Shifā* presents them. While further research is warranted, al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's ethical vision of the Prophet stands out for its clarity and comprehensiveness. To my mind, al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's portrayal deserves to be recognised as an important stage within a process of crystallisation whereby the ethics of the Prophet are abstracted out from a variety of other *shamā'il* categories and become a discrete field of inquiry. In this, *al-Shifā* is notably different than al-Tirmidhī's *al-Shamā'il al-Muḥammadiyya* or al-Kharkūshī's *Sharaf al-Muṣṭafā* where the ethical virtues of the Prophet are intermingled with a variety of other categories. Even when compared to book twenty of al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā'*, al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's treatment stands out for its cogency and systematic clarity.

In addition, by considering the ethical dimensions of *al-Shifā* this study has been able to highlight ways that the different parts of the book integrate and cohere. The individual ethical and spiritual praxes of the work's second part are intended to be a response to the vision of the Prophet delineated at the beginning of the book. Likewise, the prohibition on blasphemy in the final part of *al-Shifā* may be understood as a broader societal ethic formulated in response to this same vision. While the exquisite quality of al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's work and its relatively compact size help to account for the popular influence of *al-Shifā*, the way it powerfully related an exalted vision of the Prophet to individual and societal ethics also helped to distinguish it from otherwise similar works.

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العزّ بن عبد السلام والتأسيس للأخلاق الإسلامية حقلاً متعدّد التخصصات

قراءة في «شجرة المعارف» و«الإمام» و«قواعد الأحكام»

معتز الخطيب

مقدمة

1

يقدم الإمام أبو محمد عزّ الدين عبد العزيز بن عبد السلام (ت. 1262/660) صورةً عن «الأخلاق الإسلامية» بوصفها حقلاً متعدّد التخصصات، يجمع بين جانبيها النظري والعملي، ويستثمر—في سبيل ذلك—حقولاً متعدّدة تبدأ بنصوص الوحي من قرآن وحديث، مؤسّساً ما يُسميه «آداب القرآن» تارة و«أخلاق القرآن» تارة أخرى. وتشمل مقارنته الأخلاقية مباحث من علم الكلام وحقلي الفقه (علم الظاهر) والتصوف (علم الباطن)، وأصول الفقه (مصادر الأحكام وأدلتها). ويمكن أن نقف على منظور العزّ الأخلاقي في سيرته العملية وفي إنتاجه العلمي على السواء. ولبيان ذلك، سأجعل هذا الفصل على أربعة مباحث وخاتمة. في المبحث الأول أمهد بالحديث عن شخصية العزّ وتكوينه العلمي وطرف من سيرته يؤكّد جانباً من الأطروحة الأساسية التي تقدّمها هذه الدراسة، وهي الترابط الوثيق بين النظر والعمل؛ بما يعكس خصيصة الاتساق في شخصية العزّ وتنظيراته. وفي المبحث الثاني سأتناول—بتكثيف شديد—الأعمال العلمية التي أبدعها العزّ، وكيف أنها تترجم تكوينه وخصائص شخصيته وفكره، ثم أناقش في المبحث الثالث حيّة بعض الباحثين المعاصرين في إدراج الإسهام الذي قدّمه العزّ ضمن علم من العلوم الإسلامية المعروفة. أما المحور الرابع—وهو المحور المركزي الذي يستغرق معظم الفصل—فسيناقش أبرز ملامح النظرية الأخلاقية التي قدّمها العزّ من خلال ثلاثة أعمال مركزية هي: «شجرة المعارف والأحوال وصالح الأقوال والأعمال»، و«القواعد الكبرى» المسمّى «قواعد الأحكام في إصلاح الأنام»، و«الإمام في بيان أدلة الأحكام». وفي الخاتمة سأجمل المزايا التي وسّمت فكر العزّ، وسأوضح أهمية مساهمته في حقل ما نسميه «الأخلاق الإسلامية».

2 شخصية العز بن عبد السلام وتكوينه

ترجع أصول الإمام عز الدين بن عبد السلام إلى المغرب، ولكنه وُلد في دمشق بين سنتي 577-578/1181-1182، ونشأ وتعلّم فيها، ثم تُوفي في القاهرة سنة 660/1262. وقد وقعت للعزّ في مرحلته المبكرة—واقعة ذات دلالة في تكوينه وما سيكون عليه فيما بعد. يروي الإمام تاج الدين السبكي (ت. 1370/771) عن أبيه تقي الدين السبكي (ت. 756/1355) أن الشيخ عزّ الدين كان في أول أمره فقيرًا جدًّا، ولم يشتغل بالعلم إلا على كِبَر. وسبب ذلك أنه كان يبيت في "الكلّاسة" من جامع دمشق (أي المسجد الأموي)، فبات بها ليلة ذات برد شديد، فاحتلم فقام مُسرّعًا ونزل في بركة الكلّاسة فحصل له ألم شديد من البرد، وعاد فنام فاحتلم ثانيًا، فعاد إلى البركة؛ لأن أبواب الجامع مغلقة وهو لا يمكنه الخروج، فطلع فأغمي عليه من شدة البرد. قال تاج الدين السبكي: "أنا أشكّ، هل كان الشيخ الإمام [أي تقي الدين السبكي] يحكي أن هذا اتفق له [أي للعزّ] ثلاث مرات تلك الليلة أو مرتين فقط؟" ثم تابع تاج الدين الحكاية عن أبيه فقال: "ثم سمع [العزّ] النداء في المرة الأخيرة: يا ابن عبد السلام! أتريدُ العلم أم العمل؟ فقال الشيخ عزّ الدين: العلم؛ لأنه يهدي إلى العمل. فأصبح وأخذ [كتاب] «التنبيه» [للإمام أبي إسحاق الشَّيرازي الشافعي (ت. 1083/476)] فحفظه في مدة يسيرة، وأقبل على العلم فكان أعلم أهل زمانه، ومن أعبد خلق الله تعالى" (السبكي 1992، 212/8-213). وقد تتلمذ تقي الدين السبكي—راوي الحكاية—على علاء الدين الباجي (ت. 714/1315) أحد أهم تلامذة العزّ، وروى عن الباجي العديد من أخبار العزّ التي رواها—بعد ذلك—تاج الدين السبكي عن أبيه تقي الدين.

وقد برّح العزّ في فنون العلم حتى قال فيه الحافظ أبو الفداء بن كثير (ت. 1373/776): "جمع من فنون العلوم العجب العجائب، من التفسير والحديث والفقه والعربية والأصول، واختلاف المذاهب والعلماء، وأقوال الناس وما أخذهم" (ابن كثير 1993، 873/1). وقد تتلمذ العزّ على العديد من علماء عصره ممن جمعوا العلم والعمل فضلًا عن الصلابة في الدين والجرأة على قول الحق،¹ منهم سيف الدين الأمدي (ت. 631/1233) النظار البار

1 انظر الندوي (1960، 61-67)، وقد بيّن أثر ثلاثة من أساتذته فيه، وأوجه التشابه بينه وبينهم في وقائع محددة، وهم فخر الدين بن عساكر، وجمال الدين بن الخرساني، وسيف الدين الأمدي. وانظر أيضًا ابن عبد السلام (2006، 8).

الذي عُدَّ من أذكىء العالم، وجمال الدين الحرستاني الشافعي (ت. 1217/614) الذي وُصف بالقاضي العادل الذي لم تكن تأخذه في الله لومة لائم (الذهبي 1985، 80/22؛ السبكي 1992، 196/8)، وفخر الدين بن عساكر (ت. 1223/620) شيخ الشافعية بالشام الذي اشتهر بقوته في الحق، وجمع بين العلم والعمل (الذهبي 2003، 613/13؛ السبكي 1992، 177/8). وقد تتلمذ للعز أئمة من الفقهاء والمحدثين والمتكلمين واللغويين، عدَّ بعض محققَي أعمال العز 36 من مشاهيرهم (ابن عبد السلام 2016، 18/1-28)، منهم أبو شامة المقدسي (ت. 1267/665)، وتقي الدين بن دقيق العيد (ت. 1302/702)، وابن المنير (ت. 1284/683)، وتاج الدين الفركاح (ت. 1291/690) الذي انتهت إليه رئاسة المذهب، وُوصف بأنه من أذكىء العالم. وتَفَقَّه على العز—أيضاً—علاء الدين الباجي الذي قال عنه تاج الدين الشُّبكي: إنه ”أعلم أهل الأرض بمذهب الأشعري في علم الكلام“ (السبكي 1992، 340/10)، وكان قد حَاقَقَ شيخ الإسلام تقي الدين بن تيمية (ت. 1328/728) في 14 مسألة من مسائل الكلام، وكان صاحبَ باع واسع في المناظرة (ابن قاضي شُهبة 1987، 225/2). وممن تفقَّهوا—أيضاً—على العز شهاب الدين القرافي (ت. 1285/684).

وقد اجتمعت كلمة مترجمي العز على أنه وبعض تلامذته—كابن دقيق العيد والفركاح وأبي شامة—قد بلغوا رتبة الاجتهاد (الذهبي 2003، 933/14، 660/15؛ الكتبي 1974، 351/2، 263/2؛ الصفدي 2000، 318/18؛ السبكي 1992، 165/8؛ ابن كثير 1993، 873/1؛ ابن حجر 1998، 239). كان العزُّ ذا شخصيةٍ مستقلة، ويظهر ذلك في مؤلفاته منهجاً وموضوعاتٍ وطريقةٍ مناقشة؛ فهو لا يَحْتَفِي بنقل آراء العلماء الآخرين في معظم كتبه، ويُرجِّح ويستشكل، وينفرد بآراء وترجيحاتٍ أيضاً. وقد وُصفَ الحافظُ ابن حجر العزُّ بأنه ”كان عاليَ الهمة، بعيد الغور في فهم العلوم“ (ابن حجر 1998، 239)، وقال فيه الإمام محيي الدين النووي (ت. 1277/676): ”الإمام المُجْمَعُ على إمامته وجلالته وتمكُّنه في أنواع العلوم وبراعته“ (النووي د.ت.، 22/3).²

جمع العزُّ بين العلم والعمل معاً، وقد أجمع مَنْ ترجموا له—وهم كُثُرٌ—على هذه الخصلة في سيرته، وهي خَصِيصَة اعتنى بالإشارة إليها—أيضاً—مَنْ كتبوا عن العزِّ ومَنْ حَقَّقُوا كتبه أيضاً، فقد طلبَ في المنام المذكور سابقاً العلم؛ لأنه يؤدِّي إلى العمل، وكان

2 كان النووي معاصراً للعزِّ، ولكنه لم يلتق به في الغالب؛ لأنه زار دمشق بعد مغادرة العزِّ إلى القاهرة، ولكن جمعت بين النووي (ت. 1277/676) وبين علاء الدين الباجي (ت. 1315/714) تلميذ العزِّ صداقة متينة.

كثيرَ التعبد بحسب كتب التراجم، وكُتِبَ الفقهية والأخلاقية طافحةً بالجانب العملي والتنظير من أجل تقويم العمل وضبطه بقانون يعصم من الهوى ويوصل إلى السعادة الأخروية. ولذلك يتواتق—عنده—النظري والعملي. وقد تَلَعَّت وصيته—قبل موته—بطلب النجاة في الآخرة، وأن الجزاء والمؤاخذة مرهونة بالكسب، وبطلب العفو عن التقصير والسيئات، والعتق من النار (ابن عبد السلام 1995د، 46).

وكانت للعزّ مواقف نقدية شجاعة، عارض فيها الحُكام والأمراء، ولذلك سُمي "سلطان العلماء"، وهي التسمية التي أطلقها عليه تلميذه ابن دقيق العيد. ومن ثم وصفه تاج الدين السبكي بـ"القائم بالأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر في زمانه، المطلع على حقائق الشريعة وغوامضها، العارف بمقاصدها. لم يرَ مثل نفسه، ولا رأى مَنْ رآه مثله؛ علمًا وورعًا وقيامًا في الحق" (السبكي 1992، 209/8). من وقائعه أنه أنكر على الملك الأيوبي الصالح إسماعيل المعروف بأبي الخيش تحالفه مع الفرنج (أي الصليبيين) وتسليمهم مدينة صيدا وقلعة الشقيف، وترك الدعاء له في خطبة الجمعة، وساعده—في ذلك—الشيخ أبو عمرو بن الحاجب المالكي (ت. 1249/646)، فغضب السلطان منهما، فخرجا إلى الديار المصرية في حدود سنة 1242/639. وجرى بين العزّ والملك الأشرف موسى بن الملك العادل بن أيوب في دمشق واقعة تتصل بمسألة الكلام والمعتقد الأشعري في الأسماء والصفات، ردَّ فيها على طائفة من الحنابلة. بدأت القصة حين عظم الملك الأشرف العزّ بن عبد السلام، فأحبّه وصار يلهج بذكره ويؤثر الاجتماع به، ولكنّ العزّ لم يُجب إلى ذلك، فأرادت طائفة من الحنابلة القائلين بأن كلام الله حرف وصوت أن يُمكنوا لاعتقادهم، فاستمالوا إليهم السلطان الذي اقتنع بقولهم وأن ذلك اعتقاد السلف وأحمد بن حنبل، فأرسلوا إلى العزّ فُتيا يمتحنونه فيها لِيُسقطوه عند السلطان؛ بأنه مخالفٌ لاعتقاد السلف، ولكن العزّ كتب—في الردّ—معتقدَه على طريقة الأشاعرة، وحمل فيه على من سماهم الحشوية والمُجسمة الذين صار السلطان يقول بقولهم، الأمر الذي أزعج السلطان واعتقد أن العزّ من الكفار، فنقم عليه، وصارت بينهم ردودٌ، ضُيِّقَ—في إثرها—على العزّ ومنع من الفتيا. وقد حكى تفاصيل ما جرى ابنُ العزّ الشيخ عبد اللطيف بن عبد العزيز (ت. 1296/695) (ابن عبد العزيز 1370).³ ومن وقائع

3 طُبعت هذه الرسالة أيضًا باسم "محمد بن عبد العزيز" (ابن عبد العزيز 2006)، وقد نقلها تاج الدين السبكي في "طبقات الشافعية الكبرى" وعزاها إلى "الإمام شرف الدين عبد اللطيف" (السبكي 1992، 218/8).

العز المشهورة أيضًا: إصراره على بيع أمراء الممالك بالمزاد، وكانوا متنفذين ولهم نفوذ الخلافة، وذلك أنه رأى أنهم ما زالوا أرقاء من الناحية الشرعية، فحكّم عليهم بأنهم ملك لبيت المال، ولا بدّ من تحريرهم أولاً.

لم يكن العزّ يُبالي بعواقب ثباته على الحق وجرأته في إنكار المنكر، وكان يرى أن "المخاطرة بالنفوس مشروعة في إعزاز الدين، ... وكذلك المخاطرة بالأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر ونصرة قواعد الدين بالحجج والبراهين: مشروعة. فمن خشي على نفسه سقط عنه الوجوب وبقي الاستحباب. ومن قال بأن التغير بالنفوس لا يجوز، فقد بُعد عن الحق ونأى عن الصواب. وعلى الجملة: فمن أثر الله على نفسه أثره الله" (ابن عبد السلام 1995، د، 25-26). فكان هذا حال العزّ في طلب معالي الأمور والكمال، وفي مطابقة فعله باعتقاداته، وكان هذا شأنه في المسائل النظرية والعملية، فقد استشكل مسائل فقهية ولم يقنع بالتعليلات المتداولة لها، وقال مرة: "لست أتكلف الكلام فيما لا أعلم، والجواب بما لا أفهمه ... والموفق من رأى المُشكل مُشكلاً، والواضح واضحاً. ومن تكلف خلاف ذلك لم يخلُ من جهل أو كذب" (ابن عبد السلام 1995، ب، 47-48).

3 أعمال العزّ بوصفها تعبيراً عن شخصيته

عاش العزّ بن عبد السلام أكثر من ثمانين عاماً وصنّف كثيراً، وتنوعت مؤلفاته حتى شملت علومًا متنوعة، ولذلك قيل عنه: صاحبُ فنون؛ فقد صنّف في التفسير، والحديث، والكلام، والفقه، وأصول الفقه، والأخلاق والآداب، وغالبها صار مطبوعاً في العقود الأخيرة. وقد زادت مصنفاته على الثلاثين مؤلفاً، وكان رضوان علي الندوي أول من عمّد إلى إحصاء مؤلفاته وتصنيفها وبيان أماكن وجودها، ثم تبعه آخرون. وقد نُسبت إليه كتبٌ هي لغيره، فاعتنى بعض محققي كتبه ببيان مؤلفاته وتصحيح نسبة ما نُسب إليه (انظر الندوي 1960، 73-83؛ الوهبي 1982، 115-164؛ ابن عبد السلام 1987، 41-52؛

2006، 21-30؛ 2000، 24م-31؛ 2016، 1/51-75).⁴

اعتنى العزّ عنايةً واضحةً بالقرآن الكريم، فلخصّ تفسير أبي الحسن الماوردي (ت. 1058/450)، وكتب تفسيراً مستقلاً، وله أمالي "تتضمن على أحكام وأبحاث شتى من

4 ذكر شهاب الدين النويري للعزّ مؤلفات لم يرد ذكرها عند غيره. انظر النويري (1990، 30/67).

المشكل وأجوبة عنها، وعلى شيء من الحديث الشريف، “كما كتب أحد النساخ على إحدى نسخ الأمالي الخطية (ابن عبد السلام 1982، 8). ويبدو أن هذه الأمالي هي الدروس التي كان يُلقِيها في تفسير القرآن حتى عُذَّ أول مَنْ ألقى التفسير دروسًا في مصر (ابن عبد السلام 1982، 20).⁵ وكتب—أيضًا—في مجاز القرآن كتابًا لم يُسبق إليه، سماه «الإشارة إلى الإيجاز في بعض أنواع المجاز» (ابن عبد السلام 1999). وكان للعزّ—أيضًا—عنايةً بالحديث النبوي؛ فقد اختصر صحيح الإمام مسلم بن الحجاج القشيري (ت. 875/261)، وأفاد شمس الدين الداودي (ت. 1538/945) أن العزّ أقرَّ هذا الكتاب (الداودي 1983، 320/1؛ وانظر السبكي 1992، 248/8)، وأفاد الحافظ ابن كثير أن العزّ “سمع كثيرًا... وبرّع في المذهب، وجمع علومًا كثيرة” (ابن كثير 1998، 441/17)؛ فقد سمع الحديث من أبي حفص عمر بن طبرزد (ت. 1210/607)، والقاسم بن عساكر ابن مؤرّخ دمشق الحافظ ابن عساكر (ت. 1203/600)، وحنبل الرُّصافيّ المحدث المُسنِّد (ت. 1207/604)، وجمال الدين أبي القاسم بن الحرّستاني (ت. 1217/614) وغيرهم. وسمع منه الحافظ شرف الدين الدِّمياطي (ت. 1306/705)، وكان من نقّاد الحديث وله تصانيف متقّنة في الحديث والعوالي وغير ذلك، وقد خرّج الدِّمياطي للعزّ أربعين حديثًا عواليً، وسمع من العزّ—أيضًا—القاضي المحدث الفقيه تقي الدين بن دقيق العيد. وصنّف العزّ في علم الكلام رسائلَ عدة، منها: «الملحة في اعتقاد أهل الحق»، وقد شرحها أبو عبد الله محمد الدِّيباجي الشافعي المعروف بابن المنفلوطي (ت. 1373/774) بعنوان «إفهام الأفهام في شرح عقيدة عز الدين بن عبد السلام» (ابن المنفلوطي 2019)، ومن رسائله في علم الكلام: «الأنواع في علم التوحيد»، و«رسالة في معنى الإيمان والإسلام»، و«نبذة في الردّ على القائل بخلق القرآن» وغيرها. أما في فروع الفقه، فقد صنّف العزّ «الغاية في اختصار النهاية»، اختصر فيه كتاب «نهاية المطلب في دراية المذهب» للإمام أبي المعالي الجويني (ت. 1085/478)، وكتاب «الجمع بين الحاوي والنهاية»، جمع فيه بين أكبر كتّابين في المذهب الشافعي في زمنه، وهما «نهاية المطلب» للجويني، و«الحاوي الكبير» للماوردي. قال تاج الدين السبكي:

5 طُبِعَ القسم المتعلق بتفسير القرآن تحت عنوان «فوائد في مشكل القرآن» بتحقيق سيد رضوان علي الندوي، في وزارة الأوقاف الكويتية سنة 1967، ثم أُعيد طبعه في دار الشروق بجدة سنة 1982 (ابن عبد السلام 1982).

”ما أظنه كَمُلَ“. وللعز—أيضاً—الفتاوى المصرية والفتاوى الموصلية. أما في علم أصول الفقه، فقد صنّف العز «قواعد الأحكام في إصلاح الأنام»، و«الفوائد في اختصار المقاصد» الذي اختصر فيه كتابه السابق، وصنّف أيضاً كتاب «الإمام في بيان أدلة الأحكام». وأما في التصوف والأخلاق، فقد صنّف «مقاصد الرعاية لحقوق الله» الذي اختصر فيه كتاب «الرعاية لحقوق الله» للحرث المحاسبى (ت. 857/243)، و«شجرة المعارف والأحوال وصالح الأقوال والأعمال»، و«رسالة في القطب والغوث والأبدال الأربعين وغيرهم». ويمكن أن نُدرج هنا—على سبيل التجوز—رسالته في «بيان أحوال الناس يوم القيامة أو ذكر الرابحين والخاسرين منهم» وقد ألحقت بكتاب «قواعد الأحكام»، ورسالته في «الفتن والبلايا والمحن والرزايا».

وتتسم مؤلفات العز بثلاث سمات رئيسة: الأولى: الربط بين فنون عدة، فقد حرص العز—باستمرار—على بيان تداخل العلوم الإسلامية فيما بينها حتى يبدو بعضها آخذاً بحُجُز بعض وكأنها علمٌ واحد. وربما أوقع هذا التداخل بعض الباحثين في حيرة حول إدراج هذا المصنّف أو ذاك تحت علم واحد من العلوم. السمة الثانية: تسديد تلك العلوم باتجاه العمل القويم المُنجي في الآخرة والمحقق لمصالح الدارين؛ فالعلم يوصل إلى العمل، كما سبق في سيرته. السمة الثالثة: أن شخصية العز المستقلة تظهر في مؤلفاته بصور عدة، كابتكاره كتباً وموضوعاتٍ تفرّد بها، الأمر الذي التقطه بعض من ترجموا له كتاج الدين السبكي ونجم الدين الطوفي (ت. 1316/716) مثلاً، وكعزوفه—في بعض كتبه على الأقل—عن إيراد النقول عن العلماء السابقين،⁶ وكتبّيته بعض الاختيارات الفقهية، وكان—في آخر حياته—لا يتقيد بمذهب، وإنما يُفتي بما أداه إليه اجتهاده، ولذلك قال ابن كثير: ”اختار وأفتى بالأقوال السديدة“ (ابن كثير 1993، 873). بل إنه انتقد صنيع الفقهاء المقلّدين؛ إذ ”يقف أحدهم على ضَعْف مأخذ إمامه؛ بحيث لا يجد لضعفه مدْفَعاً، وهو—مع ذلك—يقلّده فيه، ويترك من شهد الكتاب والسنة والأقيسة الصحيحة لمذهبه؛ جموداً على تقليد إمامه، بل يَتَحَيَّل لدفع ظواهر الكتاب والسنة، ويتأولها بالتأويلات البعيدة الباطلة؛ نضالاً عن مقلّده“ (ابن عبد السلام 2000، 274/2-275).

6 يورد نقولاً عديدة في أماليه مثلاً، كما نجد في القسم المطبوع منها تحت عنوان ”فوائد في مشكل القرآن“ (ابن عبد السلام 1982).

ويمزج—في غالب كتبه—بين علومٍ مختلفة، ففي رسالة «الأنواع في علم التوحيد»—مثلاً—يُمزج بين النظريات والعمليات، أو بين معرفة الله تعالى بأسمائه وصفاته—وهي مسألة كلامية وصوفية معاً—أو بين العمل بمقتضى تلك المعرفة وما تُثمره من أحوال، وما يُثبت بها من أحكام عملية باطنة وظاهرة. وقد فصل ذلك في بعض كتبه الأخرى كـ«الشجرة» و«قواعد الأحكام». وفي رسالة «معنى الإيمان والإسلام» ربط—مجدداً—بين النظريات والعمليات، أو بين تصديق القلب والعمل بمَواجِب هذا التصديق؛ لأن العمل بمقتضى الإيمان من فوائد التصديق وثمراته وفروعه ومسبباته، خصوصاً أن الشارع—بحسب العز—استعمل الإيمان في التصديق وفي الطاعات بالقلوب والألسنة والجوارح والأبدان، وإن كان استعمال الإيمان بمعنى التصديق أكثر. أما الإسلام فقد استعمله الشارع في الانقياد إلى كثير من الطاعات كذلك (ابن عبد السلام 1992، 17، 10—9). وفي كتاب «مجاز القرآن» ربط العز بين اللغة والتفسير والكلام والأخلاق، فنقف في الكتاب على مناقشات لمسائل الحذف والتأكيد والحقيقة والمجاز، وأحكام التفسير وأقسامه، والأسماء والصفات. بل إن بنية الكتاب كلّها تتناول أساليب القرآن في التعبير، وقد أفرد الفصل الأخير فيه للحديث عن مقاصد القرآن الذي معظمه نصائح لجلب المصالح ودرء المفاسد. وفي رسالة «الفتن والبلايا والمنح والرزايا» مَرَج بين الظاهر والباطن، فذكر 17 فائدة للبلايا، وأنها تختلف باختلاف رُتَب الناس، وذكر منها معرفة عزّ الربوبية وقهرها، ومعرفة ذلة العبودية وكسرها، والإخلاص لله تعالى، والإنابة إليه، والحلم عمن صدرت عنه المصيبة، والعفو عن جانيها، والصبر عليها، والفرح بها لأجل فوائدها، والشكر عليها، وتمحيصها الذنوب والخطايا، إلى غير ذلك (ابن عبد السلام 1992، 9 وما بعدها). وفي رسالة «بيان أحوال الناس يوم القيامة» نجد مناقشة مركّبة تجمع بين مسائل اعتقادية وأخرى عملية، فهي رسالة تجمع—في مسائلها—بين حقول الكلام والتصوف والفلسفة الخلقية المبنية على الكتاب والسنة لا على طريقة الفلاسفة. فنجدُه يناقش المفاضلة بين أنواع الموجودات وأسبابها، وأنواع السعادات واللذات في الدنيا والآخرة، وحقيقة الإنسان والروح، وموازين الربح والخسارة في الآخرة، ومصالح الدارين ومفاسدهما (ابن عبد السلام 1995، ب). وفي رسالتيه: «مقاصد الصلاة» و«مقاصد الصوم»، يجمع بين الأحكام الشرعية والآداب الشرعية، وبين أحكام الظاهر وأحكام الباطن، أي بين طريقتي الفقهاء والمتصوفة، فيعالج في «مقاصد الصلاة» مسائل التدبير والخشوع مثلاً، ويعالج في «مقاصد الصوم» حكّمه وأسراره وفوائده، كـ”رفع

الدرجات، وتكفير الخطيئات، وكسر الشهوات، وتكثير الصدقات، وتوفير الطاعات، وشكر عالم الخفيات، والانزجار عن خواطر المعاصي والمخالفات“ (ابن عبد السلام 1992ج، 21).

