

Wiesbaden 1954, 231-43

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B. Radtke, *Al-Ḥakīm at-Tirmidī, Ein islamischer Theosoph des 3./9. Jahrhunderts*, Freiburg 1980

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2. Ibn al-‘Arabī and after in the Arabic and Persian lands and beyond.

i. *The present state of research.* Judgements here have to be made with caution, since this period is far less known and far less studied than the first one. There is little doubt, however, about its importance, and Marshall Hodgson was probably right when he wrote “Once the Ṣūfis came to espouse a distinctive metaphysic, that metaphysic became the most influential form of speculation among Muslims generally . . . Ṣūfism, especially the new intellectualizing expressions of it, served more than any other movement to draw together all strands of intellectual life” (*The venture of Islam*, Chicago 1974, ii, 230). The teachings of Ibn al-‘Arabī (560-638/1165-1240 [q.v.]) were without doubt pervasively influential, but the exact nature of this needs exploration, as do the works of his followers and commentators; also, several of his contemporaries were authors of major importance who established lines of teaching and influence that extended for centuries to come.

There is the further problem of defining Ṣūfism/ *taṣawwuf*’ in this period. Authors known as Ṣūfis may or may not have applied the term to themselves. All through the period one finds a broad spectrum of attitudes, beliefs and practices that have been labelled as Ṣūfism by both Muslims and outside observers. One is also overwhelmed by the sheer mass and diversity of material, in various forms of art, a vast range of devotional material, popular stories, hagiographies, handbooks on *adab*, collections of sayings or *malḡūzāḡ* [q.v. in Suppl.], etc. The Ṣūfī orders [see [TARĪKA](#)] display its social and political aspect, but Ṣūfism continued to be transmitted by other channels also; Ṣūfī texts became part of the curriculum for any well-educated scholar.

ii. *The Ṣūfism of Ibn al-‘Arabī*. If Ibn al-‘Arabī came to be known as *al-shaykh al-akbar*, “the Greatest Master”, this is because he offered enormously erudite and challenging explanations of all the basic issues of Islamic theory and practice. However, given the complexity, profundity, prolixity, and diversity of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s writings, it is difficult if not impossible to make categorical statements about his views on any important theoretical issue. Certainly the attempts that have often made to categorise his thinking—such as calling it “static” as opposed to “dynamic” (Massignion and Gardet)—have little basis in his writings. Although we are told everywhere in the later literature, both Islamic and Western, that Ibn al-‘Arabī established the perspective of *waḡdat al-wuḡjūd*, he never employs this expression, which has a complex history among both his followers and his critics, meaning different things to different authors (see Chittick, *Rūmī and waḡdat al-wuḡjūd*, in *Poetry and mysticism in Islam*, Cambridge 1994, 70-111). It is misleading to say without qualification that Ibn al-‘Arabī believes in any specific doctrine. On any given issue, his position depends on the standpoint he chooses to adopt in the context, and he acknowledges the conditional validity of every standpoint. This relativity of standpoints does not negate the fact that some standpoints are more true than others, or that immediate happiness after death can only be achieved by following the prophets, which, in Islamic terms, means observing the *sharī‘a*.

Once we treat generalisations with caution, we can say that certain notions play central roles in Ibn al-‘Arabī’s thinking, such as *wuḡjud* (existence, being, finding), the divine names, God’s self-disclosure (*taḡjallī* [q.v.]), and imagination (*khayāl*). Probably the most basic of these notions, however, is the perfect human being (*al-insān al-kāmil*), who is looked upon as integrating of all reality, since he is the origin and goal of the universe, the model and criterion for human development, and the guide on the path to God. Several of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s works, such as his famous *Fuṣūṣ al-ḡikam*, his monumental *al-Futūḡāt al-makkiyya*, and his short *al-‘Abādila*, are structured in terms of various modalities of human perfection. These modalities in turn are viewed as manifestations of the multiform reality of the Qur’ān (see Chodkiewicz, *Ocean*, ch. 2), and every standpoint of his starts from the Qur’ān and the basic hermeneutical principle that God intends every sense that can be understood from his Word without distorting the plausible meanings of the Arabic language.

Instead of attempting to summarise Ibn al-‘Arabī’s worldview, it may be useful to suggest how his perspective might help us understand the place of Ṣūfism in Islamic history. It is well to keep in mind, however, that Ibn al-‘Arabī would probably not call himself a “Ṣūfī” in any limiting sense, since he rarely employs the term, and, in a tripartite division of the Men of God (*riḡāl Allāh*), he places the Ṣūfis in an intermediate category, above the ascetics (*zuhḡād*) to be sure, but below the Blameworthy (*malāmiyya*), who are also called the Realisers (*muḡakkiḡūn*). In this highest category, he numbers the Prophet and the greatest friends of God (*awliyā’*), including himself. Their basic activity is *taḡkīk*, which Ibn al-‘Arabī

understands in terms of the Prophet's command, "Give everything that has a *ḥakk* its *ḥakk*". Everything in existence has a *ḥakk*—a truth, a reality, a right, an appropriate claim—or else God would not have created it. The function of the Realiser is to discern a thing's *ḥakk* and act accordingly, and Ibn al-ʿArabī sets out principles in terms of which every *ḥakk* can be discerned and acted upon.

