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‘AWĀREF AL-MA‘ĀREF

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a classic work on Sufism by Šehāb-al-dīn Sohrawardī (1145-1234)

‘AWĀREF al-MA‘ĀREF (Kind gifts of [mystic] knowledge), a classic work on Sufism by Šehāb-al-dīn Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Omar b. Moḥammad Sohrawardī (b. 539/1145 in Sohraward near Zanjān, d. 632/1234 in Baghdad, a Shafe‘ite *faqīh*, celebrated Sufī master, and *šaykh-al-šoyūkh* (dean of Sufī masters) of Baghdad (appointed by the caliph al-Nāṣer in 599/1202-03). Šehāb-al-dīn has sometimes been confused with his paternal uncle and spiritual guide, Abu’l-Najīb ‘Abd-al-Qāher b. ‘Abdallāh Sohrawardī (d. 563/1168), the founder of the Sohrawardi Order, and with the Illuminationist (*ešrāqī*) theosopher Šehāb-al-dīn Yahyā b. Ḥabaš Sohrawardī Maqtūl (d. 587/1191).

Sohrawardī’s work demonstrates the increasing tendency of Sufis to organize and systematize their teachings; it soon gained wide acceptance as the standard manual for matters pertaining to the duties of masters and disciples. It was translated into Persian by Qāsem Dāwūd Kaṭīb Darāča in ca. 639/1241-42, and by Esmā‘īl b. ‘Abd-al-Mo‘men b. ‘Abd-al-Jalīl b. Abī Manšūr Māšāda in 665/1266 (ed. Q. Anšārī, Tehran, 1364 Š./1985; cf. N. Māyel Heravī, “Tarjama-ye ‘Awāref al-ma‘āref-e Sohrawardī,” *Našr-e dāneš* 6, 1364 Š./1985-86, pp. 114-20). Other Persian translations were made by Zahr-al-dīn ‘Abd-al-Raḥmān b. Shaikh Najīb-al-dīn ‘Alī b. Bozgoš (d. 716/1316; cf. Brockelmann, *GAL*, S. II, p. 789), Šadr-al-dīn Jonayd b. Faẓlallāh b. ‘Abd-al-Raḥmān Šīrāzī (d. 791/1389, including a commentary called *Dayl al-ma‘āref*), Kamālzāda Čalabī, and Behbūd ‘Alī Korāsānī (13th/19th century). All these works are extant (Mā‘el Heravī, art. cit., p. 117). Ḥājji Kalīfa cites an addendum (*ta‘līqa*) by the famous theologian and philosopher Sayyed Šarīf Jorjānī (d. 816/1413-14), an abridgment by Moḥebb-al-dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Abdallāh Ṭabarī Makkī Šāfe‘ī (d. 694/1294-95), and a Turkish translation by ‘Ārefī (*Kašf al-zonūn* [Istanbul], cols. 1177-78; Brockelmann mentions a Turkish translation by Moḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ‘Alī Kabbāz completed in 938/1531). The ‘*Awāref*’ is said to have been introduced into Indian Sufism through a summary written by Farīd-al-dīn Mas‘ūd Ganj-e Šekar (d. 664/1265; *ET*² II, p. 796). In India as elsewhere it remained one of the most popular Sufī manuals (A. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Chapel Hill, 1975, p. 348).

Most sources, including Ḥājji Kalīfa, refer to *Mešbāḥ al-hedāya* by ‘Ezz-al-dīn Maḥmūd b. ‘Alī Kāšānī (d. 735/1335) as a Persian translation of ‘*Awāref*’ (hence the title of *Mešbāḥ*’s awkward and partial English translation by H. Wilberforce Clarke: *The ‘Awarif-l-Ma‘arif*, Calcutta, 1891; repr. New York, 1970). Kāšānī himself writes that he had received an “influx” (*wāred*) from the Unseen World telling him to compose an independent work based on the words of the great masters and including his own intuitions (‘*endīyat*’) and inspirations (*foṭūḥāt*) “such that most of the roots and branches of ‘*Awāref al-ma‘āref*’ would be included” (*Mešbāḥ al-hedāya*, ed. J. Homā‘ī, Tehran, 1324 Š./1945, pp. 7-8; cf. Homā‘ī’s introd., p. 37). Comparison of the tables of contents of ‘*Awāref*’ and *Mešbāḥ*’ is enough to show that the two works bear little resemblance in structure, while those passages which are indeed based upon ‘*Awāref*’ (often indicated by reference to “Šaykh-

al-eslām”) have usually been expanded and/or rewritten.

Sohravadī displays a deep concern to defend Sufism from its detractors and to demonstrate its roots in the Koran and Hadith. He provides detailed quotations from earlier authorities (many of them not known as Sufis) with full chains of authority (*esnād*). He criticizes those who have falsely attached themselves to Sufism (chap. 9) and identifies true Sufis with “the people brought nigh to God” (*al-moqarrabūn*) mentioned in the Koran (chap. 1, Beirut, 1966, p. 18). Much of the text is taken up by quotations and *esnāds*, but Sohravadī’s own contributions are far from insignificant. He demonstrates skill in formulating sophisticated and fresh explanations of well-known terms, weaving together elements from the authorities he has quoted and from his own understanding and intuition (see, for example, his explanation of the terms *nafs*, *rūh*, *qalb*, and *serr*, chapter 56, [pp. 449-55]; compare this with Kāšānī’s much expanded version, *Meṣbāh*, pp. 82-103).

The sixty-three chapters (*bāb*) of the *‘Awāref* can be divided into five major sections: Chapters 1-9: the term “Sufism” (*taṣawwof*); what sets Sufis apart from other Muslims. Chapters 10-28: specific institutions and practices connected with Sufism, including the Shaikh, the spiritual companion (*kādem*), the cloak of initiation (*kerqa*), and the Sufi center (*rebāt*); traveling (*safar*) as opposed to staying in the *rebāt*; marrying (*ta’ahhol*) as opposed to staying single (*tajarrod*); listening to music (*samā’*); spiritual retreats (*arba’īniya*). Chapters 29-30: the character traits (*aklāq*) of the Sufis, such as humility (*tawāzō’*), kindness (*modārāt*), charity (*īṭār*), forgiveness (*tajāwoz*), cheerfulness (*talāqat al-wajh*), indulgence (*sohūla*), abandoning affectations (*tark al-takallof*), and contentment (*qanā’ā*). Chapters 31-55: propriety and proper conduct (*adab*), including the Sufi’s attitude toward God; the performance of the specific ritual practices such as ablutions (*tahāra*), prayer (*ṣalāt*), and fasting (*ṣawm*) common to all Muslims; everyday activities such as eating (*akl*) and sleeping (*nawm*); vigils (*qīām al-layl*); relationship between shaikh and disciple (*morīd*). Chapters 56-63: the different kinds of knowledge (*ma’refa*) and inspiration (*kawāṭer*); the states (*aḥwāl*) and the stations (*maqāmāt*) of the spiritual travelers.

Bibliography:

The text has often been printed in commercial editions, e.g., Beirut, 1966; and on the margin of Ġazālī’s *Eḥyā’ ‘olūm al-dīn*, Cairo, 1327/1909.

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