وتظهر السمة الإبداعية خاصةً في الأعمال الثلاثة التي سنتحدث عنها لاحقاً، بالإضافة إلى كتابه عن مجاز القرآن الذي أثنى عليه العلماء حتى عدّه تاج الدين السبكي شاهداً على إمامته وعظيم منزلته في علوم الشريعة، وقال فيه نجم الدين الطوفي: “أجود ما رأيتُ في هذا الفن [أي مواقع ألفاظ الكتاب والسنة]، ولقد أحسن فيه غاية الإحسان، وضمّنه من ذلك النكت البديعة والفوائد الحسان، جزاه الله وسائر العلماء، عما أفادوا به جزيل الإحسان“ (الطوفي 1987، 516/1). وقد أفرد العزّ في هذا الكتاب—فصلاً ختامياً مبتكراً لمقاصد القرآن،⁷ ويبدو أنه فضّله—فيما بعد—وبنى عليه كتاب «الإمام» الذي سيأتي الحديث عنه. بل إن «وصية العز» جاءت على خلاف المعهود من الوصايا قبل الموت التي عادةً ما تكون وصيةً إلى الأحياء من ذوي المُوصي قبل موته، ولكن العزّ خرج بها عن هذا المعهود إلى توجيه الوصية إلى الله تعالى. وكانت لدى العزّ نزعة نقدية واضحة، وخاصةً في مسائل البدع وإنكار المنكر، سواءً وقع ذلك من الناس أم من الحكّام، ومن ثمّ وُصف بـ“صلاية الدين“ (انظر النويري 1990، 67/30). من ذلك مثلاً رسالته «في القطب والغوث والأبدال» التي بيّن فيها بطلان قول الناس فيهم وعدم وجودهم كما زعموا، ورسالته في «الترغيب عن صلاة الرغائب الموضوعة» التي وقع الخلاف فيها بينه وبين الإمام أبي عمرو بن الصلاح (ت. 1245/643)، وغيرها. بل إن اختصاره لبعض الكتب لم يخلُ—أيضاً—من تحريرات واختيارات وانتقادات، كما نجد في كتاب “مقاصد الرعاية“ مثلاً.⁸ وقد دفع تميّز أعمال العزّ بعض مترجميه إلى الإشادة بمصنفاته، فقال ابن كثير: “وله مصنفات حسان“ (ابن كثير 2003، 441/17)، وقال الذهبي: “وله التصانيف المفيدة“ (الذهبي 2003، 933/14)، وقال المؤرخ أبو الفداء الملك المؤيّد (ت. 1331/732): “وله مصنفات جليّة في المذهب“ (الملك المؤيّد د.ت.، 215/3)، فضلاً عن ثناء السبكي والطوفي وغيرهما على أعمال له بعينها.

7 نُشر مستقلاً؛ لأهميته. انظر ابن عبد السلام (1995هـ).

8 وقد وقع في النسخ الخطية لـ«طبقات الشافعية الكبرى» للسبكي (1992، 248/8) عن كتاب «الغاية» الذي اختصر فيه كتاب «نهاية المطلب»: “ليس على قدره،“ وجاء في «طبقات الصوفية» للمناوي (1999، 448/2): “وليس كإمامته.“

4 تفكير العز ونسبته إلى الأخلاق

بدأ الانشغال بشخصية العزّ وأعماله مطلع ستينيات القرن الماضي؛ فقد أشار مصطفى السباعي (ت. 1964) في تقديمه لكتاب «العزّ بن عبد السلام» لرضوان علي الندوي (الندوي 1960) —إلى أن هذا الكتاب أول كتاب مُفرد في ترجمة العزّ (الندوي 1960)، وكان الندوي قد قدّم في كتابه دراسة تاريخية نقدية تناول فيها مختلف جوانب شخصية العز وإسهاماته، وهو —في أصله— بحث تُخرّج قدّم في جامعة دمشق، وأشرف عليه المؤرخ يوسف العش (ت. 1967). ويمكن تصنيف أوجه الانشغال بالعزّ إلى ستة أوجه: الأول: الاهتمام بملامح شخصية العز وعموم فكره؛ وخاصة جرائته في الحق ومواقفه الثورية تجاه الحكام. فهو «سلطان العلماء»، و«بائع الأمراء»، و«القائم بالأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر» في وجه الحكام والمحكومين على السواء (انظر مثلاً عبد الله 1962؛ الهاللي 1990؛ الزحيلي 1992). الثاني: الاهتمام بفقه العزّ وإسهاماته المتميزة، وخاصة في كتابه «قواعد الأحكام» الذي أرجع —فيه— فروع الفقه إلى قاعدة كلية هي جلب المصالح ودرء المفاسد، وقد كان بعض الفقهاء —قبله— يردون فروع الفقه إلى جملة قواعد لا إلى قاعدة واحدة، وقد مهّد العزّ —في كتابه هذا— الطريق لتلميذه شهاب الدين القرافي، ولأبي إسحاق الشاطبي (ت. 1388/790) لاحقاً، لاستكمال بناء نظرية «مقاصد الشريعة»، وقد أشار العز نفسه إلى أن له كتاباً في «مقاصد الشريعة» في كل باب من أبوابها، ولكننا لا نعرف عن هذا الكتاب شيئاً، وقد تنبّه إليه محققاً كتاب «قواعد الأحكام» (ابن عبد السلام 2000، 52/1م). وقد سلك هذا المسلك في الاهتمام بمنحى العز الفقهي والمقاصدي بعض الباحثين منذ سبعينيات القرن الماضي (فوده 1976؛ الفقيّر 1977؛ عمر 2003). الثالث: الاهتمام بالعزّ مفسّراً، سواءً من خلال إسهامه في التفسير أم من خلال «مجاز القرآن» وأماله في مشكل القرآن (انظر الندوي 1982؛ الوهبي 1982). الرابع: الاهتمام بالتوجه الصوفي عند العز وهو اهتمام حديث (درويش 2019؛ سرور 2020)، ولكنه ما يزال بحاجة إلى درس معمّق ونقديّ يضعه في سياق تاريخ العلاقة بين الفقه والتصوف. الخامس: الاهتمام بالآراء العقدية للعز بن عبد السلام، ولكن هذا الاهتمام جاء من بعض خصوم اتجاهه العقدي مع التحيز ضده؛ لأنه كان أشعرياً (الثبتي 2010)، وما يزال بحاجة إلى درس معمّق لشكل حضور المباحث الكلامية في أعماله المختلفة. السادس: الاهتمام بالعز ممثلاً لما سُمي «الأخلاق الإسلامية الخالصة» التي تجردت عن المؤثرات الثقافية اليونانية والفارسية، وهو ما سلكه

محمد عابد الجابري (ت. 2010) (الجابري 2001). تعكس هذه الأوجه الستة موسوعية العز، ومنهجه المتعدد التخصصات الذي وسم طريقته في الكتابة والبحث، وهذا أمرٌ يساعدنا على تقديم رؤية نقدية لنهج الجابري، وبيان طبيعة المقاربة الأخلاقية التي يقدمها العز في أعماله التي سنتناولها بشيء من التفصيل لاحقًا.

انتقى الجابري من انشغالات العز الواسعة ثلاثة أمور ليؤسس عليها فهمه لفكر العز وتصنيفه لعمليته: «قواعد الأحكام» و«شجرة المعارف والأحوال». الأمر الأول: أن العز «أكثر من أدرك من علماء الإسلام منزلة العمل الصالح—أو المصالح بتعبير الفقهاء—في نظام القيم الذي أقره القرآن». والأمر الثاني: «صلته القوية بالماوردي وبالمحاسبي إلى درجة أنه لخص بعض كتبهما». الأمر الثالث: ما زعم الجابري أنه «عزوف العز عن التصوف الذي يعتقد في الأقطاب والأبدال». وقد رأى أن صلة العز بالمحاسبي والماوردي كانت ستكفي لربطه بهما «في إطار مشروع الأخلاق الإسلامية»؛ لولا أن «اهتمامه بالمصالح والمقاصد في مؤلفاته الفقهية يعطيه وضعا خاصا ينفصل به عنهما» (الجابري 2001، 596)، ليثبت—بعد ذلك—أن كتابي «القواعد» و«الشجرة» هما كتابان في الأخلاق، وليس في «الفقه والأصول أو الزهد». فتصنيف كتاب «القواعد» على أنه كتاب في «الفقه والأصول»، وكتاب «الشجرة» على أنه كتاب في «الزهد والرقائق» غير صحيح بحسب الجابري الذي يرى أن هذا التصنيف انبنى على عنوان الكتابين فقط، وربما ساعد على ذلك غياب التفكير في الأخلاق بوصفها مجالا من مجالات الفكر الإسلامي. فموضوع الكتابين—تحديدًا—هو «أخلاق القرآن»، وقد بناهما العز على مبدأ المصلحة بحسب الجابري. فكتاب «القواعد» يندرج ضمن «الأخلاق العملية»، أي الأخلاق الاجتماعية التي تتناول المعاملات بين الناس ومع البهائم، وهي مبنية على المصلحة. وكتاب «الشجرة» يندرج ضمن «الأخلاق النظرية»، أي الأخلاق النفسية أو الروحية التي تتناول حقوق الخالق والنفوس والناس، وهي مبنية على الميتافيزيقا الإسلامية (الذات والصفات والأفعال). ويخلص الجابري إلى أن العز قد أحدث—بعمله هذا—قطيعة جذرية ونهائية مع اتجاهين: اتجاه الدمج بين الموروث الفارسي والعربي والإسلامي الذي سلكه أبو الحسن العامري (ت. 992/381) وأبو علي مسكويه (ت. 1030/421) والماوردي، واتجاه أسلمة الأخلاق اليونانية الذي سلكه الراغب الأصفهاني (ت. القرن الخامس/الحادي عشر)، بحسب تشخيص الجابري (الجابري 2001، 595–596). ولكن قراءة الجابري لعمل العز لا تعكس واقع الكتابين؛ لأنها قراءة مجتزأة

لا تراعي المعطيات التاريخية والمعرفية، وتقصّر—جداً—في الوقوف على مضامين كتابي العزّ المختارين، فضلاً عن إهمال كتبه الأخرى. فلا ينشغل الجابري—مثلاً—بفهم إسهام العزّ من منظور العزّ نفسه أولاً، ومن منظور الجماعة العلمية التي تلقت عمله ثانياً. وسأبين—فيما يأتي—حيثيات هذا الاجتزاء في قراءة العزّ من ثلاث جهات، وسأوسّع الكلام على كتابي العزّ مضافاً إليهما ثالثاً هو كتاب «الإمام» في القسم الأخير من هذه الدراسة.

أما الجهة الأولى: فهي أن انشغالات العزّ أوسع من أن تُحتزل—فقط—في حقل الأخلاق بمفهوم الجابري المضيق له، كما يظهر من خلال كتابه «العقل الأخلاقي العربي»، ولا سيما أننا أوضحنا—سابقاً—أن عمل العزّ اتسم بسمات ثلاثة، وهي أنه يربط بين النظري والعملي، ويسلك نهجاً متعدد التخصصات، وفيه جدّة. فالعزّ—بحسب أعماله المشار إليها سابقاً—مفسّر، وفقه، وأصوليّ، وقاضٍ، ومتكلّم، بل ومتصوّف أيضاً، ولذلك رأينا ترجمته في طبقات فقهاء الشافعية (السبكي 1992، 209/8)، وطبقات المفسرين (الداودي 1983، 315/1)، وفي تراجم القضاة (ابن حجر 1998، 239)، وفي طبقات الصوفية أيضاً (المنائي 1999، 447/2). ثم إن العزّ لم يتصل—فقط—بالمحاسبي والماوردي، فقد اختصر كتاب إمام الحرمين الجويني، كما أن صلته بالماوردي كانت مزدوجة ولكنها لا تتناول أعمال الماوردي التي أدرجها الجابري في حقل الأخلاق؛ فقد لخص العزّ كتابين للماوردي أحدهما في تفسير القرآن والآخر في الفقه الشافعي؛ حين جمع بين كتابي الماوردي والجويني في الفقه، وهما من مطبوعات المذهب. ثم إن الجابري قد استبعد حقلي القرآن والفقه من «العقل الأخلاقي العربي»، فكيف يستقيم له أن يبنّي على هذه الصلة في حقل الأخلاق إذن؟ حاول الجابري جاهداً إبعاد العزّ عن ميدان الفقه ليلحقه بحقل الأخلاق المنفصل عن الفقه تماماً وفق منظور الجابري، ولكن ذلك يخالف حقيقة إسهام العزّ الذي كان فقيهاً شافعيّاً قبل أي شيء آخر، ووصفه غير واحد ممن ترجموا له بأنه: شيخ المذهب، أو انتهت إليه رئاسة المذهب، أو شيخ الشافعية. وحين دخل مصر، اعتذر الحافظ عبد العظيم المنذري الشافعي (ت. 1258/656) عن الفتيا قائلاً: “كنا نُفتي قبل حضور الشيخ عزّ الدين. وأما بعد حضوره فمنصب الفتيا مُتعيّن فيه” (السبكي 1992، 211/8)، ونقل جلال الدين السيوطي (ت. 1505/911) أنه قيل في مجلسه: “ما على وجه الأرض مجلسٌ في الفقه أبهى من مجلس الشيخ عزّ الدين بن عبد السلام” (السيوطي 1967، 315/1)، وقال العزّ عن نفسه: “مضت

لي ثلاثون سنة لا أنام حتى أُمِرَ أبواب الأحكام على خاطري“ (ابن حجر 1998، 241). فمحاولة الجابري إخراج أعمال العز من ميدان الفقه كليةً، أمرٌ شديدٌ التكلف وبعيدٌ تمامًا عن واقع حضور العزّ في حقل الدراسات الإسلامية، وخاصة الفقهية.

وأما الجهة الثانية: فهي أن الجابري نفى التصوف عن العز ولم يُحرر المسألة، فتصوف العزّ راسخٌ فيه: تكوينًا وصحبةً ومؤلفاتٍ؛ بالرغم من نقد العزّ لبعض أفكار الصوفية وممارساتهم، ولذلك جزم تاج الدين السبكي بالقول: ”وقد كانت للشيخ عز الدين اليد الطولى في التصوف، وتصانيفه قاضيةٌ بذلك“ (السبكي 1992، 215/8)، حتى إن بعضهم ترجم له في طبقات الصوفية كما تقدّم. وقد اعتنى عددٌ ممن ترجم له بالإشارة إلى تصوفه بين مقتضبٍ ومتوسّع، بل نسب إليه بعضهم أنه ليس خِرقة التصوف من الشيخ شهاب الدين السهروردي (ت. 1234/632) (السبكي 1992، 214/8؛ الداودي 1983، 319/1)، وكانت آخر مرة حضر فيها السهروردي إلى دمشق سنة 1214/612، أي كان عمر العزّ حينها نحو 35 سنة، وكانت له صلة بأبي الحسن الشاذلي (ت. 1258/656) الذي تنسب إليه الطريقة الشاذلية، وقرأ رسالة أبي القاسم القشيري (ت. 1072/465) على السهروردي، وحضر حلقةً للشاذلي كانت تُقرأ فيها رسالة القشيري. وقد حكى الذهبي أنه ”كان يحضر السماع ويرقص“ (الذهبي 1984، 260/5؛ 2003، 933/14؛ الكتبي 1974، 351/2)، ولكن العز بن عبد السلام نفسه ناقش مسألة السماع في ”قواعد الأحكام“، وكان له فيها موقف نقديّ فيه تفصيل؛ بحسب اختلاف السامعين والمسموع منهم والمسموع نفسه الذي نوّعه إلى: قرآن ووعظ وتذكير وحُداء وأشعار، ومُطربات متنوعة الأحكام: بعضها محرّم، وبعضها مختلّف فيه للاختلاف في قُبْح سببه، وبعضها ذهب الجمهور إلى تحريمه. ثم قال: ”وعلى الجملة فالسماع بالحذاء ونشيد الأشعار بدعة لا بأس بسماع بعضها. وأما سماع المُطربات المحرّمات فغلطٌ من الجهلة المتشبعين المتشبهين المجترئين على رب العالمين ... ولو كان السماع بالملاهي المُطربات من الدين لبيّنه رسول رب العالمين.“ وحين جاء إلى الرقص والتصفيق قال: ”وأما الرقص والتصفيق فخفّة ورعونة مشبهة لرعونة الإناث،“ ”ومن هاب الإله إذا أدرك شيئاً من تعظيمه لم يُتصور منه رقصٌ ولا تصفيق“ (ابن عبد السلام 2000، 351/2-358). وقد فسّر العزّ بعض اصطلاحات الصوفية في كتاب ”قواعد الأحكام“ نفسه، كألفاظ الفناء والتجلي والذوق والحجاب، وقولهم: القلب بيت الرب، والقرب والبعد والمجالسة، وغيرها (ابن عبد السلام 2000، 350/2، 357)، كما أنه جعل من أقسام العلوم، علومًا

يُمنَحُها الأنبياء والأولياء، "بأن يخلقها الله فيهم من غير ضرورة ولا نظر"، ومنها "علوم إلهامية يُكشَف بها عما في القلوب، فيرى أحدهم بعينه من الغائبات ما لم تَجِر العادة برؤيته، ويسمع بأذنيه ما لم تَجِر العادة بسماع مثله، وكذلك شَمّه ومُشّه ولمسه. وكذلك يُدرك بقلبه علومًا متعلقة بالأكوان" (ابن عبد السلام 2000، 195/1). فتصوّف العزّ راسخٌ كما قال السبكي وغيره، وحين ذكر العزّ عقيدته في رسالة «المِلحة في اعتقاد أهل الحق»، حرص—في نهايتها—على القول: "فهذا إجمالٌ من اعتقاد الأشعري رحمه الله تعالى، واعتقاد السلف، وأهل الطريقة والحقيقة" (ابن عبد السلام 1995، 16)، وجاء في وصف العز من قبل ناسخ «مقاصد الرعاية» كما في مقدمته: "لِسَان الشَّرِيعَة سيد عُلَمَاء الطَّرِيقَة" (ابن عبد السلام 1995 ج)، ولذلك قال فيه زين الدين المناوي (ت. 1621/1031) في ترجمته من «طبقات الصوفية»: "قُدوة الصوفية" (المناوي 1999، 447/2). وأما الجهة الثالثة: فهي أن الجابري نزع العزّ من سياقه؛ بوصفه فقيهاً متصوّفاً، ثم وضعه عَنوةً في سياق الأنظمة الأخلاقية المتصارعة التي تصوّرها في كتابه، فقال: "أما أن يكون ابن عبد السلام قد قَصَد قَصْدًا إلى تقديم أخلاق إسلامية بديلة للأخلاق التي تتخذ مرجعيةً لها الموروث الفارسي والموروث اليوناني والموروث الصوفي وما أسمىناه بالموروث العربي الخالص، فهذا واضحٌ من جملة أمور"، وهي تَجَاهُل العز التام لهذه الموروثات، وتصريحه—في أول «شجرة المعارف»—بأن موضوعه هو "أخلاق القرآن"، و"بناؤه الأخلاق العملية—في قواعد الأحكام في مصالح الأنام—على الفكرة الإسلامية المعروفة: جلب المصالح ودرء المفاسد، وبناؤه الأخلاق النظرية—في الكتاب الثاني—على محاور علم الكلام (أو الميتافيزيقا الإسلامية): الذات والصفات والأفعال"، ليُطِيب للجابري أن يُثبت أن العز "أحدث قطيعةً جذريةً ونهائيةً" مع المحاولات السابقة عليه (الجابري 2001، 596–597).

والواقع أنه لم يكن للعزّ تكوينٌ فلسفيٌّ حتى يوضع في سياق المحاولات الأخلاقية الفلسفية، وإن كان قد أخذ عن الإمام سيف الدين الآمدي الذي له باعٌ في العقليات، ولكن العزّ أوضح لنا نوع الأثر الذي تركه فيه الآمدي فقال: "ما علمنا قواعد البحث إلا منه" (ابن الملقن 1997، 357؛ ابن قاضي شعبة 1987، 80/2)، بل إن تكوين العز ولغته وطريقته لا تستقيم مع طريقة الفلاسفة، وحين اختصر كتاب «نهاية المطلب» للجويني خلّصه من آثار الاستدلال المنطقي الذي وُجد في طريقة الجويني (انظر ابن عبد السلام 2016، 216/1). ولكن الذي مكّن العزّ من تقديم تلك المساهمة "الإسلامية"

المهمة في حقل الأخلاق هو عينُ ما تجاهله الجابري في كتابه، وهو أن العزَّ فُتِيَّةٌ ومتصوفٌ؛ فالعز ضبط التصوف بقانون الفقه، وكَمَّلَ الفقه (علم الظاهر) بالتصوف (علم الباطن)؛ تأسيساً على نصوص القرآن والحديث فجمع بين الشريعة والحقيقة، واجتهد في معارفه الشرعية المتنوعة، لِيُسَهِّمَ في حقل ما نسميه "الأخلاق الإسلامية"؛ بوصفه حقلاً متعدد التخصصات، وبهذا تجاوز مشكلات الفصل بين الفقه والتصوف، أو بين الظاهر والباطن، وبين الحقيقة والشريعة، وبين الأحكام والآداب، وبين النظر والعمل، فاشترك في صياغة رؤيته الأخلاقية علومُ الفقه وأصول الفقه والزهد والتصوف، وهي الحقول التي استبعد الجابريُّ أغلبها من «العقل الأخلاقي العربي»، وهي التي أعطت إسهام العزَّ أهميته وتفرده، وخاصة أفكاراً مثل المصالح والمفاسد، والمعارف والأحوال، والأحكام والآداب، التي تجمع—في منظور العز—بين طريقتي الفقهاء والصوفية معاً، وكذلك الأسماء والصفات التي تجمع بين المنظورين الكلامي والصوفي معاً. وجميع ذلك إنما يتأسس على نصوص القرآن والحديث وعلى قواعد الشريعة المقررة في الفقه. يقول العزُّ: "والشرع ميزانٌ توزن فيه الرجال والأقوال والأعمال والمعارف والأحوال، فمن رجح في ميزان الشرع فهو الراجح، ولا إثم على أحدٍ من المخطئين؛ إذا قام بما أوجبه الله عليه من المبالغة في الاجتهاد في تعرف الأحكام؛ لأنه أدَّى ما عليه" (ابن عبد السلام 2000، 370/2).

توضح هذه الجهات الثلاثة حجم الاجتزاء في قراءة الجابري للعقل الأخلاقي العربي عامة، ولفكر العزَّ خاصة، فضلاً عن أنها تفشل في وضع العزَّ موضعه من تاريخ الفكر الأخلاقي الإسلامي أيضاً؛ بسبب فكرتين هيمنتا على الجابري في كتابه، وهما: نُظْمُ القيم المتصارعة ووجود القطائع المعرفية، ومن ثم جَنَحَ إلى إطلاق حكمين قاصرين: الأول: أن كتاب «شجرة المعارف» هو أشبه ما يكون ببديل قرآني لكتابي «الرعاية لحقوق الله» للمحاسبي و«إحياء علوم الدين» لأبي حامد الغزالي (ت. 505/III). والثاني: أن «قواعد الأحكام» يُشبه أن يكون بديلاً قرآنياً عن كتابي «أدب الدنيا والدين» للماوردي، و«الذريعة إلى مكارم الشريعة» للراغب الأصفهاني (ت. القرن الخامس/الحادي عشر). والواقع أن هناك تقارباً بين العزَّ والمحاسبي، وبين العز والراغب الأصفهاني، كما أن تأريخ الأفكار يفرض وضع العزَّ في سياق آخر هو محاولات الربط بين الفقه والتصوف السابقة على العزَّ، وهذا ما سأجمل القول فيه، لأتفرغ—بعد ذلك—للحديث عن أعمال العزَّ الثلاثة، والنظرية الخلقية التي تنطوي عليها.

يظهر التقارب بين العزّ والمحاسبي في أمرين رئيسيين على الأقل. الأول: اختصار العزّ لكتاب «الرعاية لحقوق الله» وبيان مقاصده مع ضبط بعض تفاصيله بقانون الفقه، ثم تطوير فكرة حقوق الله على القلوب ودمجها في «قواعد الأحكام» وفي «الأنواع في علم التوحيد» وغيرهما. الثاني: أن العزّ بنى أعماله الثلاثة—فيما يبدو—على قسمة المحاسبي للعلوم إلى ثلاثة: علم الدنيا وهو علم الحلال والحرام (علم الظاهر)، وعلم الآخرة (علم الباطن)، والعلم بالله وبأحكامه في خلقه في الدارين، وطورها—بفهم بعيد الغور—ليجمع بينها على صعيد واحد ويُعيد للفقه مركزيته ويكملّه بباقي العلوم لضبط المعارف والأحوال والأعمال الظاهرة والباطنة، ليُخرج لنا إسهامًا متميزًا في «الأخلاق الإسلامية» التي تربط بين مباحث العلوم الإسلامية المختلفة وتُسدّدها نحو العمل لأجل تحصيل مصالح الدارين، وهو ما سنفضّل فيه أكثر فيما بعد. أما أبو حامد الغزالي فقد حشد—في «إحياء علوم الدين»—من نصوص القرآن والحديث الشيء الكثير، بل إنما انتقد «الإحياء» بسبب الأحاديث التي اشتمل عليها.