Ibn al-ʿArabī's teachings are intimately tied to the Qurʾān in diverse ways, both obvious and hidden. His writings attempt to show how the Qurʾān manifests the reality of God in its every chapter, verse, word and letter. On a doctrinal level, his governing idea is *tawḥīd* or the assertion of God's unity, to be understood from two basic points of view, which can be labelled by the two primary names of the Holy Book—*ḥur ʿān* and *furḳān*. According to one traditional understanding, *ḥur ʿān* means "bringing together" (*ḍjam*); hence it represents a perspective that is complementary to *furḳān*, which means "separation" and "differentiation". The Qurʾān differentiates all the phenomena of the universe in keeping with God's knowledge and wisdom, but it also brings all things together under the umbrella of God's unitary creativity. Reality's differentiation is prefigured in God's external knowledge of creation, and its unity derives from the divine oneness. God is one through his Essence (*dhāt*) and "many" through his differentiated knowledge. His oneness pertains to *wudjūd*, and his manyness to the things, which, *qua* things, have no *wudjūd*. The unifying principles of the many things are known as the "divine names". This is what Ibn al-ʿArabī means when he says, as he often does, that God is the One/the Many (*al-wāḥid al-kathīr*)—He is one through His Essence and many through His names. For its part, the Holy Book, as God's eternal speech, designates both the oneness and the manyness of reality. Its two names, *ḥur ʿān* and *furḳān*, signify the two basic principles in terms of which God creates the universe and reveals himself in the "signs" (*āyāt*) that are found in the three fundamental domains of manifestation: the universe, the soul, and the Book.

Saʿīd al-Dīn Farghānī (d. ca. 695/1296 [q.v.]), who is probably the first follower of Ibn al-ʿArabī to use the term *waḥdat al-wudjūd* in a technical sense, employs it to designate the side of *ḥur ʿān*, and he contrasts it with *kathrat al-ilm*, "the manyness of [God's] knowledge", which designates the side of *furḳān*. For him as for many other members of Ibn al-ʿArabī's school, the goal of knowledge and practice is to establish a happy balance between *furḳān* and *ḥur ʿān*, both in the soul and in human interactions. In later Islamic history, especially in the debates over Ibn al-ʿArabī that raged in the Indian subcontinent, the perspective of *waḥdat al-wudjūd* was said to assert that "All is He" (*hama ūst*), whereas the opposing view, labelled *waḥdat al-shuhūd* by Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1034/1604 [q.v.]), was said to maintain that "All is from Him" (*hama az ūst*) or "All is through Him" (*hama bidūst*).

If we examine the *Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*, we see that Ibn al-ʿArabī's basic approach is to deal with any Qurʾānic verse, *ḥadīth*, or intellectual issue in terms of these two perspectives. He often refers to the two as *tanzīh* and *tashbīh*, the assertion of God's incomparability and the declaration of His similarity, or, loosely, transcendence and immanence. He sees the first standpoint expressed plainly in the divine names of majesty (*ḍjalāl*) and wrath (*ghaḍab*), while the second appears more clearly in the names of beauty (*ḍjamāl*) and mercy (*rahmd*). He associates the first with the rational faculty and its activities (*ʿaql*, *naẓar*, *fīkr*), and the second with imagination (*khayāl*) and direct vision (*kashf*, *shuhūd*, *dhawq*, *futūḥ*—unveiling, witnessing, tasting, opening). In his view, these are the two basic standpoints of Islamic thought, represented roughly by the philosophers, theologians, and jurists on the one hand and the Sūfīs on the other. In contrast, the standpoint of *taḥkīk* acknowledges the limited truth and rightfulness of every standpoint. Ibn al-ʿArabī affirms the necessity of both modes of knowing and criticises any attempts to limit knowledge to one mode or the other. Hence he asserts both the oneness of God's *wudjūd* and the manyness of His knowledge, the unity of His Essence and the multiplicity of His names, *ḥur ʿān* and *furḳān*, *tashbīh* and *tanzīh*, *khayāl* and *ʿaql*, "He" and "not He". On the human side, these two perspectives are the "two eyes" (*aynān*) with which people see their way to God. Ignoring the vision of either eye yields a distorted view of things, valid within its own limits, but inadequate as a guide to God and as a judge of other viewpoints.

What then is the role of the *sharīʿa*? Ibn al-ʿArabī employs the term *sharīʿa* (and *sharʿ*) generally to signify the whole range of teachings that have come through the prophets, more specifically to designate the teachings that have come in the Qurʾān and the Sunna, and most specifically to mean the *aḥkām* or revealed legal rulings as contrasted with the *akhbār* or revealed reports. The function of the *sharīʿa* in all these meanings is to bring about the return to God in a mode that guarantees felicity (*saʿāda*), that is, salvation. Hence, the *sharīʿa*, including all the specific *aḥkām*, is the indispensable guide.

Ibn al-ʿArabī drew from all the Islamic sciences in his works, especially *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, grammar, *fīkh*, and *kalām*. Methodologically, what differentiates him from masters of all these sciences is his reliance on *kashf* and *khayāl* as the corrective to *ʿaql*. *Kashf* or unveiling is a type of vision that sees the presence of *al-wudjūd al-ḥakk*, the Real Being, manifest in God's signs. The importance of unveiling, which discerns invisible realities in their images, comes out clearly in Ibn al-ʿArabī's theory of imagination, and no discussion of his teachings can afford to ignore the centrality of this term to his vocabulary. *Khayāl*, he tells us, is the centrepiece of the necklace of knowledge, the integrating factor. It is the human cognitive faculty that sees connections and sameness, and as such it is contrasted with *ʿaql*, which sees difference and otherness. By nature *khayāl* inclines toward *tashbīh*, and by nature *ʿaql* tends toward *tanzīh*. If knowledge is left in the hands of *ʿaql*, there can be no understanding of God's presence in the world, and if it is left in the hands of *khayāl*, there can be no understanding of God's distance, transcendence, and unity. *ʿAql* easily grasps God's inaccessibility and majesty, but it cannot understand, save

theoretically, His nearness and beauty, and the direct perception of God's presence can only be achieved through imagination.

Khayāl, then, is the human cognitive faculty that perceives the object in its mirror image, or the signified in its signifier. More broadly, the term designates the notion of an “image”, which is neither the thing that it images nor completely different from it, and in this sense it may be treated as a synonym for *barzakh* [q.v.] or “isthmus”, which refers to any intermediate reality. Thus the term *khayāl* can designate the universe itself (*al-ālam*), which is an intermediary between God and absolute nothingness (*al-ādam al-muṭlaq*), since it is neither the one nor the other, though it is the image of both. On a lower level, *khayāl* refers to the world of imagination or *mundus imaginalis*, which is the intermediary between the angelic world of pure spirits and the sensory world of pure bodies, hence the locus of visionary events and the resurrection. Microcosmically, *khayāl* can designate the human self or soul (*nafs*), which bridges spirit and body, light and darkness, knowledge and ignorance, awareness and unconsciousness. Because the soul is imaginai, it is never purely spiritual or purely bodily, so it can never be pure light or pure darkness. Like the universe itself, it undergoes constant development, change, and transmutation through the new creation (*al-khalq al-djādīd*), the never-ending process whereby the universe emerges from the infinite light of God and returns to it. Since nothing has true and permanent *wudjūd* but God, and since God's mercy prevails over His wrath, felicity will ultimately reach all the people of the Fire. The principle of the predominance ¶ of mercy over wrath, asserted explicitly in the *ḥadīth* literature and implicitly in the *Qur'ān*, determines the final end of everything. *Kur'ān* will eventually triumph over *furkān*, since light is more real than darkness, and the oneness of *al-wudjūd al-ḥaqq* is more basic to reality than the manyness of the things, though the traces of manyness will never disappear on any level. From the standpoint of human welfare and ultimate felicity, *furkān*, *tanzīh*, and *ʿaql* remain vital and inescapable.

With this extremely brief overview of Ibn al-ʿArabī's overall perspective, we can suggest that, if he is accepted as the *shaykh al-akbar* of the “*Ṣūfīs*”, then “*Ṣūfism*” involves seeing with both eyes, discerning the *ḥaqq* of each thing on the basis of the *Qur'ān* and the *ḥadīth*, and giving each thing its *ḥaqq* through practice according to the *sharīʿa*, the Sunna, and the example of the People of God (*ahl Allāh*). The importance of the *sharīʿa* in Ibn al-ʿArabī's own writings cannot be overstated. The idea that Ibn al-ʿArabī's *waḥdat al-wudjūd* devalues or overthrows the *sharīʿa*, though popular among his critics (and some fans), is untenable; as he often insists, the *sharīʿa* is inseparable from the *ḥaqqāka*.

Ibn al-ʿArabī's *Ṣūfism* clearly remains inaccessible to almost everyone, a point that he acknowledges when he calls himself the “seal of the Muḥammadan friends of God”, but it remains the ideal against which numerous *Ṣūfī* teachers have judged themselves and others. For him and them, *Ṣūfism* in its highest sense is *taḥkīk* in both theory and practice. On the level of theory, both *kur'ān* and *furkān* must be given their proper due. Theory relates primarily to the *akḥbār*, the reports from the prophets, not to the *aḥkām*, the prophetic rulings.

Since the discussion of the *aḥkām* pertains to the second half of the *shahāda*, it is weighted in favour of *furkān*, not *kur'ān*. The specific standpoint of the legal rulings is the Muḥammadan perfection, which is asserted in relation to human salvation and damnation, and here Ibn al-ʿArabī leaves less room for manoeuvre. He asserts *kur'ān* only by acknowledging the correctness of every *madḥhab* and every *mudjtahid*, but this does not allow for a diminution of the *sharīʿa*'s authority.

The *sharīʿa* was established by God with certain specific aims, and these cannot be achieved unless it is observed. The fact that God has established other *sharīʿas* for other segments of humanity pertains to the domain of *akḥbār*, not *aḥkām*, so it has no relevance to the specific acts that Muslims are required to perform as followers of Muḥammad.

This then may suggest something of what “*Ṣūfism*” involves for Ibn al-ʿArabī. In a more limited understanding of the word *taṣawwuf*—and it is this understanding that corresponds more closely to the views of sympathetic outside observers—it denotes a type of Islamic religiosity that usually stresses the first term in the following complementary pairs: *kur'ān* and *furkān*, *tashbīh* and *tanzīh*, *kashj* and *ʿaql*, mercy and wrath, *ḥaqqāka* and *sharīʿa*, intoxication (*sukr*) and sobriety (*sahw*), intimacy (*uns*) and awe (*hayba*), meaning (*maḥā*) and form (*ṣūra*), spirit and letter. In contrast, *sharīʿa*-minded Islam stresses the second term in all these pairs. In the lived reality of Islam over history, these pairs can be taken as designating the extreme limits of various spectra according to which Muslims understand their religion and put it into practice. As for groups such as *bī-shar* *Ṣūfīs* or the *Ḥurūfiyya* [q.v.], one needs to keep in mind that the accounts often derive from critics and that modern scholars (and, for very different ¶ reasons, politicised Muslims of all sorts) are constitutionally predisposed to propagate negative reports. If it is found that the reports are indeed correct, then such groups would represent a total rupture of the balance between *furkān* and *kur'ān*, if not an outright rejection of the normative Islam that is established in the *Qur'ān* and the Sunna. In the same way, modern “fundamentalism” can be seen as a rupture of balance in the direction of *furkān* (cf. M. Woodward, *Islam in Java : normative piety and mysticism in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta*, Tucson 1989).