وثمة—أيضًا—تلاقٍ بين العزّ والراغب الأصفهاني. فالراغب من مفسّري القرآن، وممن برّزوا في التأليف في «المفردة القرآنية» من خلال كتابه «مفردات القرآن»، فضلًا عن أن حضور النص القرآني—في كتاب «الذريعة»⁹—كثيف جدًّا، وهذا لا يعني تجاهل الاختلاف المنهجي الواقع بين مقاربتَي الراغب والعزّ المباحث الخلقية؛ إذ إن الراغب وثيق الصلة بالموروثين الإسلامي والفلسفي معًا، ويتنقى من الأخير ما يرى أنه موروث عقلي إنساني لا يُعارض النص القرآني والحديث النبوي، فضلًا عن أنه يقبل من ذلك الموروث ما تؤيده النصوص، فهما درجتان: ما لا يُعارض النصوص، وما وردت الدلائل النصية المؤيدة له. أما العزّ فيؤسّس تصوره على النصّ قرآنًا وحديثًا، وعلى حقول الفقه وأصول الفقه والكلام والتصوف. فالراغب والعزّ يقدّمان—في الواقع—مقاربةً تأويليةً للنص والتقليد الإسلامي. ويلتقي الرجلان في فكرة كلية مركزية—على الأقل—وهي التخلق بأخلاق الله وفق التصور الإسلامي. فقد ميّز الراغب—في كتاب «تحقيق البيان في تأويل القرآن»—بين أحكام الشريعة ومكارم الشريعة، ثم أفرد لمكارم الشريعة كتاب «الذريعة» (الراغب الأصفهاني 2007، 59–60). و«مكارم الشريعة» بلغة الراغب هي نفسها «آداب القرآن» بلغة العزّ، ويبقى الاختلاف في التفاصيل والموارد. فالمكارم—عند

9 انظر فهرس الآيات الواردة في كتاب «الذريعة» مثلاً (الراغب الأصفهاني 2007، 303–326).

الراغب—”اسمٌ لِمَا لَا يُتَحَاشَى مِنْ وَصْفِ الْبَارِي جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُهُ بِهَا أَوْ بِأَكْثَرِهَا،” أي هي أسماء الله تعالى وصفاته التي يُقْتَدَى بِهَا بِقَدْرِ الطَّاقَةِ الْبَشَرِيَّةِ، وَإِنْ كَانَ اتِّصَافُ اللَّهِ بِهَا أَكْمَلَ وَأَشْرَفَ مِنْ اتِّصَافِ غَيْرِهِ بِهَا؛ فَكُلُُّّ بِحَسْبِهِ. فمكارم الشريعة تشمل الحكمة والجُود والحلم والعلم والعفو والقيام بالعدالة بين الناس والإحسان والفضل، ومقصودُها بلوغ جنة المأوى وجوار رب العزة سبحانه (الراغب الأصفهاني 2007، 59، 83). أي أن الراغب بنى أطروحة «مكارم الشريعة» على مسألة الأسماء والصفات أو «الميتافيزيقا الإسلامية» نفسها التي ظنَّ الجابري أن العزَّ قد تفرَّد بها. أما «آداب القرآن»—عند العز— فهي التخلق بأسماء الله وصفاته أيضًا، ولكن العز أوضح وأضبط من الراغب في هذا؛ إذ فصل في هذا التخلق وبين أقسامه، وبين «في كل صفة دليلها وثمرة ملاحظتها والتخلق بها» (ابن عبد السلام 2006، 67). فالتخلق بالأسماء والصفات يكون بأمرين: خصائص العبودية كالذلَّ والإذعان، وبعض صفات الربوبية كالعدل والإحسان؛ لأن أسماء الباري وصفاته، بعضها يمكن التخلق به وبعضها لا يمكن التخلق به، ثم ما يمكن التخلق به ينقسم إلى قسمين: (1) ما لا يجوز التخلق به كالعظمة والكبرياء، (2) وما «وردت الشريعة بالتخلق به، كالجود والحياء والحلم والوفاء.» أي أن «ما لا يُتَحَاشَى» وصفُ الباري به، مما يقتدي الإنسان به بلغة الراغب، صار جاريًا على قانون الفقهاء والمتصوفة عند العز.

ويلتقي العزَّ والراغب—أيضًا—في غايات هذا التخلق بأسماء الله وصفاته من حيث الجملة، فتحصيل مكارم الشريعة—عند الراغب—شرطٌ لخلافة الله في الأرض، بل إن الخلافة هي نفسها الاقتداء بالباري سبحانه، والخلافة درجة تأتي بعد عمارة الأرض وعبادة الله، وهي ثلاثة مقاصد بها يصير الإنسان إنسانًا، ومن ثم لا يصلح لخلافة الله في الأرض من لم يتخلق بمكارم الشريعة، ثم إن الجمع بين أحكام الشرع ومكارمه (علمًا وعملاً) يوصل إلى التقوى ويبلغ جنة المأوى وجوار الله تعالى (الراغب الأصفهاني 2007، 59–60، 82–86). وعند العزَّ ”لا يصلح لولاية الديان من لم يتأدَّب بآداب القرآن ولم يتخلق بصفات الرحمن على حسب الإمكان؛ فإنه مُحَسَّنٌ أَمَرَ بِالْإِحْسَانِ، مُفَضَّلٌ أَمَرَ بِالْإِفْضَالِ، مُجْمَلٌ أَمَرَ بِالْإِجْمَالِ، نَافِعٌ أَمَرَ بِالنَّفْعِ، ... فَمَنْ تَخَلَّقَ بِصِفَاتِ ذَاتِهِ صَلُحَ لَوْلَايَتِهِ وَرِضْوَانِهِ“ (ابن عبد السلام 2006، 67). فخلافة الله عند الراغب يقابلها ولاية الله عند العزَّ، وكلاهما يحدّد غاية التخلق، وهي دخول الجنان والقرب من الديان.

فالعزَّ يأتي في سياق مختلف عن السياق الذي افترضه الجابري (أسلمة الأخلاق وعدمها، ونظم القيم المتصارعة)؛ إذ إنه يأتي في سياق المحاولات الداخلية (من داخل

العلوم الإسلامية) التي سعت إلى ردم الفجوة التي فصلت بين الفقه والتصوف (الظاهر والباطن)، وإلى إثبات التلازم بين الظاهر والباطن، كما نجد لدى أبي بكر الكلاباذي (ت. 990/380) وأبي طاهر المكي (ت. 996/386) وأبي نصر الطوسي (ت. 988/378) وأبي عبد الله الحلي (ت. 1013/403). ولكن يبقى أن إسهام العزّ الفقيه والأصولي والمتصوف جاء أكثر تميزاً وعمقاً وانضباطاً وشمولاً، الأمر الذي نقل النقاش من الجمع بين التصوف والفقه إلى حقل "الأخلاق الإسلامية" بوصفه حقلاً متعدد التخصصات كما نفهمه اليوم.

5 فلسفة العزّ الخلقيّة من خلال كتبه الثلاثة

تُظهر أعمالُ العزّ بن عبد السلام، وخاصة كتبه الثلاثة: «القواعد» و«الشجرة» و«الإمام»، ما يُشكّل نظريةً أخلاقيةً، ويبدو لي أنه سعى—في أعماله الثلاثة على وجه الخصوص—إلى الجمع بين العلوم الثلاثة التي تحدث عنها المحاسبي وسبق ذكرها، ولكن المحاسبي فصل بين العلوم الثلاثة، ثم جعل علم الظاهر فرض كفاية، ووضّح أن علم الباطن هو علمٌ يقوم بإزاء علم الحلال والحرام، وهو "علمٌ لا يستغني عنه أحد، وعلمُه والعملُ به فرضٌ على كل أحد"، وأن مسائل علم الباطن "يتفرع القول فيها أكثر من تفرّعه في الحلال والحرام، وهو أولى في التعليم والحفظ على الأمة من ذلك، والحاجة إلى هذا في كل وقت وفي كل أمر أمّس شيء من ذلك" (المحاسبي 1975، 81—88). أما العزّ فقد جمع بين الثلاثة مع بيان ترابط مسائلها من دون فصل، وجعلها متضافرة في صياغة الإنسان الأخلاقي الذي تقوده أخلاقيته إلى الفوز بالجنان ورضا الديان والأنس بجواره. وقد ضبطَ العزّ الثلاثة بقانون الفقه في حين بدا المحاسبي وكأنه يريد التأسيس لعلم الباطن على حساب علم الظاهر، وتبعه الغزالي في ذلك؛ فقد رفع من شأن علم الباطن على حساب الفقه وأضاف إليه أنه استعان—أيضاً—ببعض أفكار الموروث الفلسفي اليوناني، ولم يدق في مصادر الحديث فآثر كتابه «إحياء علوم الدين» إشكالات عدة. شقّ العزّ طريقة جديدة في الجمع بين الفقه والتصوف تكتفي بمرجعية النص من قرآن وحديث، وتحافظ على قانون الفقه، وتجتنب المواريث الثقافية الأجنبية، ومن ثم تجاوز مشكلة الفصل بين علمي الحقيقة والشرعية؛ فهو ممن رآوا التلازم بينهما، فبعد أن بيّن أن معرفة إصلاح القلوب هي الملقبة بعلم الحقيقة، قال: "وليست الحقيقة خارجةً عن الشريعة، بل الشريعة طائفةٌ بإصلاح القلوب بالمعارف والأحوال والعزوم والنيات وغير ذلك مما

ذكرناه من أعمال القلوب. فمعرفة أحكام الظواهر معرفةً لجلّ الشرع، ومعرفة أحكام البواطن معرفةً لدقّ الشريعة، ولا يُنكر شيئاً منهما إلا كافر أو فاجر. وقد تشبّه بالقوم من ليس منهم ولا يقاربهم في شيء من الصفات، وهم شرٌّ من قطاع الطريق؛ لأنهم يقطعون طرق الداهيين إلى الله تعالى، وقد اعتمدوا على كلمات قبيحات يُطلقونها على الله، ويسئون الأدب على الرسل والأنبياء وأتباع الأنبياء من العلماء الأتقياء، وينهون من يصحبهم عن السماع من الفقهاء؛ لعلمهم بأن الفقهاء ينهون عن صحبتهم وعن سلوك طريقهم“ (ابن عبد السلام 2000، 349/2).

يقدم العز—بهذه المنهجية—الأخلاق بوصفها حقلاً متعدد التخصصات، تُشكل نصوص القرآن والحديث وحقول الفقه والأصول والكلام والتصوف أصولاً تأسيسية لها، فما يميز النظرية الأخلاقية عند العز هو أنها تتأسس عنده على أرضية فقهية وأصولية صلبة، تجري على قانون الفقه ولكنها لا تكتفي به ولا تنحصر بحدوده في رعاية الظاهر المنضبط. ومن ثم كانت قراءة الجابري لعمل العزّ قراءة مختزلة؛ حين اعتبر أن ”الغاية من الأخلاق عند ابن عبد السلام هي الفكرة الإسلامية المعبر عنها—في القرآن—بالعمل الصالح، وفي الأدبيات الفقهية بجلب المصالح ودرء المفاسد“ (الجابري 2001، 597). فقاعدة ”جلب المصالح ودرء المفاسد“ عند الفقهاء تختلف عن عموم مفهوم ”العمل الصالح“ الذي تتبعه الفقهاء والمتصوفة وغيرهم، كلٌّ على طريقته، ومفهوم المصالح والمفاسد عند العزّ لا يتقيد باصطلاح الفقهاء؛ لأنه وسّعهما وفتح عليهما جدًّا، ثم إن العمل الصالح—عند العز—ليس مقصوداً لذاته وإنما هو وسيلة إلى مقاصد وغايات أعلى، وهي الجنة ورضا الديان والأنس بقربه، وعبرة ”إصلاح الأنام“ التي تردّ في عنوان كتاب ”قواعد الأحكام“، وعبرة ”المعارف والأحوال“ التي تردّ في عنوان كتاب ”شجرة المعارف“ معبرتان جدًّا عن أن إصلاح الإنسان إنما يقوم على إصلاح القلوب الذي هو علم الحقيقة، وعلى العرفان—بدرجاته المتفاوتة—الذي يُنزله الجابري—في مشروعه عن العقل العربي—منزلاً قصيصاً. فيما يأتي سأقدم تحليلاً مجملاً لكتب العزّ الثلاثة كتاباً كتاباً لنقف على مضمونها، ولنتمكن—فيما بعد—من النفاذ منها إلى بناء تصور كلي عن أبرز ملامح نظرية العز الأخلاقية.

1.5 كتب العزّ الثلاثة: رؤية تحليلية

تندرج عامة أعمال العزّ ضمن باب المعارف أو العرفان، وهو مفهوم مركزيّ كرّره في مواضع من كتبه، فالمعارف مصلحة وفضيلة تميز الإنسان الأخلاقي وتوصله إلى غاياته. وللعرفان

مراتب، أعلاها معرفة الذات الإلهية وصفاتها، ثم معرفة الأوامر والنواهي، ثم معرفة أحكام تصرفات العباد ومعاملاتهم، ثم معرفة الأحوال الناشئة عن المعارف كالخوف والرجاء والحياء، ثم معرفة لذات الآخرة المترتبة على المعارف والأحوال والطاعات، ثم معرفة أدلة الأحكام، ثم معرفة ما التبس من الأحكام وأدلتها. ومن تأمل أعمال العزّ وجدها تدرج تحت هذه الأنواع المختلفة من المعارف، فكتبه الثلاثة المذكورة و«مجاز القرآن» وما أملاه من بيان مُشكل القرآن الذي طُبِعَ مفردًا، كلها تعالج المعارف والأحوال، وقواعد الأحكام، وأدلة الأحكام، وما يُشكل من الأحكام. وتتفاضل هذه المعارف، فبعضها مقاصد كمعرفة الذات والصفات، وبعضها وسائل كمعرفة الأحكام، والمقاصد والوسائل تقصد إلى إصلاح الأنام للفوز بالجنان ورضا الديان والأنس بقربه.

1.1.5 كتاب «شجرة المعارف والأحوال»

سمّى العزّ كتابه «شجرة المعارف والأحوال وصالح الأقوال والأعمال»، واكتفى تاج الدين السبكي بوصف الكتاب بأنه «حسن جدًّا» (السبكي 1992، 248/8)، ولم يتحدث عن محتواه، ولكن شهاب الدين التُّوري (ت. 1333/733) جعله في الزهد فقال: «وصنّف في الزهد شجرة المعارف» (النوري 1990، 67/30). أما نور الدين الحلبي (ت. 1634/1044) فجعله جامعًا للأحكام الشرعية فقال—بعد أن ذكر آية ﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَى وَيَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ﴾ (التحل: 90)—: «وهذه الآية ذكرها العز بن عبد السلام أنها اشتملت على جميع الأحكام الشرعية، وبيّن ذلك في سائر الأبواب الفقهية، وضمّن ذلك كتابًا سماه الشجرة» (الحلبي 1427، 6/2، وعنه نقل ابن عاشور 1984، 260/14). ومن المعاصرين من جعل الكتاب «في الأخلاق» (ابن حميد وابن ملوح 1998، 74/1)، أو في الفضائل (ابن عبد السلام 2016، 58/1). ومنهم من أدرجه—مع غيره من الكتب—تحت عنوان: «الزهد والتصوف والتربية والأخلاق وفضائل الأعمال» (الزحيلي 1992، 147) أو تحت عنوان: «فضائل الأعمال والعلوم المختلفة» (الندوي 1960، 86). أما صاحب الكتاب نفسه فقد جعل كتابه فيما سماه «آداب القرآن»، فعنّون الفصل الثاني منه بـ«آداب القرآن»، ثم أوضح فيه أن «أخلاق القرآن» تدور على التخلق بخصائص العبودية وبيعض صفات الربوبية. ثم عاد—في أواخر الكتاب—فقرر أن «مَنْ فَهَمَ ضوابط هذا الكتاب ووقفَ على حقيقة المصالح وانحصارها في جلب المصالح ودفع الضرر [العاجل أو الآجل أو العاجل والآجل]، وعلى حقيقة المفاسد وانحصارها في جلب الضرر ودفع

النفع [العاجل أو الآجل أو العاجل والآجل]، ... لم يَكْد يخفى عليه أدبٌ من آداب القرآن“ (ابن عبد السلام 2006، 53، 456). ولا شك أن الكتاب مشتملٌ على كلِّ ذلك، أي الآداب والفضائل والأحكام والأخلاق والزهد، وهو ما سمّيناه «الأخلاق» بوصفها حقلاً متعدد التخصصات.

لا يبدو العزّ صارماً في البناء النظري لكتبه عامة؛ نظراً لبُعده عن الصياغة المنطقية، ولطريقته في الكتابة التي تجمع بين الإفادة والموعظة؛ لأن مقصوده من العلم العمل والحثُّ عليه، بل إنه قد يكرر بعض المسائل عمداً—كما أوضح هو نفسه—مع زيادة فائدة؛ لتشبيتها في نفس القارئ، مُقتفياً—في ذلك—أثر الأسلوب القرآني. وقد بنى العزّ كتاب «الشجرة» على تمهيد وعشرين باباً، يمكنني تقسيمها إلى سبعة محاور رئيسة تشتمل على مقدمة نظرية وخاتمة، وهذا التقسيم ربما يجعلها أوضح وأكثر تماسكاً من الناحية المنهجية. (1) فالفصول التمهيدية التي تسبق الأبواب العشرين هي بمثابة المقدمة النظرية التي يتأسس عليها الكتاب، حيث نجد مناقشة القُرْبَات، وآداب القرآن، وفضائل الأعمال الظاهرة والباطنة، ورتب الوسائل والأسباب، وثمرات المعارف وفوائدها، وضرر الجهالات، وما يتفاضل فيه العباد، وكيفية التفاضل، وكيفية إثمار المعارف للأحوال. (2) ثم تأتي الأبواب الستة الأولى لتوضح مسألة مركزية في الكتاب وهي التخلق بالأسماء والصفات، فيناقش فيها التخلق بصفات الرحمن على حسب الإمكان، وكيفية التخلق بها، وما تشتمل عليه القلوب من الصفات والأخلاق، ثم المأمورات الباطنة، والمنهيات الباطنة. (3) ثم يأتي الحديث عن أبواب الإحسان في الأقوال والأعمال. والإحسان—عنده—هو جلب المصالح الخالصة أو الغالبة، ودفع المفاسد الخالصة أو الغالبة، وبدأها بمبحث نظري حول “الإحسان العام”، ثم فصل في تطبيقات الإحسان، كضروب الإحسان المذكور في كتب الفقه (الأفعال الظاهرة)، وإسقاط الحقوق (المعنوية والمادية)، والإحسان ببذل الأموال على اختلاف وجوه البذل وتنوعها واتساعها (كالصدقات والزكوات والضيافة والمواساة والهيبة، والإيثار، ووجوه الإطعام المختلفة، والهدية، والوصية وغيرها)، والإحسان بالأخلاق والأعمال (كالولاية والكفالة، والإحسان إلى صنوفٍ من الناس كالأرامل والمساكين والأسرى والكفار وغيرهم، وفي طلب الحقوق ودفعها وحفظ الأمانات والوفاء بالعقود وحفظ العهود، والصحبة والمفارقة، والحُكم، والعيادة ومعالجة المرضى، والدَّفْن والصبيان، وغير ذلك). ثم الإحسان بالأقوال وشَمَل التوصي بالخيرات وإنكار المنكرات وقول الحق والنصح

والوعظ والتذكير والجدل والشفاعة وتسكين الخائف والسلام والترحيب وغير ذلك، ثم الإحسان بالدعاء ووجوهه وتنوعه بحسب المدعو به وأحوال الداعي والمدعو له. (4) ثم تناول بعد ذلك "المناهي الظاهرة" القولية والفعلية والقاصرة والمتعدية (كأنواع الإساءات والظلم والكذب وغيرها)، ثم "المأمورات الظاهرة" القولية والفعلية والقاصرة والمتعدية (وتشمل التقوى والاستقامة والتمسك بالكتاب والسنة وحفظ التكليف والاقتداء بأهل الحق ومتابعة الرسول والمصارعة إلى الخيرات، وفعل الطاعات، والذكر، والشكر، وغير ذلك). (5) ثم عقد باباً لفوائد متفرقة يبدو أنه لم ير أنها تندرج تحت باب من الأبواب السابقة. (6) ثم عاد إلى باب إضافي في "الإحسان المتعلق بالجهال"، وهو الإحسان المتعلق بمعاملة من هم خارج دار الإسلام، وشمل عرض الإسلام على الكفار وتخويف أهل الحرب وبذل الأنفس والثبوت في القتال والمصابرة والصلح وغير ذلك. (7) ثم ختم الكتاب بثلاثة أبواب منهجية تجمع بين الفقه والأصول والتصوف، تناول في أولها سبيل "تعرف المصالح والمفاسد"، وخاصة عند التعارض فيما بينها، وتناول في ثانيها "حسن العمل بالظنون الشرعية" في العبادات والمعاملات والأنكحة والحدود والقصاص والجهاد والولايات، وتناول في ثالثها "الورع والاحتياط وبيان الشُّبه".

فنعنوان الكتاب هو الأوفى بالدلالة على مضمونه؛ إذ اشتمل على جزأين: المعارف والأحوال، وصالح الأقوال والأعمال. وقد رمز العزّ للمعارف بالشجرة التي تشتمل على معرفة الذات والصفات والأوامر والنواهي الظاهرة والباطنة، ويشارك في هذه المعارف علما الحقيقة والشرعية، ودلّ عليها الكتاب والسنة، وهذه المعارف تُنتج أحوالاً تحمل على التخلق بتلك الأسماء والصفات، ومُنبت هذه الشجرة القلب الذي يصلح بالمعرفة والإيمان، ويفسد بالجهل والكفران، وقد اقتضى ذلك بحث ما يشتمل عليه القلب من صفات وأخلاق، وما يتعلق به من الأحكام والمأمورات الباطنة (كالإيمان والإخلاص)، والمنهيات الباطنة (كالحسد والغُلّ والغفلة). أما الأقوال والأعمال فهي ترجمة لما في القلب، ولذلك أفاض في بيان صالح الأقوال والأعمال، ووجوه الإحسان فيها، والمأمورات والمنهيات الظاهرة، وكيفية الموازنة بين المصالح والمفاسد المتعارضة، وجريان العمل بالظن الغالب، والورع والاحتياط فيما اشتبه من الأعمال.

وربما يكون كتاب «الشجرة» من أواخر كتب العزّ؛ فهو يحاكي فيه أسلوب القرآن في الإيجاز، وبنيتُه الرئيسة نصية فهو كتاب حافلٌ بالآيات والأحاديث؛ فقد استشهد فيه بآيات من III سورة من القرآن، واستشهد فيه بنحو 640 حديث، وأقدم نسخة خطية

للكتاب نُسخَت سنة 647هـ (ابن عبد السلام 2006، 38)، كما أن المؤلف ضمَّه العديد من المعاني الموجودة في «قواعد الأحكام»، ولا سيما أن المؤلف يرى في التكرار فوائد. وقد تحدَّث العزَّ في «مقاصد الرعاية» عن مسائل جاءت في «شجرة المعارف» أكثر تفصيلاً وإحكاماً، أبرزها: معرفة الربِّ ومعرفة أوامره ونواهيه الظاهرة والباطنة، وأنها واجبة على المريد "في ابتداء المسير إلى الله"، وفصل في بعض المأمورات والمنهيات، وأن الكتاب والسنة مرجعُ المريد في التمييز بين الفعل الحسن والقيح، وذكر في «قواعد الأحكام» —أيضاً— أن الشرع ميزانٌ توزن فيه الرجال والأقوال والأعمال والأحوال (ابن عبد السلام 2000، 370/2). ومن المسائل التي جاءت في «مقاصد الرعاية» و«الشجرة» أيضاً: حقوق الله وحقوق العباد، وحقوق الله تجري على طريقة المتصوفة هنا مما يتصل بالباطن. وفصل في أعمال الباطن (كالإخلاص والرياء)، وأعمال البدن، وأوضح أن القلوب أولُّ محلِّ التكليف، وأن أعمال الأبدان موقوفة على أعمال القلوب، وأن الأعمال إنما يقع ابتداءؤها من القلوب ثم يظهر على الجوارح، وأن التقوى تتعلق بالقلوب والجوارح معاً، ومنها رتب الطاعات وما يجب تقديمه أو توسطه أو تأخيرها، ورتب مشقة التقوى والمحاسبة، ومنها: الأحوال، ومنها الخوف والرجاء وأنها وسيلتان إلى فعل المندوبات والواجبات وترك المحرمات والمكروهات. وهذا كله يؤكد الوحدة الموضوعية لكتب العزَّ، والترابط الواقع فيما بينها، وأنها جميعاً تعبّر عن مشروع واحد يجمع بين الظاهر والباطن، أو بين الحقيقة والشرعية، كما سبق.

2.1.5 كتاب «قواعد الأحكام في إصلاح الأنام»

اشتهر هذا الكتاب بعنوان «قواعد الأحكام في مصالح الأنام»، ولكن ثبت في أكثر النسخ الخطية أن اسم الكتاب هو «قواعد الأحكام في إصلاح الأنام». أما العنوان السابق فلا يتفق مع أي نسخة من النسخ السبعة التي بحوزة محققه (ابن عبد السلام 2000، 35/1م). وقد أوضح العزَّ —على غير عادته— غرضه من وضع هذا الكتاب فقال: "الغرض بوضع هذا الكتاب (1) بيانُ مصالح الطاعات والمعاملات وسائر التصرفات ليسعى العباد في كسبها، (2) وبيانُ مقاصد المخالفات ليسعى العباد في درئها، (3) وبيانُ مصالح المباحات ليكون العباد على خيرة منها، (4) وبيانُ ما يُقدَّم من بعض المصالح على بعض، وما يُؤخَّر من بعض المفسدات عن بعض، مما يدخل تحت اكتساب العباد دون ما لا قدرة لهم عليه ولا سبيل لهم إليه" (ابن عبد السلام 2000، 14/1). وكرَّر فيه أن الشريعة كلها مصالح: إما تدرأ مفسدات أو تجلب مصالح، وبهذا رجع

جميع الفقه إلى اعتبار المصالح ودرء المفاسد، بل قد يرجع الكلّ إلى اعتبار المصالح؛ فإن درء المفاسد من جملة اعتبار المصالح (السبكي 1991، 12/1؛ السيوطي 1990، 8). وأشار العزّ أيضاً—في أثناء الكتاب—إلى أن كتابه في “مقاصد الشرع على الإجمال”، فقال: “فهذا ما حضر من مقاصد الشرع على الإجمال. وأما تفصيل مقاصده في كل باب فسأذكره—إن شاء الله تعالى—في كتاب آخر لأبيّن فيه أقرب العلماء إلى مراعاة مقاصد الشرع” (ابن عبد السلام 2000، 370/2). وقد تعاقب العلماء على الثناء على هذا الكتاب، وجعلوه من كتب المذهب الشافعي في القواعد الفقهية أو الأشباه والنظائر أو تخريج الفروع على الأصول وهي ألوان من التصنيف الفقهي بالمعنى الواسع، ولذلك دأبوا على ذكر هذا الكتاب في مقدّمات كتبهم في ذلك وأكثروا النقل عنه، كما نجد—مثلاً—عند تاج الدين السبكي والحافظين صلاح الدين العلائي (ت. 1360/761) وجلال الدين السيوطي في كتبهم المصنّفة في القواعد الفقهية. وقال العلائي: إن العزّ اخترع هذا الكتاب الذي “لا نظير له في بابهِ” (العلائي 1994، 208/1؛ السبكي 1991، 6/1؛ السيوطي 1990، 8). وقد اعتنى بالكتاب القاضي عز الدين بن جماعة (ت. 1366/767) فكتب ثلاثة شروح ونُكت على «قواعد الأحكام»، وثلاثة شروح ونُكت على مختصره «القواعد الصغرى» (حاجي خليفة 1941، 1359/2). وكتب سراج الدين البلقيني (ت. 1403/805) «الفوائد الجسام على قواعد ابن عبد السلام» (البلقيني 2013)، وكتاب «قواعد الأحكام» نسخ خطية كثيرة، مما يدل على اعتناء أهل العلم به، وقد أكثر العلماء من النقل عنه (انظر ابن عبد السلام 2016، 66/1–68؛ ابن عبد السلام 2000، 50/1–52). ولا شك أن كتاب العزّ كتابٌ في “قواعد الفقه” إلا أنه وسّع حدودها خارج نطاق الفقه، فضمّ إليها مباحث عديدة تتصل بعلم الباطن، فأظهر—بذلك—حرصه على الجمع بين الحقيقة والشرعية كما سيوضح من بنية الكتاب.