iii. *Ibn al-ʿArabī's contemporaries*. Ibn al-ʿArabī appears as a watershed in the history of *Ṣūfism* partly because he solidifies a certain shift in focus that had gradually been occurring in *Ṣūfī* writings. Before his time, most authors of theoretical works had devoted their efforts to issues of practice, morality, ethics, and “spiritual psychology” (the stations and states—*maḥāmāt* and *aḥwāl*), but from his time onward, *Ṣūfī* works commonly deal with topics that had been discussed in detail only in *kalām* and *falsafa*, such as *tawḥīd*, *nubuwwa*, and *maʿād*, even though writing on the earlier topics continues unabated. The *Ṣūfī* works

differ from those of other disciplines by their stress on *ḥur ān* over *furḳān*, which means, among other things, that *kashj* predominates over *ʾaḳl* as a means to understand the *Ḳurʾān* and the Sunna.

Within the writings of authors known as *Ṣūfis*, this same spectrum of thought and practice can be discerned, and the 7th/13th century is a highpoint of Islamic history in terms of the diversity and richness of the *Ṣūfi* spectrum. Compared to most other *Ṣūfi* authors, Ibn al-ʿArabī appears as the most prolific and profound of the masters of *furḳān*, which helps explain why Western scholars have often spoken of his “systematisation” of *Ṣūfism*. In a certain sense, his writings are systematic, especially when contrasted with masters of the other extreme, such as *Hāfiẓ* or *Yūnus Emre*, but not when compared to the works of theologians, philosophers, and jurists.

Authors who stand on the *furḳānī* side of the *Ṣūfi* spectrum write relatively systematic works in which they differentiate and discern on the basis of a sober evaluation of all things’ distance from God, but those who stress the *ḥur ānī* side are drawn toward benevolent inattention to distinctions and an intoxicated celebration of the oneness of all being. *Furḳān* is the domain of knowledge and intelligence, *ḥur ān* the realm of love and union. The knowers strive to achieve the differentiated vision of each thing in the context of the divine reality, but lovers try to overcome all difference so that nothing remains except the eternal Beloved.

If the natural vehicle of *furḳānī* discourse is technical prose, the most effective vehicle for *ḥur ānī* language is poetry and its performance. Poetry is able to bring God’s presence into the direct awareness of the listener without the intermediary of rational analysis, which by nature removes God from the stage. The two greatest masters of explicitly *Ṣūfi* poetry are contemporaries of Ibn al-ʿArabī—Ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. 632/ 1235 [q.v.]) in Arabic and *Djalāl al-Dīn Rūmī* (d. 672/ 1273 [q.v.]) in Persian, as is another great *Ṣūfi* poet of Persian, *Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār* (d. 618/1221 [q.v.]). Poetry’s function is made most explicit in *Rūmī*’s works. “God is beautiful”, as the Prophet said, “and He loves beauty”, so everything beautiful is lovable and, in the last analysis, all beautiful things take their beauty from God. Why, *Rūmī* asks, do you take water from the drainpipe? You should recognise that all beauty is God’s beauty, all love is love for God, ¶ and every intermediary disintegrates and disappears. Poetry’s evocation of beauty is evocation of God. Reminding people of beauty stirs up love in their hearts, and all love redounds on God. Nonetheless, *furḳān* cannot be abandoned, for without it, love will remain forever misguided.

Although *Rūmī* stands on the side of *ḥur ān* when contrasted with Ibn al-ʿArabī, his dialectic of love presents us with the same complementarity between *ḥur ān* and *furḳān*. Ibn al-ʿArabī differentiates in the technical language of the *ulamā* between the eye that perceives *tanzīh* and the eye that sees *tashbīh*, but *Rūmī* describes in the language of the common people the experience of separation (*firāḳ*) and union (*wisāl*). Union is to live in God’s presence, beauty and gentleness (*lutf*), and separation is to suffer His absence, majesty and severity (*ḳahr*). But mercy prevails over wrath, so every cruelty (*djafā*) of the Beloved is in fact an act of faithfulness (*wafa*). In showing their sincerity, God’s lovers welcome the pain (*dard*) of the dregs (*durd*) along with the joy of the wine. In this poetic discourse, rooted in images, symbols, and signs of the transcendent, bold expressions of paradox—“All is He!,” “I am the Beloved!”—are standard fare.

No one doubts that Ibn al-Fāriḍ and *Rūmī* were great *Ṣūfi* poets, but questions have been raised concerning the *Ṣūfi* content of the works of many important poets during this whole period. For some observers, *Hāfiẓ* (d. ca. 792/1390 [q.v.]) appears as the greatest of all Persian *Ṣūfi* poets, but for others he is simply a genius who employed the available imagery. *Amīr Ḳhusraw* (d. 725/1325 [q.v.]) was the foremost Indo-Persian poet and a disciple of the great *Ṣūfi* master *Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā* (d. 725/1325 [q.v.]), yet, we are told, there is little trace of *Ṣūfism* in his poetry. The poems of Ibn al-ʿAfīf al-Tilimsānī (d. 688/1289 [q.v.]), it is said, should probably not be given a *Ṣūfi* interpretation, even though his father was a famous disciple of Ibn al-ʿArabī and was violently attacked by Ibn Taymiyya. The *Awadhī* poetry of *Malik Muḥammad Djāyasī* (d. ca. 949/1542 [q.v.]) deals almost exclusively with “secular” topics, yet he is recognised as a great *Āshūti* saint. Discussions of this sort miss an important point: What conveys the basic message of *ḥur ān* is not so much the explicit content as the psychological impact on the listener. The single most important feature of *Ṣūfi* poetry is its beauty, a beauty that entrances and intoxicates. In *Ṣūfi* theoretical works, authors write about intoxication, but readers stay sober. *Ṣūfi* poetry (and, in fact, any good poetry well sung) conveys intoxication, as most who have attended sessions of the musical recitation of poetry known as *ḳawwālī* in the subcontinent will attest. As for someone like *Hāfiẓ*, he is a *Ṣūfi* poet not only because of his repeated references to *Ṣūfi* teachings but also because, within the tradition, it is inconceivable that any but a great friend of God could transmute language with such alchemy. For the modern scholar, whose radical *furḳān* leaves no room for “mysticism”, *Hāfiẓ*’s title *lisān al-ghayb* (“the tongue of the unseen”) is simply a poetical way of saying that he was remarkable; for the *Ṣūfi* tradition, it means that the invisible, divine master of the universe used *Hāfiẓ* as His tongue, just as He used *Rūmī* as his reed. The metaphor is the reality.