بنى العزّ كتابه على فصول تمهيدية وعشرين قاعدةً، وقَدّم فيه نمطاً فريداً في علم القواعد الفقهية والمقاصد الشرعية جمع فيه بين النظرين الفقهي والصوفي معاً. عالج في الفصول التمهيدية—كعادته—مباحث نظرية تؤسس للكتاب، تناول فيها أن جلب مصالح الدارين ودرء مفاسدهما مبنيٌّ على الظنون، وأن ما استثنى من ذلك فلوْجود معارضٍ له أو ما هو أرجح منه، وبيان حقيقة المصالح والمفاسد (الذات وأسبابها والأفراح وأسبابها، والآلام وأسبابها والغموم وأسبابها) وما تُعرف به (العقل والشرع)، وأقسام أكساب العباد التي هي أسباب للمصالح أو للمفاسد، وما رُتب على الطاعات والمخالفات. وأفرد فصلاً

لحديث عن الصغائر والكبائر وما تتميز به وبعض تفصيلاتها، وتقسيمات المصالح والمفاسد إلى دنيوية وأخروية، وحقيقية ومجازية، وتناول—في أثناء ذلك—الخواطر وما يطرأ على القلوب، كما تناول الحث على جلب المصالح ودرء المفاسد، وما عُرفت حكمته من المشروعات وما لم تُعرف حكمته، وتفاوتت رتب الأعمال بتفاوت رتب المصالح والمفاسد، وتقسيم المصالح والمفاسد بحسب ظهورها وخفائها ومن يعرفها: الأذكياء والأغبياء والأولياء، ورتب المصالح والمفاسد والمباحات وتفاوتها وتساويها، وتساوي العقوبات العاجلة مع تفاوت المفاسد، وتفاوت أجور الأعمال بحسب تفاوت المشقة، وباختلاف الأماكن والأزمان، وانقسام جلب المصالح ودرء المفاسد إلى فروض كفايات وأعيان، ووسائل ومقاصد، وما يخفى منها من غير تعبد.

ثم ذكر—بعد هذه المباحث التمهيدية النظرية—عشرين قاعدةً، بدأها بقاعدة الموازنة بين المصالح والمفاسد، ثم قاعدة تَعَدُّر العدالة في الولايات، وقاعدة الحقوق الخالصة والمركبة، وقد استوعب في هذه القاعدة منظومة الحقوق جامعاً بين طريقتي الظاهر والباطن، ثم أفرد قاعدة للجوابر والزواجر، لجلب ما فات من المصالح ولدرء المفاسد، وبيّن فيها متعلّقات حقوق الله عز وجل ومحالّها، وأن مبدأ التكليف ومصدرها القلوب، وأن أول واجب هو معرفة الله، وأن الطاعات مشروعة لإصلاح القلوب والأجساد ولنفع العباد. ثم خصّص قاعدة لبيان متعلّقات الأحكام وأن الأحكام لها تعلق بالقلوب والأبدان والجوارح والحواسّ والأموال والأماكن والأزمان. وفي أثناء ذلك ذكر 29 نوعاً من الحقوق المتعلقة بالقلوب (ابن عبد السلام 2000، 302/1-329)، أولها: معرفة الله وحقوقه وصفاته، وذكر فصلاً فرعية عديدة لهذه القاعدة، منها الاحتياط الذي قسّمه إلى مندوب وهو الورع، وواجب لكونه وسيلة لتحصيل ما تحقّق وجوبه أو درء ما تحقّق تحرّيمه، وما يقدح في الظنون من التهم، وبيان أدلة الأحكام. وقد استوعب في هذه القاعدة الكثير من فروع الفقه مع ربط الظاهر بالباطن والفقه بالأخلاق، ثم أفرد قاعدة لبيان حقائق التصرفات، وبدأها بتقرير قاعدة عامة، وهي أن إباحة التصرفات شرط ضروري لحياة الإنسان، وحياته شرط لعبادة الديان بالقلوب والحواسّ والأركان، وأنواع التصرفات المتعلقة بالحقوق الماليّة وغير الماليّة، ثم قاعدة في جملة أحكام، وقاعدة في ألفاظ التصرفات، وقاعدة في ما تُحمل عليه ألفاظ التصرفات، وقاعدة في بيان الوقت الذي تثبت فيه أحكام الأسباب من المعاملات، وقاعدة في بيان الشبهات المأمور باجتنابها، وقاعدة في ما يُقبل من التأويل وما لا يُقبل، وقاعدة في أن كل تصرف تقاعد

عن تحصيل مقصوده فهو باطل، وقاعدة في بيان اختلاف أحكام التصرفات لاختلاف مصالحها، وقاعدة في ما يوجب الضمان والقصاص، وقاعدة في من تجب طاعته ومن تجوز ومن لا تجوز، وقاعدة في الشبهات الدائرة للحدود، وقاعدة في المستثنيات من القواعد الشرعية.

ثم ختم كتابه بفصول هي بمثابة الخاتمة للكتاب، تناول فيها الأذكار، والسؤال، والبدع، والاقتصاد في المصالح والخير وقد انطوى هذا الفصل الأخير على مباحث صوفية محضة وعلى بيان للتلازم بين الحقيقة والشرعية، ثم أفرد فصلاً لمعرفة الفضائل وأنها تكون بالمعارف والأحوال وما يتبعها من الأعمال والأقوال، ثم فصلاً في تعرف ما بطن من معارف الأولياء وأحوالهم أوضح فيه أن للأحوال آثاراً تظهر على الجوارح والأبدان، ثم فصلاً لبيان أحوال الناس وأن ميزان معرفة الخسر والربح أن تعرض نفسك على الكتاب والسنة،¹⁰ وفصلاً في معرفة تفضيل بعض الموجودات الحادثات على بعض، وفصلاً في أسباب الفضائل، وفصلاً في الإحسان والإساءة، ثم ختم بفوائد متفرقة.

من الواضح أن بنية الكتاب غير مألوفة عند الفقهاء، وخاصة في كتب القواعد الفقهية، وهذا ما دفع إلى الثناء عليه والحكم بأنه لا نظير له، وإلا فإن القواعد الفقهية بالمعنى الضيق سبق إلى التأليف فيها فقهاء الحنفية قبله، ولكن قواعد العزّ متفردة بالفعل، سواءً لجهة أنها في المذهب الشافعي أم لجهة بنيتها وطريقة معالجته لها، فهو لا يبنّي كتابه على أبواب الفقه ولا على حروف المعجم كغيره ممن كتبوا في القواعد، كما أن اختياره للقواعد العشرين بعينها من دون استيعاب جميع قواعد الفقه في المذهب؛ وقع لأنها تحقق مقصوده من الكتاب الذي مهّد له بالفصول النظرية قبل الحديث عن القواعد العشرين. فمقصود العزّ هنا الجمع بين الحقيقة والشرعية، وبين الظاهر والباطن، وبين معرفة الله وأسمائه وصفاته والتخلق بها وبين معرفة أوامره ونواهيه، ولذلك

10 بدءاً من فصل "بيان أحوال الناس" إلى آخر فصول الكتاب طُبِعَ رسالة مفردة للعزّ بعنوان «بيان أحوال الناس يوم القيامة»، وقد ذُكرت هذه الرسالة ضمن مؤلفاته، وهناك نسخة خطية وحيدة لها، وقد رأى إباد الطباع محقق الرسالة أن هذه الفصول ألحقت بكتاب «قواعد الأحكام» وليست منه؛ إذ لم ترد في النسخة المقابلة على النص المقروء على المؤلف، كما لم ترد في النسخة المكتوبة سنة 669هـ القرية العهد بمؤلفها (ابن عبد السلام 1995، ب، 6). وربما يؤكد ذلك أن بعض هذه الفصول لم ترد في 4 نسخ خطية من أصل 7 نسخ اعتمدها محققا «قواعد الأحكام»، فظننا أنها سقطت منها (ابن عبد السلام 2000، 373/2 وما بعدها).

لم يَجْر في ترتيبه على طريقة الفقهاء؛ رغم أنه تَقَيّد فيه بقانون الفقه، وضمّ إليه قانون المتصوفة المؤيّد بالكتاب والسنة. ويبدو أن هذا سرى—أيضاً—إلى أبي إسحاق الشاطبي الذي بنى على العزّ وتأثر به، وهذا واضح في كتاب «الموافقات». ومما يلفت النظر في الكتاب أيضاً: توسيعه لمفهومي المصالح والمفاسد لتشمل قانوني الفقه والتصوف، والظاهر والباطن، والدنيا والآخرة، ومصالح الأفراد والمصالح العامة، وأن عدداً من مسائل الكتاب يرد مفصلاً في «شجرة المعارف والأحوال»، فهناك تقاطعات بين الكتابين كما في مباحث الإحسان، والعمل بالظنون، والكلام عن الأحوال، وغيرها. ويكثر العز هنا—أيضاً—من الاستشهاد بنصوص القرآن والحديث، ومعظم أحاديثه في الكتب الستة المشهورة، وهذا مسلكٌ مألوفٌ—أو صار مألوفاً—في كتب القواعد الفقهية كما نجد مثلاً مع جلال الدين السيوطي الذي حرص على بيان الأحاديث التي تؤسّس للقواعد الفقهية في كتابه (السيوطي 1990). ومما يلاحظ—أيضاً—التداخل بين علوم الكلام والفقه والأصول والتصوف في مباحث الكتاب، فقد خصّص العزّ في «قواعد الأحكام» فصلاً للحديث عن «حقوق الله تعالى المتعلقة بالقلوب»، وذكر فيه 29 نوعاً من الحقوق (ابن عبد السلام 2000، 302/1-329)، وكان قد ذكر هذه الحقوق ضمن رسالة كلامية مستقلة سماها «الأنواع في علم التوحيد»، وذكر فيها 16 نوعاً فقط، ومن الواضح أنه زاد—في «قواعد الأحكام»—زيادات يسيرة في متن الأنواع الستة عشر التي شرحها ابن المنفلوطي المشار إليه سابقاً، وزاد عليها أنواعاً جديدة أوصلها بها إلى 29 نوعاً، وهذا يؤكد—مجدداً—فكرة التداخل بين العلوم عند العزّ وأن الأخلاق—بالصيغة التي يقدمها العز—هي حقل متعدد التخصصات، الفقه والأصول والكلام والتصوف مكونات لا غنى عنها فيه.

3.1.5 «الإمام في بيان أدلة الأحكام»

يفصح عنوان كتاب «الإمام في بيان أدلة الأحكام» أو «الإمام في أدلة الأحكام» عن محتواه، وقد جاء عنوان الكتاب في إحدى نسخه الخطية هكذا: «بيان الأحكام المتعلقة بالملائكة والمرسلين وسائر المسلمين» (ابن عبد السلام 1987، 56)، وهو عنوانٌ مشكّل؛ لأن الكتاب في أدلة الأحكام، وتقويمه نجده في العبارة التي افتتح بها العزّ كتابه حين قال: «هذا بيان لأدلة الأحكام المتعلقة بالملائكة والمرسلين وسائر العالمين» (ابن عبد السلام 1987، 75). فالكتاب يتناول وجوه دلالة ألفاظ القرآن على

الأحكام،¹¹ سواءً بالصيغة (كالأمر والنهي والخبر المفيد للحكم) أم باللزم (وما رُتّب على العمل من جزاءٍ في العاجل والآجل)، وكيفية استخراج تلك الأحكام.

بدأ العزّ—كعادته—بمقدمة نظرية تَحَدّث فيها عن ضروب الأحكام، وأنها منقسمة إلى طلبٍ للفعل أو التّرك، وما لا طَلَب فيه (كالإباحة ونَصَب الأسباب والموانع والصحة والفساد وغيرها)، ثم أوضح أن الأحكام الطلبية (من فعل أو ترك) إنما تتعلق بالأفعال الكسبية. فإن تناولت الأفعال الجبليّة تَعَلّقت بآثارها. وتحدّث—أيضاً—عن أن الحكم الوضعي قد يتعلق بسبب كسبي (كجَعْل الزنا سبباً لإيقاع الحد) أو غير كسبي (كجَعْل زوال الشمس سبباً لإيجاب صلاة الظهر، وكجعل رؤية الهلال سبباً لإيجاب الصوم). ثم أوضح أنه يُستدل على الأحكام تارة بالصيغة وتارة بالإخبار، وتارة بما رُتّب عليها في العاجل والآجل من خير أو شرٍّ أو ضُرٍّ. وأوضح تنوّع أساليب الشارع في الدلالة على الأحكام؛ ترغيباً وترهيباً وتقريباً إلى أفهامهم (كالمحبة والبغض والرضا والسخط والتقريب والإبعاد والشقاوة والإسعاد). وكلُّ ذلك راجعٌ إلى المنافع والمضار؛ فالله تعالى رتّب خير الدارين على معرفته وطاعته، وشرّ الدارين على معصيته ومخالفته. ثم يبيّن أدلة الأحكام، وهي إما لفظي (بالصيغة أو بالخبر)، أو معنوي (دلالة اللزوم بواسطة أو بغير واسطة)، ثم جاء بقول جامع مُجمل فقال: ”كلُّ فعل طلبه الشارع، أو أخبر عن طلبه، أو مدّحه، أو مدّح فاعله لأجله، أو نصّبه سبباً لخيرٍ عاجلٍ أو آجلٍ: فهو مأمور به. وكلُّ فعلٍ طلب الشارع تركه، أو أخبر أنه طلب تركه، أو ذمّ فاعله لأجله، أو نصّبه سبباً لشرٍّ عاجلٍ أو آجلٍ: فهو منهيّ عنه. وكلُّ فعلٍ خيّر الشارع فيه مع استواء طرفيّه، أو أخبر عن تلك التّسوية فهو مُباح“ (ابن عبد السلام 1987، 81)، ثم بنى كتابه كله على تفصيل هذا الإجمال فقسّمه إلى عشرة فصول.

تناولت فصول الكتاب العشرة: الدلالة اللفظية وأنواع الأفعال الكسبية المأمور بها (وذكر هنا 23 مثلاً، منها: تعظيم الفعل، ومدّح الفعل، ومدّح الفاعل، والفرح بالفعل، وغيرها)، وتناولت أيضاً أنواع الأفعال الكسبية المنهي عنها (وذكر هنا 47 مثلاً، منها: العتب على الفاعل، وذمّ الفعل، وذم الفاعل، ومقّت الفعل، ونفّي الرضا بالفعل وغيرها)، كما تناول ما يصلح للدلالة على الأمرين (وذكر هنا 14 نوعاً، منها: كتابة العمل، ووضع

11 وإن ذكر—أيضاً—عشرات الأحاديث في أثناء الكتاب.

الموازين، والطاعة والتقوى، وذكر إطلاق الرب على الفعل، وشقاوة الآخرة وسعادتها، وغيرها)، وعقد فصلاً لنفي التسوية في الفعل كنفي التساوي في رتبة الثواب ونفي التساوي بين الجزاءين، وفصلاً آخر لما يتضمنه ضرب الأمثال من الأحكام، وآخر لفوائد متفرقة ذكر منها 32 فائدة، منها: دلالة السياق، ودلالات إخبار الشارع عما يُعلم بالعادة أو بالفعل أو بالحس (كالرد على دعوى، والوعظ، والعتب، والتوبيخ، والتّمنن، والمدح، والذم، وغيرها)، ودلالة كلمة التوحيد على الأحكام، وأنه قد تتعلق خصائص الأمر والنهي بأوصاف جِلية ولكن الأحكام تتعلق بالآثار الداخلة تحت الكسب، والأفعال الكسبية وما يترتب عليها من أحكام من مدح أو ذم أو غير ذلك، وأن الفعل إن كان حاصلاً فالأمر به أمرٌ باستدامته، والمجاز، وأن بيان ما في الفعل من مصلحة دلالة على الإذن فيه، وأن بيان ما فيه من مفسدة دلالة على النهي عنه، وأنواع المحذوفات. ثم عقد العزّ فصلاً لما يدلّ على الأحكام من صفات الله تعالى، ثم ختم الكتاب بفصلين قائلاً: "سأختم ذلك بفصلين" (ابن عبد السلام 1987، 234)، وهما: ضروب المجاز، وكيفية استخراج الأحكام من أدلتها المذكورة (بالصيغة أو باللزم).

يقدم الكتاب—كسابقه—مقاربةً متعددة التخصصات، يتداخل فيها الفقه والأصول والكلام والتصوف، ويضاف إليها—هنا—اللغة كما هو الحال—أيضاً—في كتابه الآخر «مجاز القرآن»، ولذلك عسر إدراج هذه الكتب تحت علم واحد من العلوم، وإن كانت بنية «القواعد» و«الإمام» ومادتهما الرئيسة مادةً فقهية وأصولية، ولكنهما يوسّعان حدود الفقه والأصول ليتداخلوا مع العلوم الأخرى ليبدو الكتابان خادمين لرؤية أخلاقية تتناول شخصية الفاعل وأفعاله أو ما نسميه أخلاق الفضيلة وأخلاق الأفعال. فالمفترض بكتاب «الإمام» أنه لبيان «أدلة الأحكام» الذي هو موضوع فقهي وأصولي مألوف، ولكن العزّ وسّع هنا أمرين: "الأدلة" المثيرة للأحكام، ومفهوم "الأحكام" نفسها، لنجد أننا أمام تمازج بين الفقهي والخلقي لخدمة مقصد العرفان المثمر للأحوال والسائق إلى سُكنى الجنان ورضا الديان والأنس بقربه.

ففيما يخص الأمر الأول—وهو أدلة الأحكام—لم تعد الأحكام مستفادة فقط من صيغ الأمر والنهي، بل شملت—كذلك—أسماء الله تعالى وصفاته التي تظهر بأساليب متنوعة، كحب الله تعالى أو فرحه أو رضاه بالفعل أو عن الفاعل، وكعته أو ذمه أو مقته أو نفي محبته أو نفي رضاه بالفعل أو عن الفاعل، أو كون الفعل سبباً لعداوة الله أو نسيانه أو تولي الشيطان، أو نفي الحزن أو الخوف عن الفاعل، أو نصب الفعل سبباً لولاية الله تعالى أو شكره أو ذكره، إلى غير ذلك من الصور الكثيرة التي يُفصل فيها العزّ مع تكثير

الأمثلة لها، بما لا تجده في كتاب فقهي ولا صوفي. وقد شملت الأدلة التي يُقتنص منها الأحكام—أيضاً—ما تعلق منها بالملائكة والرسل وأفاد حكماً يرتقي به سلوك المكلف وحاله. فمن الأدلة المتعلقة بالملائكة—وهي قليلة في الكتاب—قوله تعالى: ﴿الَّذِينَ تَتَوَفَّاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ طَيِّبِينَ﴾ (النحل: 32)؛ فقد وُصف الفاعل بالطيّب مما يدل على أن الفعل مأمور به. ومن الأدلة المتعلقة بالرسل: استعاذة الأنبياء من الفعل أو بُغضهم وكرهاتهم له، أو تبرؤهم من الفاعل وشكواهم منه، أو نهْيهم عن الأسى والحزن عليه أو نهْيهم عن الدعاء له، إلى غير ذلك. فكلُّ هذه صورٌ دالة على أن الفعل منهْيٌ عنه (ابن عبد السلام 1987، 110، 111، 121، 123). وهذا معنى قول العزّ في مفتتح كتابه—كما سبق—”بيان أدلة الأحكام المتعلقة بالملائكة والمرسلين وسائر العالمين“، وهو أمرٌ لم يتوقف عنده محقق الكتاب وقدم دراسة فقيرة المحتوى ضعيفة التحليل (ابن عبد السلام 1987، 55–61). فلا شك أن كتاب «الإمام» مُخصّص لبيان أحكام المكلفين، والملائكة لا تكليف عليهم، ومن ثمّ كان مراده «أدلة الأحكام» المتعلقة بالملائكة والمرسلين لا الأحكام نفسها.

وفيما يخص الأمر الثاني—وهو الأحكام—فقد اتسع نطاقها في هذا الكتاب ليمتدّ خارج حدود الفقه بمعنى الظاهر المنضبط، ومن ثمّ لم يرتضِ العزّ حصرَ ”آيات الأحكام“ في عدد معيّن شاع أنه خمسمئة آية أو أقل أو أكثر على اختلاف الأقوال في ذلك (الخطيب 2014)، ورأى—في المقابل—أن ”معظم آي القرآن لا يخلو عن أحكامٍ مشتملة على آدابٍ حسنة وأخلاقٍ جميلة، جعلها الله نصائحٍ لخلقهِ مُقَرَّبَاتٍ إليه، مُزَلِّفَاتٍ لديه؛ رحمةً لعباده. فطوبى لمن تأدّب بآداب القرآن وتخلّق بأخلاقه الجامعة لخيري الدنيا والآخرة. وقد كان خلق رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم القرآن، أي آداب القرآن“ (ابن عبد السلام 1987، 284)، فعاد بنا مجدّداً إلى ”آداب القرآن“ التي شرحها وفصّلها في كتاب «شجرة المعارف». وقد تابعه في هذا الطوفي فقال: إن الصحيح أن مقدار أدلة الأحكام غير مُنحصر؛ ”فإن أحكام الشرع كما تُستنبط من الأوامر والنواهي، كذلك تُستنبط من الأقاصيص والمواعظ ونحوها، فقلّ أن يُوجد في القرآن آيةٌ إلا ويُستنبط منها شيءٌ من الأحكام. وإذا أردت تحقيق هذا، فانظر إلى كتاب «أدلة الأحكام» للشيخ عز الدين بن عبد السلام“ (الطوفي 1987، 3/577–578).

وبما أن الكتاب في ”بيان أدلة الأحكام“ فإن العزّ يُكثر فيه جدّاً من النصوص والأمثلة الدالة على مباحثه، وكأنه جاء متممًا لكتاب «قواعد الأحكام» الذي تناول فيه الكثير من الفروع الفقهية، وربطها بأصولها. وكعادة العزّ، فإنه لا يحيل إلى كتبه الأخرى، ولكنه قد

يكرّر بعض المباحث التي عالجها في كتبه الأخرى بصورة لا تخلو من زيادة أو تعديل؛ لغايات ارتضاها لنفسه سبقت الإشارة إليها، ولذلك نجد في كتاب «الإمام» بعض المباحث التي عالجها في كتاب «مجاز القرآن»، فقد ضمّن الفصل السابع الذي عقده لبيان «فوائد متفرقة» فائدتين: الأولى في «بيان ما في القرآن من مجاز»، والثانية في بيان «أنواع المحذوفات»، وكلاهما تعرّض له في كتاب «مجاز القرآن»، ولكن موضوع كتابي «الإمام» و«مجاز القرآن» مختلف جدًّا، وقد أخطأ محقق كتاب «الإمام» حين جزم بأن كتاب «الإمام» «خلاصة موجزة في مادته العلمية» لكتاب «مجاز القرآن» (ابن عبد السلام 1987، 57، 59)، وربما يكون كتاب «مجاز القرآن» أسبق من كتاب «الإمام»؛ فقد وسّع العزّ خاتمة كتاب «مجاز القرآن» حول «مقاصد الكتاب العزيز»، وفصلها، وبنى عليها كتاب «الإمام»، وقد رأينا سابقًا كيف فعل الأمر نفسه بخصوص رسالة «الأنواع في علم التوحيد» التي طوّرها وضمّها لكتاب «قواعد الأحكام»، والله أعلم.

2.5 أبعاد النظرية الأخلاقية عند العزّ

لا شك أن أعمال العزّ الثلاثة السابقة تنطوي على سمة فقهية بارزة، وقد حجبت— في كثير من الأحيان—قراءه عن التقاط فكره الأخلاقي، ولاسيما أن تلك الأعمال قد اشتملت على تفرعات كثيرة؛ فمعجمه الاصطلاحي واسع ويحتاج إلى دراسة مستقلة ليس هنا مكانها، ويشمل هذا المعجم: المصالح والمفاسد (ومترادفاتهما)، والمعارف (أو العرفان)، والأحوال، والأعمال، والقصود، والعزوم، ومقاصد الشرع، والمقاصد والوسائل، والأحكام، وأدلة الأحكام، واللذات والآلام، والسعادات، والطاعات والمعاصي والمباحات، والضروري والحاجي والتكميلي، والفضائل، والكمالات، والأرواح والأجساد والقلوب، والظاهر والباطن، وغير ذلك. ويمكن أن نصوغ نظريته الأخلاقية بالاستناد إلى ذلك المعجم بناء على أربعة محاور رئيسة هي: (1) الغايات التي يسعى إليها المكلف، أو التي يجب أن يسعى إليها (الحياة التي يجب أن تُحتذى أو تُعاش)، (2) والأحكام والتقويمات التي هي موازين أعماله وتصرفاته المختلفة (مقاييس الخير والشر، أو المصالح والمفاسد)، (3) والفضائل التي بها يُفضّل غيره أو يصير فاضلاً، وترجع—في جملتها—إلى صفات الإنسان وأعماله لا إلى ذاته؛ لأن الجواهر والأجسام كلّها متساوية من جهة ذواتها (ماهية الإنسان ومكانته بالنسبة إلى باقي الموجودات)، (4) وأكساب الإنسان وتصرفاته التي بها يرتقي أو ينحطّ، والتي تُفصح عن كونه مكلفًا.

فمشروع العزّ يقوم على صياغة الإنسان الأخلاقي: صفاتٍ وأفعالاً. وفيما يأتي سأوضح كل محور من هذه المحاور الأربعة بتكثيف شديد لا يُغني عن أفرادها بدراسة مستقلة. فيما يخصّ الغاية التي يجب أن يسعى إليها المكلف—وهي المحور الأول—فهي سعادة الدارين، وهي الفكرة المركزية عند عامة علماء الإسلام. ولكن السعادات—عند العزّ—مراتبٌ وتتنوع أسبابها، فأعلى مراتبها سعادة الدارين، وهناك مَنْ يسعد في الدنيا ويشقى في الآخرة، ومن يشقى في الدنيا ويسعد في الآخرة. وقد تنوعت تعبيراته عن أسباب السعادة، ولكنها ترجع—في الجملة—إلى مفهومه الموسّع عن المصالح، فهي بمعنى الأفراح واللذات وأسبابهما، ومعظمُ مقاصد الخلق في طلب اللذات والأفراح، ولكن لا نسبة بين لذات الدنيا ولذات الآخرة (كدخول الجنان ورضا الرحمن). ومن تعبيراته المتنوعة قوله: ”السعادة كلها في المعارف والأحوال والتمسك بكتاب الله وسنة رسوله في كل حال“، وقوله: ”السعادة في الطاعات“، وقوله: ”ولقد أفلح مَنْ قام بما أجمعوا على وجوبه، واجتنب ما أجمعوا على تحريمه، واستباح ما أجمعوا على إباحته، وفعل ما أجمعوا على استحبابه، واجتنب ما أجمعوا على كراهته“ (ابن عبد السلام 2000، 370/2-371)، وقوله: ”من السعادة أن يختار المرء لنفسه المواظبة على أفضل الأعمال“، وقوله: ”لا سعادة أصلح من العرفان والإيمان وطاعة الرحمن“ (ابن عبد السلام 2000، 1/1). فالمعارف والأحوال مصالحٌ؛ لأنها تنطوي على لذات دنيوية وأخرية، بل إن المعارف وبعض الأحوال من أفضل لذات الدنيا. فالصلاة—وهي طاعةٌ وعبادةٌ أخرى—لها لذتان دنيوية وأخرية، فليس من جعلت قرّة عينه في الصلاة كمن جعلت الصلاة شاقّة عليه. أما بالنسبة لكون اتباع الكتاب والسنة من أسباب السعادة، فبيّانه أن معظم مقاصد الكتاب الحثُّ على جلب المصالح ودرء المفساد، فعادت السعادة إلى تحصيل المصالح ودرء المفساد العاجلة والآجلة. وقد يُشكل التعبير باللذات عن السعادة هنا، ولكن من المهمّ تقرير أن اصطلاح العزّ في اللذات المفسّرة للمصالح قاصرٌ على المصالح الشرعية الدنيوية والأخرية، فمن الأدب—عنده—ألا يُعبّر عن لذات المعاصي بشيء من ألفاظ المصالح (ابن عبد السلام 1995ب، 39؛ 2000، 392/2؛ 1996، 38). وبعد تقرير السعادات، لا بد من توضيح أن الناس تتفاوت في طلبها، وهنا يظهر—أيضاً—منزع العزّ الصوفي، فهو يتحدث—في مواطن متفرقة—عن ثلاثة أصناف: من أثروا اللذات العاجلة، والأولياء والأصفياء الذين قدّموا مصالح الآخرة على مصالح الدنيا،

وأصفىاء الأصفياء الذين عرفوا أن لذات المعارف والأحوال أشرفُ اللذات فقدّموها على لذات الدارين (ابن عبد السلام 2000، 12/1). وبالنسبة للعرفان، فهو—كما سبق—من أسباب السعادة، وهو مصالح، ولكنه ينقسم إلى ما يجب تحصيله من علوم الأصول والفروع، وما اختلف في وجوب تحصيله من الأصول والفروع، وما لا يجب تحصيله ولا حدّ له (ابن عبد السلام 2000، 90/1)، ولهذا تنوعت المعارف أو أنواع العرفان، ولكنّ أعلاها معرفة الله بأسمائه وصفاته التي تتعلق بها جملة من الأحكام، ومنها معرفة أحكامه المستفادة من خطابه أيضًا، وبهذا انطوى العرفان على علمي الحقيقة والشرعية، وكان من أسباب السعادات، والعرفان أعلى درجة من الاعتقاد؛ لأنه قد يحصل الاعتقاد (كما يحصل عند العامة) ولا يبلغ صاحبه درجة العرفان.

أما فيما يخص الأحكام والتقويمات (أو مقاييس الخير والشر)—وهو المحور الثاني—فقد ناقش العزّ في كتبه المختلفة الاصطلاحات المتعلقة بها وتقسيماتها ومراتبها ومصادرها وتطبيقاتها، حتى استأثرت باهتمام عدد من الباحثين، وخاصة في حقل القواعد الفقهية والمقاصد الشرعية، ولكن أطروحة المصالح والمفاسد—وإن كانت محورَ نظريته الأخلاقية—لا تكفي وحدها للوقوف على نظريته. فمفهوم المصالح عند العزّ أوسع منه عند الفقهاء الذين يتحدثون عن علل الأحكام بمعنى الأوصاف الظاهرة المنضبطة التي تُبنى عليها الأحكام. فالمصالح والمفاسد يُعبّر عنها—عند العزّ—بالمحجوب والمكروه، والحسنات والسيئات، والعرف والتكر، والخير والشر، والنفع والضّر، والحسن والقبح (ابن عبد السلام 1996، 38). وهذا التوسع في التعبير عن المعنى ضَبَطَه المفهوم الذي—وإن تنوعت تعبيراته—نجدّه منحصرًا في أربعة أمور هي اللذات وأسبابها والأفراح وأسبابها فيما يخص المصالح، وأربعة أخرى هي الآلام وأسبابها والغموم وأسبابها فيما يخص المفاسد. ولكنّ اللذة والألم عَرَضَان متلازمان في الدنيا بحكم العادة، وتَعْرِى عنهما الآخرة. وبهذا جمع العزّ بين العلل بالمعنى الفقهي، والجُحْم التي تدل على مجمل المعاني الملحوظة من قبل الشارع في جميع أحوال التشريع، في العاجل أو في الآجل أو فيهما معًا. هكذا وقع التداخل بين الأحكام والقِيَم وتلاقت اصطلاحات الفقهاء والمتكلمين والفلاسفة والمتصوفة. فالخيور والشرور والمحجوبات والمكروهات هي المفاسد والمصالح، والأحكام الخمسة لا تخرج عنها، وتتعلق الأحكام بمختلف الأعمال الواقعة من الجوارح والحواسّ والقلوب، والمنافع الدنيوية والأخروية (الأحكام الظاهرة والباطنة)، ومن ثمّ كان التخلق يتحقق بتحصيل المصالح ودرء المفاسد.

فالتطاعات كلها مشروعة لإصلاح القلوب والأجساد ولنفع العباد في الآجل والعاجل؛ لأن القلب مبدأ التكليف كلّها ومحلّها أو مصدرها، والطريق إلى إصلاح القلوب معرفة أحكام الظواهر والبواطن. وبناءً على هذا المفهوم الموسّع للمصالح اتسعت وجوه الدلالة على الأحكام ووجوه التعبير عنها واقتناصها كما تقدّم بيانه. وتتنوع مصادر التقويمات الأخلاقية، فمعظم مصالح الدنيا ومفاسدها تُعرف بالعقل والتجارب والعادات، وكذلك معظم الشرائع. أما مصالح الآخرة ومفاسدها فلا تُعرف إلا بالنقل (ابن عبد السلام 1996، 41؛ 2000، 9/1-11). بل إنه يرى أن "تقديم الأصلح فالأصلح، ودرء الأفسد فالأفسد مركز في طباع العباد؛ نظراً لهم من رب الأرباب"، ومخالفة ذلك الطبع ترجع إما إلى الجهل بفضل الأصلح وإما إلى الشقاوة بتجاهل التفاوت بين الرتبتين (ابن عبد السلام 2000، 9/1).

أما الفضائل—وهي المحور الثالث—فتنحصر في أوصاف الكمال، والكمال إما بالمعارف والطاعات والأحوال، وإما بالأفراح واللذات. فالإنسان يُفضل بصفاته وأعراضه وانتسابه إلى الأوصاف الشريفة والفضائل النفيسة. والفضائل التي يُفضل بها الإنسان تتنوع فتشمل حُسن الصور، وقوّة الأجسام، والصفات الداعية إلى الخيور والوازعة عن الشرور كالغيرة والنخوة والشجاعة والحلم والأناة والسخاء، وتشمل أيضاً العقول، والحواس، والعلوم المكتسبة، والأحوال الناشئة عن تلك العلوم أو المعارف كالخوف والرجاء والمحبة والحياء والتوكل والتعظيم والإجلال، وتشمل كذلك القيام بطاعة الله في كل ما أمر به أو نهى عنه، وما ربّه الله على تلك المعارف والأحوال والطاعات من لذات الآخرة وأفراحها كلذة الأمن من عذاب الله والأنس بقربه وجواره وسماع سلامه وكلامه وتبشيره بالرضا الدائم والنظر إلى وجهه الكريم. فهذه تسع فضائل بعضها أفضل من بعض، وتشمل الصورة الظاهرة (حسن الصورة وقوّة الجسم وكمال الحواس) والصورة الباطنة (الصفات الخلقية)، وأكساب الإنسان (المعارف والأحوال والتصرفات)، وما يناله من لذات وأفراح أخروية. فمن اتصف بأفضل هذه الفضائل كان أفضل البرية، بل إن الإنسان والملّك يتفاضلان بالمعارف والطاعات والأحوال، أي أن الإنسان يمكن أن يُفضّل للملّك بحسب تمكنه من المعارف والأحوال والطاعات، بل إنه فضّل بطاعات ليست للملّك كالصبر على المصائب والجهد والرضا بمرّ القضاء وحُلوه وغير ذلك (ابن عبد السلام 2000، 373/2-377؛ 1995، 14-17؛ 1996، 149-151). وقد اعتنى العزّ بتفصيل فضيلة العلم أو المعارف أكثر من غيرها من الفضائل؛ لأهميتها، وجعلها

على مراتب أعلاها—كما سبق—معرفة الله تعالى وصفاته، ثم معرفة إرسال الرسل وإنزال الكتب، ثم معرفة ما شرعه من الأحكام الخمسة وأسبابها وشرائطها وموانعها. وإذا ضمنا إلى تلك المعارف الأحوال المتولدة عنها وجدنا أن العرفان قد جمع بين علوم الكلام والفقه وأصول الفقه والتصوف.

أما المحور الرابع من نظرية العزّ الأخلاقية، فهو أكساب الإنسان وتَصَرُّفاته، وقد تناول العزّ تفاريع كثيرة تتصل بهذا، بل إن الفقه كله إنما يتعلق بأفعال المكلفين وأكسابهم، ويمكن أن نردّ التفاريع الكثيرة إلى الكسب الذي تتأسس عليه المسؤولية والجزاء، وتكشف تنويعات الكسب عن شمول الإصلاح الأخلاقي—عند العز—لكلية الإنسان بأجزائه المختلفة: القلب والحسّ والقول والفعل. ومع ذلك فإن القلب مركزيّ هنا؛ لأن مبدأ التكاليف كلها العزوم والقصود التي تقع في القلب، بل إن آلية صدور الفعل المكتسب عن الإنسان تأخذ مساراً مركباً عند العز يبدأ بالمعارف المكتسبة التي تولّد أحوالاً، ثم تولّد هذه المعارف والأحوال قُصوداً، ثم ينشأ عن تلك القصود أعمالاً وأقوالاً. ومن ثم قسّم—في موضع آخر—أكساب الإنسان إلى أكسابٍ للقلوب والحواسّ والأقوال والأعمال، مع الأخذ بالاعتبار أن الأحوال—مثل المعارف—مكتسبةٌ عند العزّ، ولذلك تعلّقت الأحكام بها. أما المعارف غير الكسبية فبقيت—في نفسها—فضيلة ولكن الثواب لم يتعلق بها، كالمعارف النبوية والإلهامية مثلاً. وفيما يأتي سأوضح الكسب وتقسيماته عند العز، وتفاوت الثواب والعقاب بناء على المصالح والمفاسد الناتجة عن الفعل لا على الفعل نفسه؛ نظراً لتسبب الفعل بها.

فالإنسان لا يُثاب ولا يُعاقب إلا على كسبه، واكتسابه يكون إما بمباشرة أو بتسبب قريب أو بعيد. وقد قادت هذه القاعدة العزّ إلى نفي أن يكون المصائب مأجوراً على مصيئته بمجرد وقوعها؛ لأن المصائب ليست من كسب المصائب (ابن عبد السلام 2000، 188/1-189). وكذلك لا ثواب ولا عقاب على الصفات الجبليّة؛ لانتفاء الكسب فيها أيضاً. فكلّ صفة جبليّة حسنة لا كسب للمرء فيها كالشجاعة والسخاء والجدود والحياء، لا ثواب فيها مع فضل تلك الصفة وشرفها، ولكن الثواب والعقاب يكونان على ثمرات الصفة المكتسبة، فمن التزم بما دعت إليه الشريعة في مثل هذه الصفات كان مثاباً جامعاً لصفتين حسنتين: جبليّة وكسبية. وكلّ صفة جبليّة قبيحة لا كسب للمرء فيها كالجبين والشحّ، لا وزر عليه فيها في ذاتها. فمن أجاب هذه الصفات القبيحة إلى مقتضياتها مما يخالف الشرع، كان معاقباً على قُبْح إجابته لا على قُبْح أوصافه. ومن

خالفها ووافق الشرع في قهرها والعمل بخلاف مقتضاها، كان مثاباً على حُسن مخالفتها (ابن عبد السلام 2000، 192/1-193). ويَطرد مبدأ الكسب—كذلك—في الثواب على العلوم، فلا يُثاب العالم على علومه الضرورية؛ لأنها ليست من كسبه، ولكن يُثاب على علومه النظرية؛ لتحصيلها بالتسبب إليها (ابن عبد السلام 2000، 195/1). وبناءً على مبدأ الكسب، لا ثواب ولا عقاب على الخواطر وحديث النفس؛ لغلبتهما على الناس، ولا على ميل الطبع إلى الحسنات والسيئات؛ إذ لا تكليف بما يشقّ اجتنباه مشقةً فادحةً ولا بما لا يُطاق فعله ولا تركه (ابن عبد السلام 2000، 194/1)، ومع ذلك فإنه لا ينبغي لعاقِل أن يخطر على قلبه ولا يجري على جوارحه إلا ما فيه مصلحة (ابن عبد السلام 2000، 349/2)، ويكون ذلك بالألّا يسترسل مع خواطره، وأن تطهير قلبه سيقوده—لا محالة—إلى طرد الخواطر القبيحة، مع تَمَكُّنه في المعارف وتحصيله للأحوال الناتجة عنها.

وتتنوع أكساب الإنسان إلى أربعة أنواع: أكساب القلوب، وأكساب الحواس الخمس، وأكساب الأقوال، وأكساب الأفعال. فالنوع الأول—وهو أكساب القلوب—منه ما يُؤمر به لذاته؛ لحُسْنه في نفسه وصلاحه (كمعرفة الديان). ومنه ما يُنهى عنه لذاته؛ لقُبْحه في نفسه (كالجهل بالله). ومنه ما يَخْتَلِف حُسْنه وقُبْحه باختلاف متعلّقه، فيُنهى عنه لما يَقرُن به من مفساد الكراهة أو التحريم، ويُؤمر به لما يَقرُن به من مصالح الندب أو الإيجاب، ويؤذَن فيه لمصالح الإباحة. فالصبر—مثلاً—تختلف أحكامه باختلاف المصبور عليه وعنه. والنوع الثاني—وهو أكساب الحواس الخمس—مثل الاستماع، تختلف أحكامه باختلاف مصالح المسموع ومفساده، وهو منقسم إلى الأحكام الخمسة، وكذلك اللمس والشمّ والذوق. والنوع الثالث—وهو أكساب الأقوال—منه ما يُؤمر به لذاته؛ لحُسْنه في نفسه وصلاحه كالأذكار والثناء على الله بأسمائه الحسنى. ومنه ما يُنهى عنه لذاته؛ لقُبْحه في نفسه كجحد اللسان لجميع ما يجب الإيمان به بالجنان. ومنه ما تَخْتَلِف أحكامه باختلاف مصالح المَقُول فيه ومفساده كالجهر مثلاً، فهو واجب في الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر، ومندوبٌ في قراءة الصلوات والوعظ، ومحرمٌ في الجهر بقبيح الأقوال والأعمال. والنوع الرابع—وهو أكساب الأفعال—يتنوع إلى ما يُؤمر به لذاته؛ لحُسْن صورته كالإصلاح الفعلي، وما يُنهى عنه لذاته؛ لقُبْحه كالإفساد، وما تختلف أحكامه باختلاف ما يَقرُن به من المصالح والمفاسد، كالوطء—مثلاً—فحقيقته واحدة ولكن يُباح تارة لوجود عقد نكاح صحيح؛ لما يشتمل عليه من مصالح السكن والمودة والرحمة والتناسل، ويُحرّم تارة إذا أقدم عليه بغير سبب شرعي أو يُحرّم لأجل

الحيض والنَّفاس والتَّلبس بُسك الحج والصيام؛ لما فيه من إفساد العبادات وانتهاك المحرمات (ابن عبد السلام 2000، 195/2-200).

ويتفاوت الثواب والعقاب—في الغالب—بتفاوت المصالح والمفاسد المترتبة على الفعل دون الفعل نفسه الذي اشتمل عليها، فالفعل الواحد الذي ترتب عليه مفسد جمّة يؤاخذ فاعله بقدر المفاسد الناتجة عن الفعل، كمن قتل ألف نفس مؤمنة بفعل واحد، فيؤاخذ على قتل ألف لا على وقوع القتل منه مرة واحدة (ابن عبد السلام 2006، 408؛ 1996، 71).

6 خاتمة

ربطت أعمال العزّ بن عبد السلام بين المعارف والأحوال، وبين العلم والعمل، وسلكت—في سبيل ذلك—نهجاً متعدد التخصصات جمع بين علوم الفقه وأصول الفقه والتصوف والكلام والآداب، وبذلك قدّم العزّ إسهاماً يتسم بالجدّة والتميّز. وقد بدا العزّ—وخاصةً في أعماله الثلاثة محلّ الدّرس والتحليل—حريصاً على الجمع بين العلوم الثلاثة التي فصل بينها الحارث المَحاسبيّ، وهي علم الظاهر وعلم الباطن والعلم بالله وأسمائه وصفاته، مع بيان ترابط مباحثها وجعلها متضافرةً في صياغة الإنسان الأخلاقيّ الذي لا يخطر على قلبه ولا يجري على جوارحه إلا ما فيه مصلحةً دنيويةً أو أخرويةً أو فيهما معاً، والذي يتخلّق من أجل الفوز بالجنان ورضا الديان والأنس بجواره. والتخلّق—عند العزّ—يستوعب التخلّق بالأوامر والنواهي الظاهرة والأوامر والنواهي الباطنة، فهو يجمع بين أمرين: الأول: تحري أدلّة الأحكام التي يوسّع العزّ حدودها وصيغها، والثاني: أسماء الله تعالى وصفاته التي تولّد معرفتها أحوالاً وتدلّ—أيضاً—على الأحكام فتندرج ضمن الأدلة الدالة عليها أو على وجه المصلحة فيها. وقد حرص العزّ—في أعماله عامة—على مرجعية القرآن والحديث النبويّ، التي هي الميزان الذي توزن به الأعمال والأقوال والأحوال والرجال. بل إن التمسك بهذه المرجعية هو من أسباب الفضائل عند العزّ؛ لأن الأحكام والنصائح وأدلتها ترجع إلى القرآن والسنة، ولأن ”آداب القرآن“—التي تقوم على التخلّق بالأسماء والصفات—مرجعها القرآن والحديث. ثم إن مصالح الآخرة ومفاسدها (أو الخيبر والشور، أو الحسنات والسيئات) لا تُعرف إلا من خلالهما. وفق هذا التصور، تتجاوز العزّ مشكلات الفصل بين الفقه والتصوف أو بين الظاهر والباطن، وبين الحقيقة والشريعة، وبين الأحكام والآداب، وبين النظر والعمل. بل إن من السمات التي ميّزت

عمل العزّ أنه أسّس نظريته الأخلاقية على مرجعية نصّية كثيفة، وعلى أرضية فقهية وأصولية صلبة، وإن لم يتقيّد بحدود الاشتغال الفقهي؛ إذ بحث في تفاصيل الأوامر والنواهي الباطنة، وفيما يتعلق بالأسماء والصفات من الأحكام، وربط بين ثنائية الخير والشر والأحكام الخمسة، وبين الأحكام وأدلتها ومصالحها (أو المعاني الملحوظة فيها) الموصلة إلى إصلاح القلوب والأبدان معاً؛ لأن الشريعة كلها نصائح.

وقد اشتملت أعمال العزّ الثلاثة التي جرى تحليلها—رغم كثرة تفريعاتها—على أربعة مكونات رئيسة هي: البحث في الغايات القصوى، والأحكام والتقويمات الأخلاقية ومصادرها وكيفية استخراجها، والفضائل وأسبابها، وأكساب الإنسان ومراتب الأفعال وتنوعها. وقد نظّم العزّ—في هذا المكوّن الأخير—أفعال الإنسان التي تتسم بالتركيب والتعقيد، فاستوعب أفعال الجوارح والحواسّ والقلوب، والأفعال الكسبية ومتعلّقات الأفعال الجبليّة. وبهذا استعاد الاهتمام بكليّة الإنسان وتربّط صورته الظاهرة والباطنة، ووسّع—لأجل ذلك—مفهومي الأحكام وأدلة الأحكام، ليستوعب تعقيدات الفعل الإنساني ظاهراً وباطناً، ومن ثمّ كان القرآن كلّ والمدونة الحديثية كلّها ميداناً لاستخراج أحكام الظاهر والباطن أو النصائح الهادية إلى مصالح الدارين. وهذه الملامح الرئيسة كافية لتشكيل نظرية أخلاقية متكاملة تتمحور حول ”المصلحة“ بمفهوم العزّ الموسّع الذي جمع بين الحقيقة والشرعية، وتسعى إلى بناء الإنسان الصالح في الدارين، قولاً وعملاً، ظاهراً وباطناً، معرفةً وحالاً بل وخواطر أيضاً. ولأجل هذا، اعتبرت أن العزّ يقدّم إسهاماً بارزاً في حقل ”الأخلاق الإسلامية“ بوصفها حقلاً متعدد التخصصات، ووافياً بكليّة الإنسان. وآمل أن أفرد دراسة مفصلة لتحليل نظرية العزّ الأخلاقية بعد أن أجملتها—في هذا الفصل—بالتركيز على كتب العزّ الثلاثة: «شجرة المعارف والأحوال»، و«قواعد الأحكام في إصلاح الأنام»، و«الإمام في بيان أدلة الأحكام».

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Ibn Taymiyya's *al-Tuhfa al-'Irāqīyya*

Observing God's Ethics through Sufi States and Stations

Arjan Post

1 Introduction: The *Tuhfa* in Context

The first time I read *al-Tuhfa al-'Irāqīyya fī l-A'māl al-Qalbiyya* ("The Iraqi Gift on the Works of the Heart") was somewhere in early 2014, when I believed it could potentially be an important source to reconstruct Taqī l-Dīn Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Ḥalīm ibn 'Abd al-Salām Ibn Taymiyya's (d. 728/1328) own "version" of Sufism. Before I read the book, I had expected it to be something of a Sufi manual. What is meant by "the works of the heart" (*al-a'māl al-qalbiyya*) is immediately explained in the book's first sentence after the usual introductory invocations, where Ibn Taymiyya briefly elucidates his purpose:

These are brief remarks concerning the hearts' works, which may be called "stations" (*maqāmāt*, sing. *maqām*) or "states" (*aḥwāl*, sing. *hāl*) and which belong to the principles of faith (*uṣūl al-īmān*) and the pillars of religion (*qawā'id al-dīn*), such as love for God and His Messenger, trust in God, sincere devotion to the religion for His sake, gratitude to Him, patience with His decree, fear of Him, hope in Him, and whatever pertains to the above.

IBN TAYMIYYA 2000a, 289

Clearly, Ibn Taymiyya saw "states" and "stations" as a set of spiritual qualities that are identified as the believer's inner movements, which are those deeds of worship realised by the heart as opposed to the believer's outward movements of worship realised by the limbs. This sounded like classical Sufism to me. Moreover, on the first page of the critical edition, we even find that the first folio of one of the manuscripts that was consulted reads *Qā'ida fī l-Taṣawwuf wa-l-A'māl al-Qalbiyya Tu'rāfu bi-l-Tuhfa al-'Irāqīyya* ("A Precept on Sufism and the Works of the Heart Known as 'The Iraqi Gift'") (Ibn Taymiyya 2000a, 289).¹

¹ Referred to in this chapter as "*Tuhfa*."

I vividly remember being very excited about the prospects of this book, especially as I was still aspiring to write a monograph on Ibn Taymiyya's relationship with Sufism, an ambition I would soon abandon after finishing the *Tuhfa* and discovering the works of his Sufi companion, 'Imād al-Dīn al-Wāsiṭī (d. 711/1311).

It was around the middle of the *Tuhfa* that I became thoroughly disappointed in its value as a work on Sufism. Rather than a Sufi manual, it read as a somewhat dry academic work about terminology, which, albeit deeply embedded in the Sufi tradition, hardly seemed to disclose much about the way Ibn Taymiyya envisioned the direct practical application of spiritual states and stations. He only referred to Sufis on a few occasions, for the most part, to discuss problematic sayings related from them, and hardly ever to support his own views on states and stations. I could not but conclude that this was not a Sufi manual, and therefore could not convey an explicit form of "Taymiyyan" Sufism—if such a thing even existed.

Writing this now with a very different appreciation of the *Tuhfa*, I realise my first reading of the book failed to fully appreciate how its systematic discussions actually reveal Ibn Taymiyya's distinct ethical approach to spirituality, and indeed, to Sufism. I had previously been unable to uncover this as I was still relatively new to Ibn Taymiyya and not yet sufficiently acquainted with some of the core aspects of his conceptual framework. Having studied him and several of his students in the past years, my recent revisiting of the *Tuhfa* has enabled me to contextualise the book's contents against the background of what has previously been identified as Ibn Taymiyya's project to make Sufism compatible with his traditionalist framework of thought (Post 2020, 11–12). So, if anything, my own experience with the *Tuhfa* has proven that a book like this cannot be properly assessed without consideration for Ibn Taymiyya's wider corpus.

As with most of his writings, little to nothing can be said about the genealogy of the *Tuhfa* in terms of its place within his massive oeuvre, because we simply have no way to date it. Likewise, there is not much to be said about its historical background, except that it was composed after someone requested that the *shaykh* write something about *al-a'māl al-qalbiyya* and that the title may indicate that this person was originally from Iraq.² Although it may not be considered one of his more famed works, like his magnum opus, *Dar' Ta'āruḍ al-'Aql wa-l-Naql* ("Averting the Contradiction between Reason and

2 This was also noted by the editor of the edition I consulted, who rightly pointed out that Ibn Taymiyya has several works whose titles contain a word that refers back to the country of origin of the person who requested the *shaykh* to write something on a specific issue (see Ibn Taymiyya 2000, 51–52).