Although, in the domain of *furḳānī* *Ṣūfism*, Ibn al-ʿArabī may indeed deserve the appellation *al-shayḳh al-akbar* that his followers gave to him, there are many other important figures whose lifetimes overlapped with his and who deserve much more attention than modern scholarship has given to them. In Ibn al-ʿArabī’s ¶ own view, the greatest of his contemporaries was *Shuʿayb Abū Madyan* (d. 594/1197 [q.v.]), who left behind disciples like Ibn *Mashīsh* (d. 625/1228 [q.v.]), the master of *Abu ʾl-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī* (d. 656/1258), the eponym of the *Shādhiliyya* [q.v.] (see V. Cornell, *The way of Abū Madyan . Doctrinal and poetical works of Abū Madyan Shuʿayb ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Anṣārī*, Cambridge 1996). Among other important

contemporaries in the *furkānī* domain were the philosophers Suhrawardī al-Maḳtūl (d. 587/1191 [q.v.]) and Afḍal al-Dīn Kāshānī (7th/13th century), both of whom have a Ṣūfī orientation in some of their writings. Ibn Sabʿīn (d. 669/1270 [q.v.]), born like Ibn al-ʿArabī in Murcia, displays a highly sophisticated and articulate philosophical mind, so much so that some scholars have considered him a Peripatetic, but the practical implications and Ṣūfī orientation of his teachings becomes obvious in his *rasāʾil* and his *Budd al-ʿarīf*. He seems to be the first author to have used the term *waḥdat al-wuḍjūd* in anything like a technical sense, and his understanding of this expression (along with the polemical attack on it by Ibn Taymiyya) probably resulted in the idea that *waḥdat al-wuḍjūd* is equivalent to the Persian expression *hama ūst*. Also of interest are Ibn Sabʿīn's students and fellow-Andalusians, Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥasan b. Hūd (d. 699/1300) and the poet Abu ʿl-Ḥasan al-Shuṣhtarī (d. 668/1269). Awḥad al-Dīn Balyānī (d. 686/1288) of Shīrāz seems to be following in Ibn Sabʿīn's footsteps in his famous *Risālat al-aḥadiyya*, which was long attributed wrongly in Western sources to Ibn al-ʿArabī (see M. Chodkiewicz, *Awḥad al-Dīn Balyānī. Épître sur l'unicité absolue*, Paris 1982).

Ibn al-ʿArabī himself had several disciples who wrote significant works and exercised a determining influence in the way the tradition was to interpret him; these include al-Badr al-Ḥabashī (d. ca. 618/1221), Ibn Sawdakīn (d. 646/1248), ʿAfīf al-Dīn al-Tilimsānī (d. 690/1291), and especially Ṣadr al-Dīn Kūnawī (d. 673/1274 [q.v.]). Both al-Tilimsānī and Kūnawī were independently minded in their readings of Ibn al-ʿArabī's works. The former sometimes employs his commentary on the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* to criticise his master's positions, and both were far more inclined toward *falsafa* than Ibn al-ʿArabī. Kūnawī's direct students included three major transmitters of his teachings— the Persian poet Fakḥr al-Dīn ʿIrākī (688/1289 [q.v.]), author of the short prose classic *Lama āt Saʿīd al-Dīn Fargḥānī*, author of the first commentary on Ibn al-Fārid's *Tā ʿiyya* and Muʿayyid al-Dīn al-Djandī (d. ca. 700/1300), author of the most influential of the more than one hundred commentaries on the *Fuṣūṣ*. Perhaps pertaining also to Kūnawī's circle is one Naṣīr or Nāṣīr al-Dīn Khūʿī, who is probably the author of a widely-read Persian work that helped popularise some of Ibn al-ʿArabī's teachings, *Tabṣīrat al-mubtadī* (see Chittick, *Faith and practice of Islam. Three thirteenth century Sufi texts*, Albany 1992). Also connected with Ibn al-ʿArabī's circle was Awḥad al-Dīn Kirmānī (d. 635/1238 [q.v.]), a well-known author of Persian quatrains. Ibn al-ʿArabī entrusted Kūnawī's training to him for a period of time, but there is no apparent trace of Ibn al-ʿArabī's teachings in his poetry. The idea that Rūmī was a student of or influenced by Ibn al-ʿArabī, propounded by Nicholson and others, has no textual basis. Other authors of great importance in this period include Rūzbihān Baḳlī (d. 606/1209) and Rūmī's father Bahāʾ Walad (d. 628/1231), both of whom exposed the reality of love in extraordinarily beautiful Persian prose. Naḍjm al-Dīn Kubrā (d. 618/1221 [q.v.]), the eponym of the Kubrawiyya, has been noted for his psychology of colours. His theoretical and practical interests were developed in various directions by his disciples. Thus Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥammūʿī (d. 649/1252 [q.v.]) writing in both Arabic and Persian, and the latter's disciple ʿAzīz al-Dīn Nasafī (d. before 700/1300) writing in Persian, manifest the general tendency of the period to deal much more explicitly with metaphysical and philosophical issues, though Ḥammūʿī's works are obscure, and he delights in expounding the symbolism of letters and numbers, while Nasafī wrote relatively popular expositions of the different metaphysical and cosmological teachings of various schools of Ṣūfism and philosophy (though it is usually difficult to determine which historical figures he has in mind; see H. Landolt, *La paradoxe de la "face de dieu" . ʿAzīz-e Nasafī (VII^e / XIII^e siècle) et le "monisme ésotérique" de l'Islam*, in *SI*, xxv [1996], 163–92). Kubrā's disciple Naḍjm al-Dīn Dāya Rāzī (d. 654/1256 [q.v.]) wrote the Persian classic *Mirṣād al-ʾibād*, which has been a mainstay of the teaching of both theory and practice in the Persianspeaking orders. Another important author of the period, Shihāb al-Dīn ʿUmar Suhrawardī (d. 632/1234 [q.v.]), nephew of the eponym of the Suhrawardiyya [q.v.], wrote the Arabic classic *ʿAwārif al-ma ʿarīf*, a work that has been widely influential in the organisation and practical teachings of the orders.