Revelation”), for instance, I would argue that its significance is above all in the fact that it exemplifies his ethical approach to spirituality and Sufism. Among his more concise works, it is perhaps one of the most comprehensive to provide a theoretical exposition regarding the believer’s main spiritual qualities as he envisioned them in relation to God.

While I have not been able to find whether the *Tuhfa* was read or studied in the centuries directly following Ibn Taymiyya’s passing, it appears to have been (re)discovered in the past century, when the author’s popularity significantly increased, especially in reformist and Salafī circles.³ Today, one can find various lecture series on the book by contemporary scholars, such as Sa’d ibn Nāṣir al-Shathrī (b. 1387/1967), Ḥāmid al-Junaybī, and Khālīd al-Qaḥṭānī. So, obviously, it is receiving attention today. To finally shed more light on this book from an academic perspective, the present chapter aims to clarify how it can be read within the wider context of Ibn Taymiyya’s approach to ethics from a spiritual perspective. In order to do so, we must first briefly shed light on what we may identify as the *shaykh*’s project to purify Sufism and how this incorporates his understanding of ethics.

2 Ibn Taymiyya and His Project to Purify Sufism

The full story of Ibn Taymiyya is a long one. Since it has been conveyed many times already, and much more eloquently than I can do here, I will but give a brief summary of the *shaykh*’s life below, to then turn to his project to purify Sufism. Ibn Taymiyya was born in Ḥarrān, present-day Turkey, in 661/1263. Due to the threat of the Mongol invasion, his family fled their homeland to settle in Damascus in 667/1269, and it was there that he received his education in the religious sciences. His family name was already revered in Ḥanbalī circles well before he made a name for himself. The works of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) by his grandfather, Majd al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Salām (d. 652/1254), are still studied in Ḥanbalī schools to this day. His grandfather’s blood definitely ran through his veins, as the young Ibn Taymiyya quickly rose to fame in the last decades of the seventh/thirteenth century. It is related that he was already considered qualified to give *fatwās* at the age of seventeen. Besides familiarising himself with Islamic jurisprudence and traditionalist theology (*uṣūl al-dīn*) according to the Ḥanbalī school and the Ahl al-Ḥadīth (people of *ḥadīth*), the *shaykh* also delved into subjects that are not so self-evident for a scholar with

3 On the details of this development, see the recent study of El Shamsy (2000, 55–57, and ch. 7).

his background, such as *kalām*, philosophy, astrology, and Shīʿism, to name a few. As it turned out, his wide interest combined with intellectual wit would soon provide the ammunition he needed to formulate his own positions on all matters pertaining to religion, be it matters of Islamic jurisprudence, theology, or Sufism, and refute those of his opponents in polemics that would come to define his life.

By the turn of the century, he had already experienced the first negative effects of his outspokenness and polemical efforts, as he was forced to appear before several councils to clarify his stance on several issues he wrote and preached about, both while in Syria and in Egypt. He was clearly considered dangerous by his intellectual opponents, who were well aware of his popularity among the “common folk.” If anything, this could be seen as a forebode to the remainder of his troubled and controversial life. However, to him, so the sources seem to suggest, the trials he underwent seem to have been a price he was more than willing to pay in defence of his truth. In that capacity, he became what is perhaps to this day the greatest Ḥanbali polemicist against the growing influence of *kalām* within the folds of Sunnī Islam, especially that of the Ashʿarī school, which dominated his direct context. This dominance had already caused many a traditionalist predecessor troubles, as the growth of Ashʿarism also ensured the school’s power and influence in Mamlūk (r. 648–923/1250–1517) scholarly society. Their political influence was certainly noticed directly by Ibn Taymiyya himself as well. His opponents made his life difficult and helped pave the way to his imprisonment in Damascus, Cairo, and Alexandria for abiding by his contested opinions on several matters of religion. The most important of these were his theological position regarding the divine names and attributes (*al-asmāʾ wa-l-ṣifāt*), for which he was accused of propagating anthropomorphism (*tashbīh*), his juridical opinion regarding the triple-divorce, and his strict disapproval of setting out to travel with the sole intent to visit a grave and seek blessing through a deceased person (*ziyārat al-qubūr*). The latter position would lead to his final confinement in the citadel of Damascus, where he remained from 726/1326 until 728/1328, when he died after a brief illness.⁴

Another matter of religion where Ibn Taymiyya’s critical attitude caused him trouble was Sufism. His attacks on several doctrinal and practical issues in the realm of Sufism have mistakenly earned him the reputation of having been opposed to the Sufis altogether. Several scholars, among whom myself,

4 For biographies of Ibn Taymiyya by his own students, see Ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī (2010) and al-Bazzār (1976). The vast majority of biographical notices on the *shaykh* from Arabic sources have been collected in Shams and al-Umrān (2011). For a good English biography, see Hoover (2019, ch. 1 and 2).

have already critically assessed this supposed anti-Sufism, and it is by now well-established that the *shaykh's* opinion of Sufism was far more complex.⁵ While he was crystal clear about what he considered to be evident heresy in the Akbarian doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd* (the unity of being), he had profound respect for such Sufis as al-Junayd (d. 298/910) and 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 561/1166). Since the *Tuhfa* deals with terminology that is deeply embedded in the Sufi tradition, let us briefly examine Ibn Taymiyya's approach to Sufism as a project to purify it by pleading for its return to what he regarded as its original, legitimate form.

In my previous work I have spoken of a Taymiyyan project to "traditionalise" Sufism in order to keep it within his understanding of the framework of the Ahl al-Ḥadīth traditionalists. I have referred to this approach to Sufism as a "*nuṣūṣ*-based spirituality" (the *nuṣūṣ* being the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*) (Post 2020, 199–200 and 277–282). I understand this textual focus in accordance with Ovamir Anjum's observation that both Ibn Taymiyya and his pupil Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350) were concerned with maintaining a "unity of epistemology" when it came to Sufism. This signifies that whatever claim a Sufi may make in the realm of spirituality can never be epistemologically independent of the word of revelation. Thus, every facet of Sufism must always remain within the boundaries of what the Qur'ān and the Sunna convey to remain legitimate (Anjum 2010, 176–177). Drawing on this observation, I will demonstrate in this article that the *Tuhfa* can be read as an effort by Ibn Taymiyya to (re-)define Sufi terminology to ensure that it remains in harmony with the *nuṣūṣ* as he understood it. As such, I consider the *Tuhfa* to be the product of his project to purify Sufism by anchoring its terminology in his own conceptual framework to ensure its soundness from the angle of revelation.

One aspect of Ibn Taymiyya's framework that perfectly exemplifies this effort and which will also play a crucial role in our analysis below is the concept of friendship with of God (*wilāya* or *walāya*). The conviction that some believers have a higher rank in the face of God was certainly a widely accepted point of creed in Sunnī Islam and Ibn Taymiyya, whose position on this issue is dealt with in some detail in the *Tuhfa*, was no exception in that regard. The reality of *wilāya* is commonly associated with verses 61 and 62 from *sūrat Yūnus* (Jonah), which read: "Surely God's friends (*awliyā' Allāh*)—no fear shall be on them, neither shall they sorrow: Those who believe, and are pious" (Q 10:61–62).⁶ Following the general trend within Sunnī tradition, Ibn Taymiyya cites these verses in the *Tuhfa* to argue that "God has thus circumscribed the *awliyā'* as

5 For a state-of-the-art on this issue, see Post (2020, 11–15).

6 In this article I rely on Arberry's translation of the Qur'ān, which I adjust where deemed necessary.

those who have faith and piety (*mu'minūn muttaqūn*)" (Ibn Taymiyya 2000a, 290). The realisation of faith and piety is thus the distinguishing mark of God's friends and it is what sets them apart from believers who fail to fully abide by the obligations and rulings set by God.

As he does in several other works, he connects this idea of hierarchy to verse 32 in the *sūrat Fāṭir* (Originator), which reads

Then We bequeathed the Book on those of Our servants We chose; but of them some wrong themselves (*ẓālim li-naṣṣih*), some of them are moderate (*muqtaṣid*), and some are forerunners in good works (*sābiq bi-l-khayrāt*) by the leave of God".

Q 35:32

Ibn Taymiyya explains that this verse differentiates between three categories of believers: first, those who wrong themselves by sinning. Such believers hinder themselves from achieving full friendship with God, he says, and so "they have a portion of friendship with God according to the measure of their faith and piety, just as they have a portion which contradicts that according to the measure of their depravity" (Ibn Taymiyya 2000a, 292). Faith and piety are, after all, the core attributes of God's friends.

The *Tuhfa* subsequently divides God's friends into two classes in accordance with the above-quoted verse: a general class (*ʿamm*), who are the moderates, also referred to in *sūrat al-Wāqīʿa* (The Inevitable) as "the companions of the right" (*aṣḥāb al-maymana/yamīn*) (see Q 56:8 and 90–91), and an elect class (*khāṣṣ*), who are the forerunners in good works. The moderate is described as one who "performs what has been made obligatory and abandons what has been made unlawful" (Ibn Taymiyya 2000a, 290). The forerunner is then stated to be distinguished by "being drawn near [unto God] by performing whatever is in his power to do of obligatory and recommendable acts of worship, and by abandoning what is unlawful and disliked" (Ibn Taymiyya 2000a, 290).⁷ Having thus defined the latter two categories as God's general and elect friends, Ibn Taymiyya goes on to state that both are in fact described in the well-known holy report (*ḥadīth qudsī*) from al-Bukhārī's (d. 256/870) *Ṣaḥīḥ* ("Authentic"), which, we may note, is generally cited as a description of the spiritual state of God's friends in Sufi writings as well:

God (the Exalted) says: "Anyone who shows enmity to a friend (*walī*) of mine has provoked me to contend in battle. My servant is drawn near to

7 Their attribute of nearness to God is likewise connected to *sūrat al-Wāqīʿa* (Q 56:10–11 and 88).

me by performing the kind of acts I have made obligatory upon him. Then, my servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory deeds (*nawāfil*) until I love him. When I love him, I will be his hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes, and his leg with which he walks—so through Me he will hear, through Me he will see, through Me he will strike, and through Me he will walk”.

IBN TAYMIYYA 2000a, 291⁸

From the perspective of Ibn Taymiyya, friendship with God is thus initially simply a matter of abiding by the absolute requirements and rulings set by God in the revelation, and a higher degree of friendship may be achieved when the believer starts to put in effort to do even more than that for the sake of God.

While this particular interpretation of *wilāya* was certainly not newly invented by Ibn Taymiyya and can be traced back as far as the early proto-Sufi al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī (d. 298/910) at least (see for instance, al-Tirmidhī 2010, 7:28), I would argue that the underlying objective in using Qurʾānic terminology was innovative and should be understood against the background of his *nuṣūṣ*-based epistemology. It was most likely meant as an alternative to the several variations of detailed systems of hierarchy that had become popular in his age, especially among the Sufis. Ibn Taymiyya rejected these first and foremost for the simple fact that they have very little to no basis in the texts of revelation. For instance, he held that there is no strong evidence that the Prophet or his companions ever affirmed that there is one supreme friend of God who is designated as the “pole” (*quṭb*) or “helper” (*ghawth*). Also, the existence of a class of (forty) “substitutes” (*abdāl*), a term that appears to have found some favour in the Ḥanbalī school as it is based on a *ḥadīth* from Ibn Ḥanbal’s (d. 241/855) *Musnad*, is dismissed by Ibn Taymiyya because he considered the *ḥadīth* in question to be weak (*ḍaʿīf*) (Ibn Taymiyya 1986, 1:93–94).⁹ It thus seems that, in order to counter the widespread use of such terms, while still affirming the reality of a hierarchy among believers, the Ḥanbalī *shaykh* provided an alternative through epistemologically sound Qurʾānic terms.

Another aspect of Ibn Taymiyya’s framework of thought that serves as a guiding principle in this approach to Sufism is the notion of conformity—*muwāfaqa* in Arabic—to God’s will. In fact, I have argued elsewhere (Post forthcoming) that his understanding of conformity is at the very heart of his ethical thought, an observation the *Tuḥfa* also implicitly confirms, as we shall see. The academic debate regarding Ibn Taymiyya’s ethics has mostly revolved around the question of whether he held that human beings can discern right

8 For the version of this *ḥadīth* as it is cited in al-Bukhārī’s *Ṣaḥīḥ*, see al-Bukhārī (2001, 8:105).

9 For the two variations of the *ḥadīth*, see Ibn Ḥanbal (2001, 2:231 and 37:413).

from wrong independently from revelation, a matter that is mostly discussed from the viewpoint of law.¹⁰ It is certainly true that law was a priority for Ibn Taymiyya. Jon Hoover even contends that the *shaykh* considered *fiqh*, *kalām*, and Sufism as all being part of the encompassing realm of (divine) law. As long as any one expression of these three disciplines remains within the boundaries of this law, it is correct and provides a means to bring about nearness to God. Thus, when it comes to Ibn Taymiyya's spirituality, Hoover says, this "is distinctively ethical in character. The goal of the spiritual path is not ecstatic or metaphysical union with God, but perfect obedience to God's law found in the Qurʾān and the Sunna" (Hoover 2019, 71). Sufism, then, is perfectly acceptable to the *shaykh* as long as it is in conformity to God's law (Hoover 2019, 73). While I agree with Hoover, I would add that conformity to the law—God's legislative will—is but one side of the coin of Ibn Taymiyya's ethical thought. For him, one's ethics are only truly perfected by also conforming to God's ontological will, an observation that will require some elaboration for the sake of this chapter's purpose.

The differentiation between God's legislative will and His ontological will derives from Ibn Taymiyya's distinction between the unity of God's divinity (*tawḥīd al-ilāhiyya* or *ulūhiyya*) and the unity of God's lordship (*tawḥīd al-rubūbiyya*), for which he is well-known. Although he did not invent this distinction, it plays such a central role in his theological thought that it has become a characteristic element of his intellectual legacy.¹¹ In the *Tuḥfa*, he clearly expects his readership to know what he means by the two terms, as he refers to them several times without providing a concrete definition for them. Essentially, the terms are interconnected for Ibn Taymiyya, as they embody two aspects of God's being, both of which must be affirmed and understood correctly in order to believe as intended by God. The first and primary aspect is divinity, which alludes to God as the only entity in existence worthy of worship. In that capacity, God has manifested Himself as lawgiver through the books He revealed to His prophets, which set out the laws and prohibitions by which He is obeyed and, thus, worshipped. The second aspect, lordship, alludes to God as Lord of the worlds and Creator of all. In that capacity He directs everything in existence and is therefore the single source of succour since all that happens in creation is ultimately the result of His ontological will to create (Post 2020,

10 For a brief state-of-the-art on this discussion, see my forthcoming chapter "Ibn Taymiyya's Ethics of Spiritual Perfection" (Post forthcoming).

11 It can, for instance, already be found in *al-Idāra al-Kubrā* ("The Great Clarification") of the early Ḥanbalī scholar Ibn Baṭṭa al-ʿUkbarī (d. 387/997) (Ibn Baṭṭa 1994, 6:214). For its role in Ibn Taymiyya's thought and influence on the much later Wahhābī movement, see for instance Hoover (2016, 635 and 642).

261–262). As previously stated, Ibn Taymiyya mostly emphasises the necessity to abide by God's law, His commands and prohibitions which derive from His legislative will, since it is by loving what God loves and hating what God hates that one serves God's divinity. However, for Ibn Taymiyya, God's lordship, too, ought to be served, and this is done by fully submitting to God's decree. What God in His wisdom determines, no matter how harmful it may seem from a human perspective of ethics, ultimately serves a wise and just purpose. Thus, if a human being is able to fully abide by both the legislative and ontological will of God, he or she will effectively acquire the highest possible degree of conformity to the ethics desired by God (Post forthcoming). Let us bear the above concepts in mind and now turn to two case studies from the *Tuhfa*, which will reveal how these concepts actually regulate Ibn Taymiyya's understanding of Sufi states and stations.

3 Analysing the *Tuhfa*: A Case Study of "Trust" (*Tawakkul*) and "Love" (*Maḥabba*)

As stated above, the *Tuhfa* discusses states and stations, explained by Ibn Taymiyya as the works of the heart, which are typically identified as the collective of spiritual qualities realised in relation to God. We can roughly summarise the book's contents as follows: It starts with an introduction where Ibn Taymiyya discusses the concept of states and stations, friendship with God (*wilāya* or *walāya*), and the two qualities of truthfulness (*ṣidq*) and sincerity (*ikhhlās*) (Ibn Taymiyya 2000a, 289–310). The remainder of the book is divided into three sections (*fuṣūl*, sing. *faṣl*), each of which treats several spiritual qualities, some in much more detail than others. The first section discusses sorrow (*ḥuzn*), trust (*tawakkul*), renunciation (*zuhd*), scrupulousness (*wara'*), uprightness (*istiḳāma*), contentment (*riḍā*), patience (*ṣabr*), gratitude (*shukr*), and love (*maḥabba*) (Ibn Taymiyya 2000a, 311–373). The second section continues with love, which was obviously Ibn Taymiyya's foremost concern in relation to the believer's inward spiritual life. Moreover, the Sufi concept of annihilation (*fanā'*) is also discussed here (Ibn Taymiyya 2000a, 374–398). The final section begins with the qualities of fear (*khawf*) and hope (*rajā'*), and then once more returns to the topic of love, under whose rubric Sufi audition (*samā'*) is also briefly evaluated (Ibn Taymiyya 2000a, 399–463). As is typical of the *shaykh's* style of writing, he often digresses left and right into discussions that branch from the main topics under discussion (at least as he perceived them). In several instances, this leads to lengthy passages that do not, at first hand, seem to hold particular relevance to the overarching scheme of the book, but provide the reader with insights that are of great significance to the author. This flow

in Ibn Taymiyya's writings sometimes gives the impression that he wanted to take every opportunity to provide his readers with as many pointers from his thought as he could.

It would naturally be beyond the scope of the current article to give an exhaustive analysis of all the topics discussed in the *Tuḥfa*. We will therefore zoom in on the qualities of trust and love, as Ibn Taymiyya provides them with some of the more elaborate discussions in the book. As such, they exemplify his attempt to adapt Sufi theory to his own conceptual framework.

3.1 *Trust in God*

The spiritual quality of trust (*tawakkul*) is discussed in great detail in the *Tuḥfa*, as Ibn Taymiyya considered it a crucial part of the believer's inner life, so we will see. His discussion on the topic takes up about thirty-three pages of the printed edition, a fair share of which is concerned with answering whether trust is a spiritual station of the generality of God's friends, or whether it is a station of both the generality and the elect. He begins his analysis by referring to a group of people who were of the opinion that trust is for the generality only: "they maintain that trust is to vie with the ego (*nafs*) while [still] seeking nourishment, and that the elect no longer vie with the ego" (Ibn Taymiyya 2000a, 314).

In his view, this is an incorrect and dangerous position, and he attributes it to certain Sufis. This attribution only becomes clear by the end of the *Tuḥfa*'s discussion on trust, where he writes that such was the opinion of the author of *ʿIlal al-Maqāmāt* ("The Pitfalls of the Spiritual Stations"), who was none other than the Ḥanbalī Sufi ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī al-Harawī (d. 481/1089). Ibn Taymiyya then goes on to state that the latter's view was subsequently adopted by the author of *Maḥāsīn al-Majālis* ("The Attractions of Spiritual Sessions"), whom we can identify as the Andalusī Sufi Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣanḥājī, known as Ibn al-ʿArīf (d. 536/1141). If we look at al-Harawī's *ʿIlal*, Ibn Taymiyya's attribution of the named opinion is indeed confirmed in the section on *tawakkul*:

As for trust, this is for the generality (*ʿawāmm*). It means to entrust your affair to your Master and to seek refuge in His knowledge and compassion so that He manages it for you and suffices you. Now, on the path of the elect, this would mean that one is blind to sufficiency [in God], since [the truth of the matter is that] God (the Exalted) does not leave any matter neglected save that it is made to be sufficient in accordance with what He has decreed—even if this is to be disputed in the minds [of people] and becomes confusing from [their] perspective [...]: He is the First, the Director [of all affairs].

If we then inspect Ibn al-ʿArīf's *Maḥāsin*, one gets the impression that Ibn Taymiyya probably had had access to both books, as the section on *tawakkul* confirms his observation, namely that the Andalusian Sufi very obviously based himself on and expanded the passage translated above from al-Harawī's *ʿIlal* (Ibn al-ʿArīf 2015, 70–71). Paradoxically, although Ibn Taymiyya credits al-Harawī as having been “one of the greatest of the [Sufi] *shaykhs*” in the *Tuhfa*, in the same sentence he also concludes in unambiguous terms that the *shaykh* had committed a grave error in upholding the position cited above (Ibn Taymiyya 2000a, 346).

The reason why is very simple for Ibn Taymiyya: the quality of trust is intrinsically connected to the affirmation of God's lordship. The crux of the issue is epitomised lucidly in the following passage, which is Ibn Taymiyya's response to the statement about trust being only for the generality of God's friends:

As for the former statement: [the term] trust actually has a more general signification than having trust for the sake of worldly interests [alone], for one who has [truly] realised trust (*mutawakkil*) will trust in God (glorified be He) for the proper state of his heart and religion, as well as for guarding his tongue and desire—and this is the most important thing to him. It is for this reason that he confides in his Lord during every canonical prayer by uttering: “You alone we serve, You alone we ask for help” (Q 1:5), which is similarly expressed in the statement of the Exalted: “So serve Him and put your trust in Him” (Q 11:123).

IBN TAYMIYYA 2000a, 314¹²

The Ḥanbalī *shaykh* considered the wording of the verse from *sūrat* al-Fātiḥa (The Opener) cited above to be a summary of the religion in its entirety, a position he based on a saying attributed to one of the Salaf. The first half of the verse, “You alone we serve,” pertains to the servitude of God (*ʿubūdiyya*), by which the believer gives God's divinity its due; the second half, “You alone we ask for help,” pertains to seeking God's aid (*istiʿāna*), by which the believer gives God's lordship its due, as all matters are, in the end, in God's hands. As it is recited in each canonical prayer, the believer would constantly be reminded of this reality. Ibn Taymiyya explains moreover that, where servitude is exclusively for God, trust and seeking aid combined are for the servant, “because they are a means and a way by which one's aims and wishes are granted through worship”

12 For the translation of this particular passage I have partly relied on the edition of the *Tuhfa* found in the *Majmūʿ Fatāwā* (“Collection of *Fatwās*”), whose wording slightly differs here (see Ibn Taymiyya 1995, 10:18).

(Ibn Taymiyya 2000a, 319). It is thus obvious for Ibn Taymiyya that *tawakkul* and *istiʿāna* fall under the same rubric, as they are core features of giving God's *rubūbiyya* its due.

The *Tuhfa* then turns to a lengthy discussion on the proper understanding of the relationship between *tawakkul* and *istiʿāna*, divine foreordination, and the necessity to abide by God's commands and prohibitions, whose practical implications lead Ibn Taymiyya to differentiate between four classes of people. The first class consists of those who acknowledge God's divinity, and are characterised by a profound regard for the revealed law. However, they disregard divine foreordination and *tawakkul* and *istiʿāna*. Such is the spiritual state of many of those who devote themselves to the study of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) to worship God (*al-mutaḥaqqiḥa al-mutaʿabbida*), Ibn Taymiyya argues (Ibn Taymiyya 2000a, 339–340). The second class is of those who acknowledge God's lordship and their need of Him, for which they consequently practice *istiʿāna*. However, they disregard the full reality of God's revealed law:

They end up stripping away the divine command and prohibition. They may call this a [spiritual] reality (*ḥaqīqa*), thinking that this ontological reality (*al-ḥaqīqa al-qadariyya*) requires surrendering to [God's decree] without regard for the legislative reality revealed through the religion (*al-ḥaqīqa al-amriyya al-dīniyya*), which contains the Lord's pleasure, love, command, and prohibition, outwardly and inwardly.

IBN TAYMIYYA 2000a, 343

Evidently, Ibn Taymiyya's fear here is that excessive focus on surrendering completely to fate may arouse laxity in abiding by God's law. This, he says, is the state of many of those who endeavour to practice Sufism (*mutaṣawwifa*), and in that regard it may be worthwhile noting that followers of Ibn ʿArabī's (d. 638/1240) school of Sufism have been accused of such an attitude towards law within Ibn Taymiyya's circle (Ibn Taymiyya 2000a, 343).¹³ The third class consists of those who disregard both God's law and seeking His help, thereby effectively denying what is due to both divinity and lordship. These are the evillest of people according to the *shaykh* (Ibn Taymiyya 2000a, 345). The fourth class is the praiseworthy one (*al-qism al-maḥmūd*), whose state is described as follows in the *Tuhfa*:

13 Ibn Taymiyya's companion, ʿImād al-Dīn al-Wāsiṭī (d. 711/1311) actually accuses the Akbarians on more than one occasion of laxity in law due to their Sufi doctrine (cf. Post 2020, 230).

It is the state of those who realise “You alone we serve, You alone we ask for help” (Q 1:5) and [God’s] statement “So serve Him and put your trust in Him” (Q 11:123), and so they seek [God’s] aid in a state of obedience to Him. They testify that He is their God, who alone must be worshipped by obeying Him and His Messenger [Muḥammad], and that He is their Lord, who alone is their Patron and Intercessor.

IBN TAYMIYYA 2000a, 345

Here, we again find the importance of the fifth verse from al-Fātiḥa (Q 1), whose realisation represents the affirmation of God’s divinity and lordship. This brings Ibn Taymiyya full circle and leads him to conclude that what is necessitated by divine unity (*tawḥīd*), reason (*‘aql*), and revelation (*shar‘*) clearly concurs that trust is always required of God’s servants (Ibn Taymiyya 2000a, 346).

The notion that trust is a station of the generality is thus a grave error, he says, and the hierarchical distinction between believers should never be rooted in trust as a spiritual station, but in the degree of their conformity (*muwāfaqa*) to what God loves and pleases Him. Hence, the *Tuhfa* explicitly mentions conformity to God’s will as the greatest miracle (*karāma*) of God’s friends—indeed, greater than any supernatural feat (Ibn Taymiyya 2000a, 335). For Ibn Taymiyya, even the believers who wrong themselves will have trust in God and supplicate Him, but will fall short as Muslims, purely due to their occupation with matters that are forbidden by the revealed law. The same applies to God’s friends: the forerunners are not superior to the moderates by having outgrown the necessity of trust, as trust is an ever-required spiritual station of faith. Rather, it is their practice of supererogatory deeds after the obligatory—i.e., their greater conformity to God’s legislative will—that defines their elect status. The gravity of the matter is such that Ibn Taymiyya holds that those who discard trust do not merely disobey God and the Prophet, but actually deviate from the reality of faith (*ḥaqīqat al-īmān*) altogether (Ibn Taymiyya 2000a, 347). This discussion thus demonstrates that the two sides to ethics recognised within Ibn Taymiyya’s conceptual framework, the legislative and the ontological, must both be given their full due if one intends to reach a higher spiritual station.

3.2 *Mutual Love*

Let us now turn to the quality of love and again analyse how it connects to Ibn Taymiyya’s conceptual framework. Love for God is an essential ingredient for the *shaykh*, since he considers this to be the absolute root (*aṣl*) of every human deed motivated by faith and religion (Ibn Taymiyya 2000a, 373). The role of love in his thought has been studied in great detail by Joseph Bell (d. 2020),

and what follows on the basis of the *Tuḥfa* repeats and compliments some of his main observations.¹⁴

Much of the book's discussion on love is focused on refuting the notion that God cannot truly be loved and, *vice versa*, that God cannot truly love His servants. As Bell has shown in his monograph, one of the main targets for Ibn Taymiyya here were those Ash'arīs who held this understanding of love (Bell 1979, 61–62). Although the *Tuḥfa* never explicitly names them, it does explicitly attribute this position to the Jahmiyya—and it is commonly known that Ibn Taymiyya would refer to the later Ash'arīs as Jahmīs as a polemical ploy (Post 2020, 109). Either way, the faulty understanding of love was, to the *shaykh*, a problematic conclusion of *kalām* theology in general, which had unfortunately also infiltrated the ranks of some Sufi groups (referred to in the *Tuḥfa* as “the Sufis of the speculative theologians (*mutakallimīn*)”) (Ibn Taymiyya 2000a, 409–410, 429).

As the *Tuḥfa* explains it, the gist of the reasoning behind the denial of mutual love was that there cannot be any affinity (*munāsaba*) between something that is brought into being (*muḥdath*), i.e., a human being, and something that is pre-eternal (*qadīm*), i.e., God (Ibn Taymiyya 2000a, 427–430). Based on that premise, the *kalām*-theologian would have argued that the love that may be experienced by the servant in making an effort to worship God is not actually love for God Himself in His essence, but that it is rather love for the act(s) of worship performed. The *shaykh* responds to this, stating that

they have interpreted (*taʿawwalū*) the servant's love for Him as mere love for obeying Him or being drawn near unto Him. But this is great ignorance, because love for being drawn near unto the One who draws near unto Himself (*maḥabbat al-taqarrub ilā l-mutaqarrrib ilayh*) is subordinate to love for Him and derives from [that love].

IBN TAYMIYYA 2000a, 418

In other words, it is logically inconceivable that someone would love any form of servitude towards God without loving Him first: the objective (*maqṣūd*) is always loved before the means (*wasīla*) to it (Ibn Taymiyya 2000a, 418).

We may note that the *shaykh* used the verb *taʿawwalū* when relating the position of his theological opponents here, which should be viewed in the context of the wider discussion regarding the affirmation (*ithbāt*) of God's names of attributes as opposed to metaphorically interpreting them (*taʿwīl*). As a

14 See Bell (1979, ch. 3–5), and, for a few critical remarks regarding Bell's analysis concerning theodicy, see Hoover (2007, 72–76).

traditionalist proponent of affirmation, he saw the *ta'wīl* of the *mutakallimūn* in the case of love as, yet, another manifestation of their heresy in stripping God of His attributes (*ta'ṭīl*) by negating the apparent meaning of the way God describes Himself in the texts of revelation (Ibn Taymiyya 2000a, 419–420).¹⁵ But in line with the many references to love that can be found in the *nuṣūṣ*, he says, the truth of the matter is that “... all works of faith and religion only emanate from love for God (the Exalted)” (Ibn Taymiyya 2000a, 374).

If we now take a closer look at the issue of God's love for His servant specifically, we find that the *Tuhfa* does not present Ibn Taymiyya's position in as much detail. The topic has been studied accurately by Bell, who has pointed out that the *shaykh's* main principle in that regard was that God's will is subordinate to His love, which opposes the Ash'arī position that equates God's love and will in order to bypass the possibility of literal divine love for anything created (Bell 1979, 63–65). However, Ibn Taymiyya actually does allude to the principle of God's love for His servant somewhat vaguely in the following passage from the *Tuhfa*, where he summarises his view on the affirmation of mutual love:

Denying the servant's love for his Lord is to effectively deny [God's] existence as a God who is worshipped (*ilāhan ma'būdan*). In the same vein, denying His love for His servant necessitates denying His [creative] will (*mash'ā*), which necessitates denying His existence as a Lord who creates (*rabbān khāliqān*). In other words, denying them becomes a requisite for denying His existence as both the Lord of worlds and the God of worlds. Such is the doctrine of those who strip God of His attributes and deny Him (*ahl al-ta'ṭīl wa-l-juḥūd*).

IBN TAYMIYYA 2000a, 425–426

Here we see the distinction between God's divinity and lordship from the *shaykh's* conceptual framework return once more, this time applied to the quality of love and directed at the *mutakallimūn* in general, most likely the Ash'arīs in particular. In simple terms, it is argued that, first, affirming God's divinity requires affirming that God's servants can love Him, and, second, affirming God's lordship requires affirming that He can also love them back. The reasoning behind the former principle has essentially been explained already, but the second principle still requires some elaboration.

Although not stated in the above passage, Ibn Taymiyya essentially associates the principle of lordship with the love that God has for Himself, as it is love

15 For a discussion regarding *ta'ṭīl*, see for instance Post (2020, 206–207). The issue of love is similarly explained by Bell (1979, 82).

that moves His divine creative, ontological will (referred to by him as *mashrāʿ* in the quote, but sometimes also as *irāda kawniyya*) (Ibn Taymiyya 2000a, 327). This is explained aptly in the following passage from his *Kitāb al-Nubuwwāt* (“Book of Prophethood”):

Love is the source of existence for all that exists and the Lord (the Exalted) loves Himself. One of the requisites of His love for Himself is that it wills that which He wills to do. And what He wills to do, He wills to the utmost degree that He loves. Thus, love is the utmost cause for the sake of which everything has come into existence.

IBN TAYMIYYA 2000b, 1:372¹⁶

So, from the perspective of Ibn Taymiyya, God’s love for His servants springs forth from His lordship as it is from His ontological will, which falls under the rubric of lordship, that His love for Himself manifests through the creation. The concepts of divinity and lordship thus provide the foundations for his affirmation of mutual love.

We will conclude the current section with a final example of the *shaykh*’s treatment of love from the *Tuhfa*, which engages his understanding of the hierarchy of believers. Around the end of the book’s last section, he argues that the source (*aṣl*) of love is knowledge (*maʿrifa*) of God, which itself has two sources. The first is love for the sake of God’s beneficence (*iḥsān*) towards His servants, which is called love of the generality of the believers (*maḥabbat al-ʿamma*). Human beings have a natural disposition (*fiṭra*) to love whoever does good to them, Ibn Taymiyya says, and since God is ultimately the one who brings all into being as “the causer of causes” (*musabbib al-asbāb*), He is always their true Benefactor (*Muḥsin*). The *shaykh* holds that this kind of love is described in the following *ḥadīth*, according to which the Prophet said: “Love God for the sake of the blessings that you are provided with by Him, love me for the love that you have for God, and love my household for the love that you have for me” (Ibn Taymiyya 2000a, 450).¹⁷

Although the *Tuhfa* does not explicitly identify the *ʿamma* here as the “moderates” from among the friends of God, it is inferred that this was meant, since the subsequent passage that describes the love of the elect (*ḥubb al-khāṣṣa*) does specifically attach the latter degree of love to the “forerunners.” We thus learn that their love is characterised as love for the Benefactor Himself rather than for the beneficence which He bestows. This, as repeated several times throughout the *Tuhfa*, is love for God’s essence (*dhāt*), a kind of love that is only

16 It is also cited by Bell (1979, 80), whose translation I have slightly modified.

17 For this *ḥadīth*, see al-Tirmidhī (1998, 6:134).

appropriate for God (Ibn Taymiyya 2000a, 388, 409, 417, 423). Ibn Taymiyya describes it as follows:

This is the love of those who know from God that He is entitled to be loved for His sake. Every mode by which God is known on the basis of His divine names and attributes is entitled to perfect love, even every result of His actions [emanating from His ontological will] (*maf'ūlātihi*)—after all, every blessing from Him is a favour and every trial from Him is an act of justice. He is therefore entitled to be praised for every state, whether it concerns bounty or adversity. This is more exalted and perfect [than the love of the generality] and it is the love of the elect: they are those who seek the delight of beholding [God's] noble face (*wajh*) and take great pleasure in remembering Him and intimately conversing with Him (*bi-dhikrih wa-munājātihi*). That is more important to them than water to fish, to the extent that, would they be separated from it, they would experience unbearable agony.

IBN TAYMIYYA 2000a, 451–452

Such a poetic description of the forerunners' love for God is an essential element of the spiritual dimension of the *shaykh's* understanding of ethics. Again, we find here an indirect reference to lordship, where he states that God is even deserving of love during moments of trial, for these spring from God's infinite wisdom as a Creator who always creates for just purposes, as we have previously seen.¹⁸ Thus, for Ibn Taymiyya, the mutual love of the elect of God's friends is a kind of love that requires a full alignment of the servant's ethics with those of God. This is not merely a matter of abiding by the revealed law to one's utmost extent, but also a matter of embracing God's ontological will manifesting as fate unfolds in the created realm.

4 Conclusion

Let us briefly reiterate what we have thus far seen and assess how the notion of Ibn Taymiyya's project to purify Sufism connects to our analysis of his treatment of spiritual states and stations from the *Tuhfa*. The guiding principle for sound Sufism, according to the *shaykh*, is that it must always be anchored in the *nuṣūṣ*, the Qur'ān and the Sunna. This requires that its theoretical expressions and terminology remain within the framework of the epistemology expressed

18 For a detailed discussion of God's justice in Ibn Taymiyya's theology, see Hoover (2000, ch. 6).

in these texts and that Sufi practices remain in accordance with the revealed law. The *Tuhfa* concerns itself with the spiritual states and stations with which the Sufis have occupied themselves for centuries, though not to directly teach how one traverses through them on the spiritual path, but rather to call attention to their pitfalls, some of which can, in fact, have disastrous implications. The book aims to not only point out what mistakes have become prevalent amongst Sufis and theologians in their regard but also to rectify them and provide correct alternatives.

Here its author relies on a framework of concepts, culminating in a highly systematic analysis of these states and stations to lay bare why certain positions that have been expressed in their regard by adherents of specific spiritual and theological doctrines are flawed and what the correct position should then be. His analysis of the qualities of *tawakkul* and *maḥabba* exemplifies this approach. Although the *Tuhfa* ascribes much more space to both qualities than we can assess here, by merely uncovering how Ibn Taymiyya's understanding of the concepts of *wilāya* and the distinction between divinity and lordship regulate his analyses of trust and love, we were able to observe how he appropriates the language of the Sufis. It is through this conceptual framework that the *shaykh* attempts to ensure a sound appreciation of trust and love as spiritual stations: on that basis, he argues that trust has to be understood as a core aspect of belief in God's lordship, shared by both the generality and the elect of the *awliyāʾ*; and on that basis, he argues that mutual love between God and the believer is indeed a reality and that the most distinguished form of love is experienced by the elect of the *awliyāʾ*. Ibn Taymiyya's analysis is not meant to deny the reality of states and stations, but rather to endorse them as concepts that have an actual basis in the texts of revelation. By doing so, he simultaneously discloses what he considers to be the result of sound spiritual states and stations, which is the servant's conformity to the ethics of God. It is in the station of the elect of God's friends that the utmost degree of ethical, spiritual perfection is reached, a degree that combines conformity to both the legislative and ontological dimension of God's ethics. Thus, for Ibn Taymiyya, this should then be the very objective of correctly practising Sufism.

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Al-Ādāb al-Sharʿiyya by Ibn Muflīḥ

Traditionalist Ethics in Medieval Islam

Ovamir Anjum

1 Introduction

Written by Shams al-Dīn Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad Ibn Muflīḥ ibn Muḥammad al-Maqdisī (d. 763/1362), *al-Ādāb al-Sharʿiyya* (“Divinely Mandated Etiquettes”) is a treasure trove of Islamic moral teachings and a study in late classical traditionalist ethical imagination. During the Mamlūk (r. 648–923/1250–1517) era, grateful for having been spared the Mongol apocalypse, the Sunnī society took a deeply conservative turn, with exceptional scholarly attention paid to the advancement of the sciences of *ḥadīth* and Sunna, by all legal and theological schools, producing compendia, syntheses, and historical and comparative works unmatched by those produced in any earlier or later period. Judicious compilers from Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277), Jamāl al-Dīn al-Mizzī (d. 742/1341), Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348), Tāqī l-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 756/1355), Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 770/1370), and ʿImād al-Dīn Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), to Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449), and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) produced works on *ḥadīth*, Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and history that juiced the enormous intellectual output of the preceding several centuries, sifting through the monumental *ḥadīth* compilations and theological and exegetical studies that they inherited and raising them to new heights of intertextual connectivity and criticism. A few towering minds such as ʿIzz al-Dīn Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām (d. 660/1262), Taqī l-Dīn Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406), and Abū Ishāq al-Shāṭibī (d. 790/1388), to name a few, produced deeply original works that furnished Islam not only with new scholarly depth, but new frameworks of thinking about the tradition and the community, recentring revelation and revelational sciences in a way that both built on but also challenged the existing paradigms. Among the most addressed subjects in the writings of this period is devotional ethics concerned with etiquette (*ādāb*), devotion (*taʿabbud*), psycho-social virtues (*ḥusn al-khuluq*), and self-purification (*tazkiya*). If the great Seljūq period (r. 429–590/1037–1194) theologian and jurist Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) had lived in the Mamlūk realm, perhaps he

would not have complained of the dry scholasticism of his fellow jurists and theologians that he allegedly found in his own time. Among the most active and accomplished writers in this period are the Damascene Ḥanbalīs, whose numbers and intellectual capacity had recently swelled due to recent migrations from three important Ḥanbalī communities, Ḥarrān (e.g., Ibn Taymiyya's family), Jerusalem (the Maqdisī family), and Baghdad (Adem 2015). This essay introduces an important etiquette work by the scion of the Maqdisī family, Ibn Muflīḥ, and places it in its intellectual context.

2 Ibn Muflīḥ and His Work

Our author Ibn Muflīḥ was born in Jerusalem, Palestine (c.710/1210) and moved to Damascus early in his life, where he became a dedicated student of Ibn Taymiyya and an authority on his jurisprudential opinions. He married the daughter of Ḥanbalī jurist and judge Jamāl al-Dīn al-Mirdāwī (d. 769/1367) and himself served as a judge and a deputy of his father-in-law. Several scholars in the Damascene Ḥanbalī circle, including Ibn Taymiyya and his associates al-Dhahabī, Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 751/1350), and Ibn Kathīr praise Ibn Muflīḥ, particularly for his precise knowledge of jurisprudential matters. His most important work that ensured his renown in posterity is *Kitāb al-Furūʿ* ("The Book of Jurisprudence"), which was an important reference work that invited more than one commentaries and has been published in its authoritative version corrected and glossed by al-Mirdāwī.¹

Although devoted to the teachings and the person of his *shaykh* Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn Muflīḥ seems to have been cut from a different cloth, more fitting within his location in the esteemed Maqdisī dynasty of Ḥanbalī scholars in Damascus. In contrast to Ibn Taymiyya's chief disciple, Ibn al-Qayyim, Ibn Muflīḥ appears in this work to have been a more conventional Ḥanbalī. Although he copiously references Ibn Taymiyya, his focus remains on elaborating and organising the opinions attributed to the school's founder, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855). In fact, Ibn Muflīḥ was recognised as the most learned expositor of the Ḥanbalī school, consulted by his more senior colleagues like Ibn al-Qayyim, and his magisterial works are rightly recognised as among the

1 The first publication of *Kitāb al-Furūʿ* was edited by Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (d. 1354/1935) (published at Maṭbaʿat al-Manār in 1341/1923) and another by ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Subkī (published at Dār Miṣr lil-Ṭibāʿa in 1379/1960). A recent edition with al-Mirdāwī's corrections and gloss by Ibn Qundus (d. 861/1456) has been, edited by ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (published in 12 volumes at Muʾassasat al-Risāla in 1424/2003).

most authoritative in Ḥanbalī tradition (Ibn Muflīḥ 1999, 15). Unlike the great intellectual, epistemological, and moral problems of post-classical Islam that occupied Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim and led them to a critical integration of Sufism, theology (*kalām*), and jurisprudence. Ibn Muflīḥ's ethics are largely juristic and traditionist in style, with no hint of Sufi influence. For this reason, and its comprehensive erudition, Ibn Muflīḥ's treatise gives us a privileged window into certain ethical problems in Islamic tradition and sheds light on the nature of the tensions within it.

The treatise is conceived as a treasury of Sharī'a-based or at least Sharī'a-inspired guidance on every conceivable practice in a Muslim society. Each entry in this extensive treatise—three volumes totalling over 1500 pages not including back matter in our edition and containing hundreds of entries—is a collection of scriptural quotations and other received wisdom, enriching and edifying, but not organised to serve a larger argument. A selective narration of the topics will serve to illustrate the range and nature of the subject matter. The treatise opens with hortatory texts on psychological demeanour toward God, encouraging fear, hope, and contentment, and then moves to the social sphere, discouraging slander, hypocrisy, badmouthing, and promiscuity, and an extensive treatment of various forms of lying (see below), promises, and vows. The discussion then returns to the relationship with God in a long chapter on repentance (also discussed below), before resuming socio-religious topics through the rest of the text, starting with one of the more extensive discussions, commanding right and forbidding wrong. The latter includes guidance on addressing just and unjust rulers, and speaking truth to power while also, in keeping with the post-classical Sunnī tradition, emphasising never rebelling against oppressive rulers. Characteristically, no upper limit is placed on the amount of depravity and tyranny that may be tolerated from a nominally Muslim ruler (Ibn Muflīḥ 1999, 196–199). The duty to command right and forbid wrong emerges as a key practice, and a host of practical problems are addressed, such as, whether and if so how might a sinful Muslim be boycotted, God's curse be invoked against sinners, especially murderous tyrants of the past like Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya (d. 64/683) (Ibn Muflīḥ 1999, 1:285), and the duty to forbid wrong be directed at various groups of people, like one's parents, non-Muslim *dhimmīs*, and unrelated women. Next, we encounter virtues of pious men, in particular Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, related for didactic purposes, followed by virtues pertaining to leadership and of exemplary leaders, such as modesty, forbearance, chivalry, and otherworldliness (*zuhd*). These give way to the virtue and etiquette of reading the Qur'ān as well as of handling it with due reverence, including applying perfume to the codex. By the end of the

second volume in our edition, the discussion moves to medicine, starting with the Prophet's permission and instruction to seek cure, and including specific practices recommended by the Prophet, nutritional qualities of a vast range of foods, such as cheese, rice, ginger, milk, and qualities of wearables like silk, wool, and cotton. This ends in a discussion of hygiene, in particular the characteristic medieval Islamic institution of bathhouses, which begins with the *ḥadīth* material on bathing and is followed by the advice of physicians who had indigenised the Greek medical tradition. The treatise ends with guidance on choosing and keeping friends and companions and preparing for death.

Given the vast number of topics addressed and the apparent lack of a central thesis in this work, a good way to appreciate the contours of the Ḥanbalī ethical tradition in this brief space is to dive deeper into selected topics. To this end, we explore Ibn Muflīḥ's treatment of two ethical traits that are often said to be the cardinal Islamic virtues: one vis-à-vis God, repentance, and the other, the cardinal Islamic social virtue, truthfulness. The first is a central religious virtue, which clearly sets Islamic ethics apart from either Greek or modern Western ethics, and the second is a universal virtue shared by all traditions and allows for comparative ethics. Before we turn to that, a few words about the conceptual boundaries of Islamic ethics are in order.

3 Islamic Law as Ethics

The ideas of ethics—of what is right and wrong, or morally beautiful and ugly, respectively—are naturally grounded in one's fundamental worldview, theology or philosophy. Modern philosophers distinguish between the practical question of which actions are right and wrong (first-order concerns) from the theoretical question of the status of moral values and the nature of moral valuing (second-order questions, the concerns of metaethics). One may further subdivide first-order concerns into applied ethics (specific policies and decisions in particular spheres of life; it answers questions such as, "Is it right for one to tell a white lie to make peace between spouses?" and "Ought I to use the printer at work to print my son's homework?") and normative ethics (think of questions such as "What are the general principles of good conduct?" "Ought I to do that which pleases God, or what maximises human benefit, or what a virtuous community considers to be good, or do to others what I would have them do to me?" etc.). Questions of metaethics and normative ethics belong to the domains of Islamic theological discourse, which may be found in *kalām*, exegetical works, and numerous other genres.

Needless to say, metaethics has implications for normative ethics. For Plato (d. 348 BCE), Aristotle (d. 322 BCE), and their disciples, right and wrong were matters of rational inquiry, and the good was inscribed in the nature of things that a philosopher could read through systematic reasoning. In contrast to most modern Western philosophers, given the field's largely atheistic or agnostic approach, ethics is merely a fiction—the debate dwells largely on the kind of fiction it is (Joyce 2011). Muslim scholars, committed to an Omnipotent and Ever-Living God who created humankind to worship Him and equally to the central fact of divine law, did not immediately need to attend to the question of metaethics or applied ethics independently of the divine command. When the theological questions were raised, they differed on how to answer the dilemma Plato had posed to Euthyphro (fl. 400 BCE): Whether an action was good because the gods commanded it or the gods commanded it because it was good (al-Attar 2010, 3). Whereas the early scholars had silently assumed a harmony between the two, the Mu'tazilis who were the first to begin to theologise about ethics contended it was the latter—thus binding God to do what reason demanded. In response, the Ash'arīs, at first the defenders of scripture and traditionalism, insisted it was the former, thus articulating a Divine Command Theory (DCT) of ethics. In fact, to them ethical value had no ontological existence, for the divine command freely and arbitrarily labelled certain acts as licit and hence rewarded in the afterlife, and others as illicit and punishable in the afterlife. This debate in metaethics had little impact on what would fall under normative and applied ethics. For the Mu'tazilis, the traditionalists (who rejected *kalām* as a heretical innovation altogether), and the Ash'arīs (who sought to defend Sunnism using *kalām*), were all committed to upholding the divine law.² Precisely because the leading Ash'arīs held to an extreme version of the Divine Command Theory view, they sought purely psychological and utilitarian, even cynical, explanations for why and how humans universally assign ethical value to acts. People call good what they see as benefiting them, or that which evokes a positive reaction in them (a view today called emotivism). This led Ash'arīs like al-Ghazālī to attend to and write masterfully on the psychological aspect of human action.

Setting aside theory, the problems of applied ethics, or what we have called first-order ethics, were identical to the problem of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), which was derived by all the schools through a combination of scriptural hermeneutics and local customs, and which grew increasingly sophisticated as

2 For this line of reasoning about the attitude of pre-*kalām* jurists as well as the Mu'tazilis and the Ash'arīs, as well as the influence of Greek physician Galen's (d. 216 CE) writings on al-Ghazālī's development of the "purposes of the law" discourse, see El Shamsy (2014).

Islamic civilisation confronted new historical contingencies. In this sense, we can attest to Kevin Reinhart's conclusion: "Islamic law is more basic to Islamic ethics than is either Islamic theology or philosophy," and in fact, "Islamic ethics can refer only to Islamic law and legal theory." "Excluded," he continues, "from Islamic ethics would be the cultural practices which distinguish Algerians from Pakistanis, including their behavioural norms, as well as philosophical ethics. These would fall into the domain of Islamicate ethics and constitute an important field of study in themselves" (Reinhart 1983, 186). This was true in a fundamental sense, the majority of the jurists agreed that the divine law applied to all possible human acts, and the law was to be derived from the two sources (*uṣūl*), the Qurʾān and the Prophetic Sunna.

This same law came to define not only the field of applied norms—how to worship, enter contracts, marry and divorce, make war and peace, etc.—but also what moderns call normative ethics. Unsurprisingly, it was among the Ashʿarīs, whose school eventually dominated the middle period of Islamic history, that the systematisation of the law (that is, Islamic equivalent of applied ethics) led to the formulation of certain inherent purposes that all the particular laws were believed to aim at, thus inaugurating the purposes of the law (*maqāṣid al-sharʿa*) discourse, whose initial purpose seems to have been to fill the vacuum left by the Ashʿarī denial of ontological ethics (El Shamsy 2014, 30).

Until Ibn Taymiyya, Ḥanbalism remained largely focused on scriptural texts and theoretically underdeveloped, with the exception of some brilliantly independent-minded Ḥanbalīs who developed systems influenced more or less by other strands of *kalām*, mostly Ashʿarism (Adem 2015). Formally having rejected Ashʿarī *kalām* and its attendant rationalism, Ḥanbalism remained committed to what we may call "scriptural empiricism"—focused on the preservation of the inherited data and employing largely hermeneutic reasoning. In the intervening centuries that separated the school's eponym Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal from Ibn Muflīḥ's time, Ḥanbalism did not develop an authoritative, independent theoretical foundation until Ibn Taymiyya, but Ibn Muflīḥ does not show any partiality to his framework. Ibn Taymiyya affirmed the existence of ethical truths as ontological, thus siding with the Muʿtazilīs, yet sided with the Ashʿarīs in hinging their salvific effect on divine revelation (Vasalou 2015). Ibn Muflīḥ's *modus operandi* shows a lack of commitment to any particular normative theory of ethics and rather focuses on the applied opinions of the renowned Ḥanbalī authorities as interpreters of the notoriously varied opinions of the school's eponym Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal.

If Miskawayh's (d. 421/1030) ethical approach was indebted to Hellenistic philosophy, al-Ghazālī's to Sufism, and Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim's to scripturalism inflected by Sufism, Ibn Muflīḥ's ethics is jurisprudential in the

Ḥanbalī style. His method is to establish the best case for Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal's opinion by adjudicating the interpretations offered by the school's great authorities, just as he would in any legal matter. This claim takes us back to the earlier observation by Reinhart, that Islamic ethics is nothing but Islamic law, and it also raises a question. Since the normative sources and principles (*uṣūl*) required to pass normative judgment on any human act are the same as in a book of jurisprudence, what room is there for a distinct field that the author addresses in this treatise? The answer lies in the conventions of the genre. In his main text on the Ḥanbalī law, *al-Furū'*, he addresses himself to the standard legal curriculum and organisation of chapters that each of the four Sunnī schools had adopted: from ritual purity to five pillars of worship to commerce and so on, the subject matter and order was more or less fixed. This doubtless served practical comparative and pedagogic functions across the schools.