iv. *From the late 7th/13th to the 12th/18th century.* This period of four centuries is marked by an enormous proliferation of works on Ṣūfism, but the problem of surveying these works is made doubtly difficult by the increasing geographical spread of Islam and the use of local languages. The best regional survey of Ṣūfism is provided by Rizvi's two-volume *History of Sufism in India* (Delhi 1978-83), but a short tour through Indian manuscript libraries was able to turn up several important authors of Ṣūfī theoretical works whom Rizvi does not mention, such as the inventive author of Persian treatises on Ibn al-ʿArabī's perspective Khūb Muḥammad Čiṣḥī (late 10th/16th century), the prolific Kādirī *shaykh* ʿAbd al-Ḥaḳḳ Muḥammad Maḳhdūm Bīdġāpūrī Ṣāwī (fl. 1108-23/1696-1711), the sophisticated Kādirī metaphysician Sayyid ʿAbd al-Ḳādir Fakḥrī Naḳawī (late 12th/18th century), the essayist Irādāt Khān Wāḍiḥ (12th/18th century), and the stylist Muḥtaram Allāh (12th/18th century) (see Chittick, *Notes on Ibn al-ʿArabī's influence in India*, in *MW*, lxxxii [1992], 218–41). In the small number of cases in which Ṣūfī authors of this period have been studied, they have often been chosen for reasons that can best be called political or ideological. One example is Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī [q.v.], who has been the object of several monographs, even though it is easy to argue that his works—in contrast to his claims—hardly stand out among those of his contemporaries. The reason for his fame seems to be that among Muslims of the subcontinent, he has taken on mythic proportions as the precursor of a certain type of modern political consciousness, since he defended an Islamic particularism that overcame the heritage of Akbar and led politically to the triumph of Awrangzīb over Dārā Shukūh [see HIND v.(b)] (for general remarks on the distortions introduced by ideology in the Indian context, see C. Ernst, *Eternal garden. Mysticism, history, and politics at a South Asian Sufi center*, Albany 1992).

Scholars have frequently observed that Ṣūfism was instrumental in the spread of Islam in diverse cultural contexts. On a

doctrinal level, one of the primary reasons for its spread is the flexibility that is provided by the perspective of *ḥur ān*. Once it is recognised that “All is He”, alien beliefs and practices can easily be read as expressions of Islamic truths. The intellectual figures in India who actively studied the theory and practice of Hinduism had Ṣūfī predilections. Dārā Shukūh [*q.v.*], with works such as *Maḍjma ‘al-baḥrayn* and his translation of the Upanishads, is a prime example. Another is the Shaṭṭārī *shaykh* Muḥammad Ghawth of Gwalior (d. 970/1563 [*q.v.*]), who was an important supporter of Bābur and wrote several works that show both originality and mastery of the perspective of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s school; one of these, the Persian *Djawāhir-i khamsa*, was widely read not only in the original but also in an Arabic translation. He also translated into Persian, with many modifications and additions, an earlier Arabic translation of the Yogic text *Amritkund* (see Ernst, *Sufism and yoga according to Muhammad Ghawth*, in *Sufi*, xxix [1996], 9-13; according to an oral report from Bruce Lawrence, the Arabic is still read today in a Ṣūfī order in Syria). The two most important Muslim authors writing in Chinese, Wang Daiyu (d. 1657 or 1658) and Liu Chih (d. ca. 1736 [*q.v.*]), adopt a *ḥur ānī* perspective in theoretical issues. Wang makes little reference to Arabic or Persian terminology, but skilfully explains Islamic metaphysical, cosmological and psychological doctrines with the help of terminology drawn from Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. He is sympathetic toward the Chinese traditions, especially Confucianism, but *furkān* occasionally comes to the fore, and then he offers judicious criticisms to illustrate Islam’s superiority, and he consistently describes the details of right activity in terms of the *sharī‘a*.