Less fixed was the genre of etiquettes (*adab*, pl. *ādāb*), which covered practical matters such as motivation for cultivating religious and social virtues, along with guidance on frequently asked religious rulings (*fatāwā*) and anything pertaining to quotidian matters. A distinguished precedent in this genre would be the Shāfi'ī judge al-Māwardī's (d. 450/1058) *Adab al-Dīn wa-l-Dunyā* ("The Ethics of Religion and this World") which covers many of the same topics. Ibn Muflīḥ's treatise is about three times the size and—reflecting perhaps his Ḥanbalī sensibility—largely devoid of the extra-scriptural wisdom and poetry that adorns al-Māwardī's text. Fittingly, Ibn Muflīḥ labels his text *al-Ādāb al-Shar'īyya*—which strictly rendered is "Divinely Mandated Etiquette"—but which could be more accessibly translated as "Divine Guidance on Proper Conduct."

4 On Repentance

An examination of Ibn Muflīḥ's treatment of repentance reveals a few notable points of contrast with the ethics and etiquette works of Ibn al-Qayyim such as *Madārij al-Sālikīn* ("Ranks of the Divine Seekers") and Ibn Taymiyya's similar works. The most glaring difference is the absence of Sufi concerns and authorities. Ibn Muflīḥ's substantial chapter on repentance, a significant concern among orthodox Sufis, forms a notable part of this massive three-volume treatise, but contains almost no Sufi references. A brief analysis of this chapter allows us to understand Ibn Muflīḥ's style, authority, and concerns.

Apart from the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* reports, his main authorities, approximately in order of frequency of reference, are as follows:

1. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, whose terse responses to incidental questions are systematised through the commentaries of the school's foremost authorities.
2. Taqī l-Dīn Ibn Taymiyya (upon whose death in 728/1328 Ibn Muflīḥ would have been in his teens, but the young man was recognised and praised by him as a prodigy), referred to as "*shaykh* Taqī l-Dīn" rather than the usual "*shaykh* al-Islām," is the most frequently invoked authority in resolving doctrinal complexities, and whose resolution is at times preferred even to Ibn Ḥanbal's opinion.
3. The Baghdādī scholar al-Sāmīrī's (d. 616/1219) *al-Mustawʿib* ("The Comprehensive," a compendium of Ḥanbalī law), consulted for definitions and such.
4. The Baghdādī master Abū l-Wafā' Ibn 'Aqīl's (d. 513/1119) *Fuṣūl al-Ādāb wa-Makārim al-Akhlāq al-Mashrūʿa* ("Treatise on Islamic Manners") and his magnum opus of legendary length *al-Funūn* ("The Notebooks").
5. The Ḥarrānī Ḥanbalī Aḥmad Ibn Ḥamdān's (d. 695/1295) *al-Riʾāya* ("The Guardianship") and *Nihāyat al-Mubtadiʿīn fī Uṣūl al-Dīn* ("The Ultimate for Beginners in the Fundamentals of Religion").
6. The Baghdādī celebrity preacher 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn al-Jawzī's (d. 597/1201) exegesis *Zād al-Masīr fī 'Ilm al-Tafsīr* ("Provisions of the Wayfarer in the Knowledge of Qur'ānic Exegesis") and other works.
7. The Baghdādī Ḥanbalī Abū Ya'la al-Farrā's (d. 458/1066) *Kitāb al-Mu'tamad fī Uṣūl al-Dīn* ("The Book of Authority on the Fundamentals of Religion").

The non-Ḥanbalīs mentioned include the Mālikī al-Qāḍī 'Iyād (d. 544/1149), and the Shāfi'ī commentator on *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* Yahyā ibn Sharaf al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277) among others. The discussion is indicative of typical traditionalist concern with the right practice and feeling based on authoritative traditions. Completely absent are the Sufis' psychological discussions of inner states, stations, passing away into God, and the like, or even asceticism. Absent as well is the discussion of love for God, to which barely one page is devoted in the entire treatise, and even then, the reason for loving God is given to be God's blessings and gifts. This is a far cry from the overwhelming emphasis on love for God as the essence of all worship in Ibn Taymiyya's and Ibn al-Qayyim's writings. This suggests that the love discourse may not have been the norm among the Ḥanbalīs and its overwhelming presence in Ibn Taymiyya and some of his disciples may have been the result of *shaykh* al-Islām's own synthesis, one in which Sufism, especially its Baghdādī tradition going back to the orthodox masters such as al-Junayd (d. 298/910) and his circle that emphasised intense love for God, played a notable role.

Ibn Muflīḥ's negotiation of disagreement shows his heavy reliance on tradition, minimal employment of independent reasoning, and preference for Ibn Taymiyya's resolutions. In the section on the rulings of repentance, for instance, we find a discussion of selective repentance; whether one may repent from some sins without repenting from all. The discussion begins with the declaration that "repentance is obligated by revelation, not reason, in opposition to the Mu'tazila," with no further comment (Ibn Muflīḥ 1999, 1:85). This shows the Ash'arī resolution of the issue that many traditionalist Ḥanbalīs had adopted. Notably, Ibn Taymiyya challenged this, contending that most obligations were established by both revelation and reason simultaneously.

Next, Ibn Taymiyya is invoked to state the principle that general repentance (*tawba ʿamma*) suffices all sins except if there is a reason to exclude particular sins from it (such as sins that one would commit whenever given the opportunity, and does not intend to repent from specifically). It is also sound to repent from some to the exclusion of others. Ibn Muflīḥ now reproduces the contradicting opinion by Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, as quoted and defended by Ibn ʿAqīl. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal reportedly said that if one were to say that he gives up fornication but will not desist from looking at forbidden women, his repentance is no good. Ibn ʿAqīl then notes that the validity of selective repentance is the position of the people of Sunna (*ahl al-sunna*), but elsewhere endorses the opposite opinion, quoting another one of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal's anecdotal opinions that if a man were to possess one hundred virtues but drink *nabīdh* (a grape drink of disputed validity), this one deed would erase all. Ibn Muflīḥ declares Ibn ʿAqīl's reasoning and endorsement of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal unconvincing, and instead endorses Ibn Taymiyya's view, one that involved a charitable if somewhat unconvincing reinterpretation of Aḥmad's words (Ibn Muflīḥ 1999, 1:86). Ibn Muflīḥ goes on to attribute the view claiming the invalidity of selective repentance to *kalām* theologians, mentioning Ibn ʿAqīl and the Mālikī Abū Bakr [al-Bāqillānī] (d. 403/1013) as its advocates, and closes the discussion with Ibn Taymiyya's conclusion that a general (*mujmal*) supplication for repentance neither necessarily includes nor excludes particular sins, whereas an explicitly general (*ʿamm*) repentance, when one says something like "I repent from all my sins" suffices all sins (Ibn Muflīḥ 1999, 1:88). Even though invested in sorting and authenticating the opinions of the school's eponym, this instance shows that Ibn Muflīḥ is not shy to reject Ibn Ḥanbal's opinions.

Ibn Muflīḥ's exposition of subtle issues at times lacks clarity and confident insight that is characteristic of Ibn al-Qayyim's scholarship. In the case of selective repentance, for instance, Ibn Muflīḥ's exposition of the matter does not quite bring out the peculiar aspect of Ibn Ḥanbal's opinion, which pertains to someone who explicitly refuses to repent from a particular sin, rather

than merely neglecting to repent from it. This lack of clarity becomes evident when compared to Ibn al-Qayyim's discussion of the same issue in *Madārij al-Sālikīn*. Ibn al-Qayyim mentions that Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal has two opinions on the matter, and after detailing the case for both positions in a far more organised fashion, but without quoting authorities like Ibn 'Aqil or even Ibn Taymiyya, gives his own reasoned judgment, namely, that repentance is divisible between classes of acts, such that repentance of a sin, such as fornication, must include rejection of all associated and comparable sins (such as fornication with any woman, not with only a particular woman) (Anjum 2020, 1:588). Notwithstanding the greater clarity of Ibn al-Qayyim's writing, for someone interested in cataloguing the opinions of the school's great authorities, however, Ibn Muflīḥ's text is clearly more useful.

5 On Truthfulness and Its Limits: Ruses and White Lies (*Ma'ārīḍ*) as a Way Out of Lying

Next, we examine Ibn Muflīḥ's discussion of truthfulness and its limits in practice. His discussion of the nature and limits of *ma'ārīḍ* is organised around the responses of the school's eponym, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal. He deploys Aḥmad's responses to resolve the (real or apparent) tensions within the scriptural corpus, and then invokes later Ḥanbalī authorities to resolve tensions or ambiguity within Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal's responsa. Furthermore, whereas Ibn Muflīḥ deploys Ibn Taymiyya's opinions frequently, his treatment of the subject matter represents a different synthesis of Ibn Taymiyya's teachings than the one represented in the writings of Ibn al-Qayyim. Because of Ibn Muflīḥ's central concern with traditional Ḥanbalism elaborated through authoritative reports and jurisprudence, encouraged perhaps by his own location as the scion of the great Maqdisī family of Damascene Ḥanbalis, his copious use of Ibn Taymiyya's teachings does not alter the nature and direction of his ethical outlook, and in some ways remains continuous with the works of earlier Ḥanbalis like Ibn al-Jawzī, Ibn Ḥamdān, and Ibn 'Aqil. Ibn Taymiyya appears in this text as a great Ḥanbalī authority rather than an iconoclastic reformer. In contrast, Ibn al-Qayyim writes as an independent authority who shares Ibn Taymiyya's wider horizon of concerns and authorities, and in whose writings Ibn Taymiyya is a singular *mujtahid muṭlaq*, not merely the latest in a long line of Ḥanbalī masters.

Ibn Muflīḥ's discussion of truthfulness as a virtue allows us to further explore the nature of traditionalist ethics. Ibn Muflīḥ takes the virtue of truthfulness for granted, reproducing copious reports about its merit with God, rather than

offering a rational, psychological, or social analysis. The task of defining truthfulness and its limits is accomplished obliquely, through a considerable treatment of the ambiguity created by the grey area between truth-telling and lying, an area referred to in Islamic tradition as *ma'āriḍ*, which may be rendered in English as *ruses*, *white lies*, *equivocation*, or *misdirection*. This discussion brings out the significance as well as limitations of the imperative of truthfulness in classical Islamic ethics and allows one to reflect on the relationship between revelation and ethical theorisation.

Truthfulness is a fundamental moral commitment in Islam, as well as in the Hellenistic and other moral traditions in the premodern world that came to heavily inflect Islamic ethics. Modern mainstream Western philosophers remain concerned with truthfulness only marginally as a useful ethic. Having lost any ultimate grounding for morality, as noted earlier, most non-theistic philosophers consider morality a useful fiction (Joyce 2011). Among the more insightful treatments of the practical limits of truthfulness remains the famous humourist Mark Twain's (d. 1910) treatment of the subject in two essays, which as one scholar recently noted contain "the most original things ever written about lying" (Mahon 2017, 95). Twain observed frankly that the right thing to do is to discern "what sorts of lies are best and wholesomest to be indulged, seeing as we *must* all lie and we *do* all lie, and what sorts it may be best to avoid" (Mahon 2017, 95). Only children and fools tell the truth all the time.

What Twain means by lying is a rather extensive range of things, including the silent lie, which he claimed was much more common than the spoken lie. When a woman, proud of always being truthful in a gathering, challenged Twain, he probed her until she acknowledged that she had lied just that day by filling out a form evaluating a kind and competent nurse taking care of her baby and leaving her answer about negligence blank, even though she believed that the nurse left the baby uncovered for too long while making the baby's bed. This fact, the woman had thought, need not be mentioned. This gesture that most would consider noble, to Twain, is the silent lie. Another kind of lie Twain discovers is not deceptive at all: to fail to acknowledge to a friend that you were offended by his remark is a nondeceptive lie. On this exaggerated definition, lying might even be a virtue at times. Lying is not limited to words; its ambit includes gestures. Some lies are true on the surface but intended to mislead, with or without malice. Twain reports that he once told the police that he belonged to the same family as the Prince of Wales, when he silently meant the human family! This Twain calls "modified lies," an unimaginative label that can be better replaced with ruse. Finally, there are well-meaning, pleasing lies sometimes called white lies. The mildest version of this could be: we say we are truly grateful for something for which we do not in fact feel grateful. Thus, we

have the following distinctions in classes of lies from Twain: (1) the silent vs. spoken, (2) deceptive vs. nondeceptive, (3) gestural vs. spoken, (4) modified vs. literal, and (5) pleasing vs. malicious lies. In all these instances, Twain's list still assumes that all lies are *intentional*.

Let us now turn to Ibn Muflīḥ's treatment of the limits and ambiguities of social truthfulness, and in particular the issue to which his juristically inflected ethics dedicates most space, *ma'ārīḍ*. Let us begin with the definition of a lie, *kadhib*. Ibn Muflīḥ's attempt at a definition through a selection of reports appears somewhat belated in the section on lying. We learn here that intention is not a necessary element of lying (*khadib*), which is why the Prophet (upon him be peace) explicitly added intentionality (*ta'ammud*) at times when warning about punishable lying (Ibn Muflīḥ 1999, 1:53). This Ibn Muflīḥ declares to be the doctrine of *ahl al-sunna*, in contrast to the approach of some *kalām* scholars who consider intentionality to be necessary to lie (Ibn Muflīḥ 1999, 1:53, 55). On the question of whether lying could be about the future, there is some ambiguity in the *ḥadīth* reports (see below). Should a promise one makes but does not intend to or fails to keep be labelled a lie? Ibn Muflīḥ produces evidence against it, suggesting that only statements of fact (past or present) can be called lies (Ibn Muflīḥ 1999, 1:59).

Ibn Muflīḥ's collection of reports and commentaries is not ordered along a clear scheme, starting with a definition, and proceeding with explanations. Rather, it moves through a series of questions, each addressed through the invocation of relevant *ḥadīth* traditions followed by authoritative scholarly commentary.

To organise this material in a theoretical framework, I classify the report-cum-commentaries into four classes.

The first class are those that emphasise the absolute virtue of truthfulness and the evil of lying. Let us call these the "absolutist" reports. The second are those where the definition of lying is extended to include the spreading of rumours and careless reporting; let us call this class of reports "intensification," as they intensify the prohibition. A third class of reports are the well-known occasions where the prohibition on lying is liable to relaxation. Finally, a fourth class of reports are those where a permissive attitude toward utilitarian lying is suggested.

The first class of *ḥadīth* reports is straightforward. Truthfulness is the font of all righteousness and leads to high ranks with God, whereas lying is the font of all wickedness and a path to hell (Ibn Muflīḥ 1999, 1:37).

The second class of reports that intensify the harm of lying includes reports that declare that *lying* was the single most hated vice to the Prophet and his companions (Ibn Muflīḥ 1999, 1:45; a report in *Musnad Aḥmad*). Numerous

traditions list lying as the signature of a hypocrite—one who is not a believer but only pretends to be one. Even minor acts of dishonesty are included in its scope: a woman who pretends to have received a gift from her husband to make her co-wife envious is declared a wrongful liar (Ibn Muflīḥ 1999, 1:45). *Lying* in jest to elicit fun and laughter too is damned (Ibn Muflīḥ 1999, 1:45), although the *ḥadīth* reports on this point are at best acceptable (*ḥasan*). In one report mentioned earlier, *lying* even to romance one's wife is discouraged, but promises and flattery are permitted (Ibn Muflīḥ 1999, 1:49). Finally, the most strident warnings occur in reporting lies on the authority of the Prophet (upon him be peace); "Whoever reports on my authority something he knows to be a lie is one of the liars" (Ibn Muflīḥ 1999, 1:51), and the well-known warning that "Whoever lies about me knowingly shall make his place in fire" (Ibn Muflīḥ 1999, 1:53). These warnings are relaxed when reporting from the Israelite tradition, presumably because Muslims, aware of the possibility of its error, ought not to rely on it for authority, but only use it for religious enrichment (Ibn Muflīḥ 1999, 1:51–52). Here, Ibn Muflīḥ glosses, invoking the authority of al-Shāfi'ī (d. 204/820), that the relaxation is only about those reports whose falsehood is not known (Ibn Muflīḥ 1999, 1:51).

The high bar in the second class of reports—no lying even in jest—is adjusted in some Prophetic reports where the Prophet himself uses clever ruses to make a joke, as when he tells an old woman who wishes to enter paradise, "No old women will enter paradise!," then telling the befuddled woman that her youth will be restored before she enters paradise. Similarly, he tells a man who asks for a camel that he can only give him the child of a camel, and then discloses to the dejected man that all camels are children of other camels (Ibn Muflīḥ 1999, 1:41–42). In these cases, a half-truth is used to create a humorous yet benevolent tension, which is then immediately resolved. This is to be differentiated from humour in which malicious lies are told to have a laugh or fun at others' expense.

A third class of reports includes those that mitigate the prohibition of lying by naming three exceptional circumstances in which lying is permissible: love, war, and peace-making (Ibn Muflīḥ 1999, 1:48–49). Numerous *ḥadīth* reports are given by Ibn Muflīḥ to establish that lying is explicitly said to be permissible in three cases: to make peace (between two Muslims; it is debated whether it is permissible to lie when making peace between two non-Muslims), to please one's wife (or spouse), and the use of stratagem in war in order to misdirect the enemy. However, there is debate about whether these three lies are true lies, as in actual misstatement of facts, or merely ruses (*ma'ārīḍ*). Some reports suggest that the Prophet said to a man who sought permission to lie to his wife, "There is no benefit in lying," but when he asked permission to romance his

wife by making promises and saying colourful things, the Prophet (upon him be peace) relented (Ibn Muflīḥ here cites a report from *al-Muwattaʿ* of Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179/795), Ibn Muflīḥ 1999, 1:49). Does this mean that no actual lying is permissible even under exceptional circumstances but only ruses or strategies that misdirect or disclose only part of the truth? This is one possible interpretation. This was Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī's (d. 124/742) understanding, who said that the Prophet has never—and in another report he says no (religious authority in Islam) has ever—permitted “what people call lying,” rather, what they permit is *ruses*. This statement appears in the context of the following *ḥadīth* report that Ibn Muflīḥ records, “A liar is not one who makes peace between people, saying good things or increasing good news (*yanmī khayran*, by way of publicising or exaggerating)” (found in al-Bukhārī and Muslim, Ibn Muflīḥ 1999, 1:48). Al-Zuhrī insists that what is permitted here is merely ruses, not actual lying. The other extreme is occupied by some later authorities such as Ibn al-Jawzī, who permits utilitarian lying rather freely. Here, we note that at least two further issues are contested. First, is outright lying ever permissible, or only *maʿārīḍ* (ruses, evasive and euphemistic speech)? Or are these ruses to be avoided unless one has no other choice? Second, are these three exceptions the only ones, or simply examples of the kinds of “lies” or ruses that are permissible? In other words, can these three classes be extended to include any and all well-intentioned lying? To address these, Ibn Muflīḥ characteristically offers *ḥadīth* reports and authoritative opinions to support various opinions without offering decisive answers.

A fourth class of reports seems to contrast with the strident prohibition found in the second class of reports, and stretches the permission granted in the third class to such an extent that it begins to appear utilitarian. These reports are primarily Qurʾānic, such as in the case of prophet Abraham (the only one Ibn Muflīḥ mentions), and one may add anecdotes featuring prophets Joseph and Solomon, who all employ *maʿārīḍ* in order to fulfil their missions. Abraham claims to be sick (*saqīm*) in order to break the idols and then make a point about their helplessness (Ibn Muflīḥ 1999, 1:43), and Prophet Muḥammad declared this to be one of three occasions when Abraham lied. In each case, Abraham's lie turns out to be a ruse, for the truth is discovered shortly after and the moral lesson is uncovered, which means that the prophet is using the widest definition of lying, inclusive of even permissible ruses. The Qurʾān also mentions a similar ruse by Joseph to keep his full brother and force his half-brothers to return (Q 12:70–78). In these verses, Joseph does not explicitly lie, but hides the king's cup in his brother's luggage, allowing the misunderstanding to play out in his favour, and taking advantage of the law, keeps his brother to himself. Ibn Muflīḥ does not mention these rather revealing

Qur'ānic examples, which suggests his focus on *ḥadīth* reports. He does mention a *ḥadīth* report in which a companion lies to a righteous Medinan man declared by the Prophet (upon him be peace) to be a man of paradise. The young companion claims that having disputed with his father, he had no place to stay, and seeks to be the man's guest for a few days to find out the virtue that earned him this honour, thus taking a well-intentioned lie to its extreme (Ibn Muflīḥ 1999, 1:49; the *ḥadīth* is in *Musnad Aḥmad*, declared *ṣaḥīḥ*). In this last case, the sought-after virtue is found to be benevolence or goodwill toward all Muslims. Even though the Prophet (upon him be peace) is not involved in the report, the assumption in the pious ethical literature is that such a well-intentioned lie—and this is not merely a ruse—would be permissible.

The scholarly resolution to these tensions ranges from the Ash'arī-leaning Ḥanbalī Ibn al-Jawzī's utilitarian opinion on the one end of the spectrum—who declares the principle to be “lying to attain any praiseworthy goal that cannot otherwise be attained is permissible, if the goal is an obligation, so is lying to attain it”—to the Mu'tazilī-leaning Ḥanbalī Abū l-Khaṭṭāb (d. 510/1116), who declared lying to be an inherently evil act that is impermissible in all cases, yet one that becomes a lesser evil in cases where it is direly needed such as to save an innocent person's life (Ibn Muflīḥ 1999, 1:39). Ibn Muflīḥ's lack of theoretical curiosity is indicated by his reproduction of Ibn al-Jawzī's utilitarian opinion without any resistance. If consistently followed, lying would appear to be no different from truth-telling. It is only the result that would determine its permissibility. As such, it is not clear whether lying in Ibn al-Jawzī's opinion is any different from drinking a cup of water or riding a horse: good if the purpose is good, necessary if the goal is necessary, and bad if the end result is bad. Ibn Muflīḥ begins his entire discussion with Ibn al-Jawzī's opinion but does not make it clear whether his later presentation is meant to disqualify Ibn al-Jawzī's permissivism or endorse it. Extensively quoted as well are the more theoretically astute traditionalists ranging from Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī to Ibn Taymiyya who, in contrast to Ibn al-Jawzī, adopted extreme caution against lying and avoided drawing loose utilitarian conclusions.

6 Conclusion

This chapter introduces and sheds light on the strengths and limits of Ḥanbalī traditionalist ethical teachings as found in Ibn Muflīḥ's treatise *al-Ādāb al-Shar'īyya*. Contrasted to modern ethics, a few peculiarities may be noted. First, every imaginable practice from birth to death has moral expectations and ends. From ritual to hygiene, every practice falls either directly under a

legal ruling of prohibition or obligation, or a more nebulous but vast category of permission, with possibly a positive or negative recommendation. Even truly neutral matters, such as the health effects of consuming ginger, make their way into this ethical manual, for they still could fall under the telos of keeping the body healthy in order to serve God. The Islamic jurist is not a modern lawyer whose legal concerns are separable from the moral ones, but the Prophet's heir, and as such, a moral exemplar who brings the revealed law to bear on all problems of human life. This contrasts sharply with the modern, secular world in which seeking refinement, beauty, and benefit, on the one hand, and righteousness and salvation on the other are distinct goals separated by legally and socially maintained boundaries.

Second, the traditionalist discourse on ethics does not carve out a domain for itself that is separate from the jurisprudential enterprise of deciphering the right course of conduct, but simply complements it by filling in the blanks left by the strictly legal questions found in typical manuals of *madhhab* law, and shedding light on the practical question of how to acquire the right dispositions and virtues.

Third, virtues in this tradition are acquired through maximum exposure to scriptural text and embodiment in communities of learning and proper legal practice. The lack of theoretical focus minimises controversy, yet also runs the risk of turning traditions into a bleached, result-oriented instrument to attain seemingly pious goals. With the notable exception of Ibn Taymiyya and his disciples, theoretical analysis was often not the traditionalists' forte. They aspired, rather, to emulate the Prophetic conduct in concrete cases. Ibn Muflīḥ's extensive treatise gives us a privileged window into this field of "ethics as jurisprudence."

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This book transcends the narrow philosophical concept of ethics confined to the Greek model, demonstrating that "Islamic ethics" is an interdisciplinary field. It encompasses both theoretical and practical ethics, incorporating disciplines such as Qur'an, *ḥadīth*, biography of the Prophet (*sīra*), theology (*kalām*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*), Sufism, and philosophy. The book provides analytical readings of a list of Islamic ethical heritage sources covering a period from the 3rd/9th to the 8th/14th century. It emphasises two ideas: first, the richness and diversity of ethical perspectives within Islamic tradition, showcasing multiple approaches including the Greek philosophical, narrative, and analytical approach belonging to other disciplines beyond philosophy. Second, it challenges the perception of scarcity in ethical sources within Islamic civilization.

Contributors: Matthew Anderson, Ovamir Anjum, Raja Bahlul, Hans Daiber, Omar Farahat, Mohammed Ghaly, Paul Heck, Mutaz al-Khatib, Taneli Kukkonen, Chafika Ouail, Arjan Post, and Jason Welle.

MUTAZ AL-KHATIB (PhD 2009) is Associate Professor of Methodology and Ethics at the Research Centre for Islamic Legislation and Ethics (CILE), Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), Doha, Qatar. He is also director of the MA in Applied Islamic Ethics programme at the College of Islamic Studies at the same university. His publications include *Radd al-Ḥadīth min Jihat al-Matn* (2011), *al-'Unf al-Mustabāḥ* (2017), *Qabūl al-Ḥadīth* (2017), and *Ḥadīth and Ethics Through the Lens of Interdisciplinarity* (2023).

يتجاوز هذا الكتاب المفهوم الفلسفي الضيق للأخلاق الذي انحبس في النموذج اليوناني، ويُظهر أن "الأخلاق الإسلامية" حقلاً متعدد التخصصات. فمن جهة، يشمل الأخلاق النظرية والعملية. ومن جهة أخرى، يستوعب مختلف التخصصات مثل القرآن، والحديث، والسيرة النبوية، وعلوم الكلام والفقه والتصوف والفلسفة. يقدم الكتاب قراءات تحليلية لقائمة من مصادر التراث الأخلاقي الإسلامي التي تغطي فترة زمنية تمتد من القرن الثالث إلى القرن الثامن الهجريين. ويلج الكتاب على فكرتين: الأولى: ثراء التصورات الأخلاقية وتنوعها داخل التراث الإسلامي؛ حيث نرى فيه أمثلاً متعددة كالنمط الفلسفي اليوناني، والنمط النصي السرد، والنمط التحليلي الذي ينتمي إلى تخصصات أخرى غير الفلسفة. والثانية: سعة التراث الأخلاقي الإسلامي بعد أن ساد تصور يرى أن مصادر الأخلاق شحيحة في الحضارة الإسلامية.

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