In order to provide some idea of the vast range of material waiting to be studied, one may cite the names of a few representative authors, divided into three main categories (ignoring, despite their social and historical importance, many major Ṣūfī masters not known primarily as authors): (a) poets; (b) authors rooted in the metaphysical perspectives established by Ibn al-‘Arabī and others; and (c) authors primarily concerned with spiritual, psychological, ethical and practical teachings.

(a) Throughout this period, poetry is the most important literary vehicle for the wide dissemination of Ṣūfī teachings, especially the *ḥur ānī* view of things. Poetry incites love and, in the *mathnawī* form, excels at story-telling. Persian Ṣūfī poets of the first rank include Sa‘dī (d. 691/1292 [*q.v.*]), whose love poetry is preferred by some even to Ḥāfiẓ and whose prose classic *Gulistān* reflects a Ṣūfī concern for practical morality. Bīdil (d. 1133/1721 [*q.v.*]) is considered by many Persian speakers (at least among the Afghāns) to be the greatest of all poets. In his case, there can be no doubt as to his Ṣūfī perspective, since he was a master of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s school of thought, as comes out clearly, for example, in his *mathnawī* called *Irfān*. Among the many other Persian Ṣūfī poets who deserve special mention are Maḥmūd Shabistarī (d. 718-20/ [*q.v.*]), Awḥādī Marāgha‘ī (d. 738/1338), and Kamāl Khudjandī (d. 803/1400-1 [*q.v.*]). In Turkish; besides Yūnus Emre one can mention Mīr ‘Alī Shīr Nawā‘ī (d. 906/1501 [*q.v.*]), writing in Čaghatay Turkish, and Nesīmī (d. 820/1417-18 [*q.v.*]), Lāmi‘ī (d. 938/1531-1 [*q.v.*]), and Nāẓim (d. 1139/1726 [*q.v.*]) writing in Ottoman. Also deserving mention is Kāḍī Burhān al-Dīn [*q.v.*], sultan of Sivas for eighteen years until his death in 800/1398. Although he has been called a poet of “profane love”, this judgment should be tempered by the fact that he was a master of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s school, as proven by his highly original *Iksīr al-sa‘ādāt fī asrār al-ibādāt* (see Chittick, *Sultan Burhān ‘al-Dīn’s Sufi correspondence*, in *WZKM*, lxxiii [1981], 33-45). Outstanding poets of other languages who deserve special mention include Maẓhar (d. 1195/1781 [*q.v.*]), Dard (d. 1199/1785 [*q.v.*]), and Mīr Muḥammad Takī (d. 1223/1810 [*q.v.*]) in Urdu; Shāh ‘Abd al-Laṭīf (d. 1165/1752) in Sindhi, Bāyazīd Anṣārī (d. 980/ 1572-3 [*q.v.*]) in Pashto, Bullhe Shāh (d. after 1181/ 1767-8) in Panjabi; and Ḥamza Faṣṣūrī (d. ca. 1008/ 1600) in Malay.

(b) Authors with a metaphysical orientation. The importance of a continuing tradition of debate over the exact significance of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s teachings becomes obvious in the large number of commentaries on the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*. Several of these were written by prolific authors whose works are begging for serious study. These include ‘Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī (d. 730/1330 [*q.v.*]), Dāwūd al-Ḳayṣarī (d. 751/1350), Sayyid ‘Alī Ḥamadānī (whose commentary is in Persian; d. 786/1385 [*q.v.*]), the Shī‘ī thinker Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī (d. 787/1385), ‘Abd al-Karīm Dīlī (d. 832/1428 [*q.v.*]), ‘Alī b. Aḥmad b. ‘Alī Mahā‘imī (d. 835/1432), Ṣā‘in al-Dīn ‘Alī Turka Iṣfahānī (d. 835/1432), Ḳuṭb al-Dīn al-Iznīkī (d. 885/1480), ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Dījāmī (d. 898/1492 [*q.v.*]), Bālī Khalīfa (d. 960/1553), Ismā‘īl Anḳarawī (whose commentary is in Turkish, d. 1041/1631-2 [*q.v.*]), ‘Abd Allāh Busnawī (two commentaries, one in Arabic and one in Turkish, d. 1054/1644), Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī (two commentaries, one in Arabic and one in Persian, d. 1058/1648), and ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (d. 1143/ 1730 [*q.v.*]; for a list of *Fuṣūṣ* commentaries, see O. Yahia’s Arabic introduction to *Sayyed Haydar Amoli Le texte des textes*, Tehran and Paris 1975). Of all these, Kāshānī has been the most studied, but far from thoroughly (notable is T. Izutsu’s partial analysis of his *Fuṣūṣ* commentary in *Sufism and Taoism*, Berkeley 1984, and P. Lory’s *Les commentaries ésotériques du Coran d’après ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī*, Paris 1981). Dīlī, who has often been singled out as Ibn al-‘Arabī’s chief follower—perhaps because his *al-Insān al-kāmil* has remained popular among Arab Ṣūfīs until recent times—is a good example of an original thinker who appears superficially to be a mainstream member of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s school. Sophisticated support for Ibn al-‘Arabī’s positions is found in the numerous works of Ṣafī al-Dīn Ḳushashī (d. 1071/1660-1 [*q.v.*]) and his disciple Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī (d. 1101/1690 [*q.v.*]). The Algerian *shaykh* Aḥmad b. Adjība (d. 1224/1809 [*q.v.*]) demonstrates that theorising in the line of Ibn al-‘Arabī continued in the Arabic-speaking countries into the 19th century.

The Persian treatises, numbering over 100, of the poet Shāh Ni‘mat Allāh Walī (d. 834/1430-1), eponym of the Ni‘mat-Allāhiyya [*q.v.*], are firmly grounded in the writings of Ibn al-‘Arabī and his commentators, especially Kāshānī and Ḳayṣarī. More widely influential among Persian readers, however, has been *Sharḥ-i gulshan-i rāz* by Muḥammad Lāhīdī (d. 912/1506 [*q.v.*]), which is a far more fluent and readable interpretation of the same sources. The *Naqshbandiyya* [*q.v.*] are sometimes

said to have been hostile to Ibn al-‘Arabī, perhaps because of Sirhindī’s critique of *waḥdat al-wuḍjūd*, but in fact many Naqshbandīs, early and late, supported his teachings, such as Kh^wādja Muḥammad Pārsā (d. 842/1419), Kh^wādja ‘Ubayd Allāh Ahrār (d. 896/1490), and Djāmī, who was not only a learned commentator on Ibn al-‘Arabī, but also an extremely influential populariser of his teachings through his seven *mathnawīs* (known as *Haft awrang*), his *dīwān*, and his short Persian treatises such as *Lawā’ih*. Mullā ‘Abd Allāh Ilāhī (d. 896/1491), a disciple ¶ of Ahrār, was the first major propagator of the Naqshbandiyya in Turkey and popularised Ibn al-‘Arabī’s ideas with works in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish; he is sometimes confused with another disciple of Ahrār, Mullā Aḥmad Ilāhī of Bukhara, who settled in Bursa and translated Ṣadr al-Dīn Kūnawī’s *Mifāḥ al-ghayb* into Persian at the command of Meḥmed II Fātiḥ in the year 880/1475-6 (M. Kara, *Molla Ilāhī : un précurseur de la Nakshibendiye in Anatolie*, in *Naqshbandis*, 316-18 [see also ṢADR AL-DĪN KŪNAWĪ]). Kh^wādja Kalān and Kh^wādja Khurd, the two sons of Bākī Billāh (d. 1012/1603 [q.v.]), who introduced the Naqshbandī *ṭarīqa* into India, both wrote works supporting *waḥdat al-wuḍjūd* and criticising, if indirectly, the position of their father’s disciple Sirhindī. The poet Mīr Dard, who founded a branch of the Naqshbandīs, appears as a follower of Ibn al-‘Arabī in many metaphysical issues in his long Persian work, *Ilm al-kitāb*. Shāh Walī Allāh (d. 1176/1762 [see DIHLAWĪ]) was also not opposed to Ibn al-‘Arabī. Like Sirhindī, he has taken on mythic proportions among modern-day Indian Muslims, who respect him not only for his scholarship but also his political ideas. His sophisticated handling of metaphysical, theological, and psychological issues is demonstrated in several works, especially his Arabic *Hudūd al-Allāh al-bāliḡa*; in one well-known treatise he attempts to demonstrate that there is no fundamental contradiction between the views of Ibn al-‘Arabī and Sirhindī. The great Egyptian *shaykh* ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha’rānī (d. 973/1565 [q.v.]) was a famous and prolific defender of Ibn al-‘Arabī.

Many members of the Čishtīyya [q.v.] were known for their support of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s teachings, including ‘Abd al-Ḳuddūs Gangohī (d. 944/1537) and Kalīm Allāh Djahānābādī Čishtī (d. 1142/1729 [q.v.]), though Mas‘ūd Bakk (d. ca. 789/1387) should not be considered Ibn al-‘Arabī’s follower, since his writings demonstrate little awareness of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s school and instead are reminiscent of the perspective of ‘Ayn al-Ḳuḍāt Hamadānī (d. 525/1131). The works of the latter, who offered a sophisticated theological standpoint as well as a subtle theory of love, were widely read in this period. Numerous other Ṣūfis in India devoted themselves to Ibn al-‘Arabī’s teachings, foremost among them the above-mentioned Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī, who was probably the best-informed of all the Indian authors concerning the contents of the *Futūḥāt*. Maḥmūd Kh^wuṣh-dahān Čishtī (d. 1026/1617), author of *Ma’rifat al-sulūk*, employs the terminology of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s school in an original revisioning of relationships that seems to represent the teachings of his master Shāh Burhān al-Dīn b. Mīrāndjī Shams al-‘Ushshāk (d. 1005/1597) of Bidjapur. An interesting if unknown author is Ḳamar al-Dīn b. Munīb Allāh b. ‘Ināyat Allāh al-Ḥusaynī al-Awrangābādī, who apparently flourished in the 12th/18th century, His Arabic *Mazhar al-nūr*, on which his son Nūr al-Hudā wrote a long commentary, is a history of Islamic ideas on light, classifying major schools of thought in terms of their understanding of light and concluding with support for *waḥdat al-wuḍjūd* as the best of these perspectives. A significant line of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s intellectual influence extends through figures who are not known as Ṣūfis, such as Djālāl al-Dīn Dawānī (908/1502-3 [q.v.]; see, for example, his unpublished *Sharḥ-i rubā’iyyāt*), the philosopher Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1050/1640 [q.v.]), and the broad-ranging Shī’ī scholar Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī (d. 1090/1679 [q.v.]). Other lines of theoretical writing are clearly present during this period, though once again, it is difficult to disentangle them from Ibn al-‘Arabī’s ideas. Kubrawī authors such as ¶ as ‘Alā’ al-Dawla Simnānī (d. 736/1337 [q.v.]) showed hostility to certain of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s teachings, and he, along with the important and prolific Čishtī master Gīsū Darāz (d. 825/1422 [q.v.]), are often claimed as precursors of Sirhindī. Theoretical writers of special importance in Indonesia include Ḥamza Faṣṣūrī, Nūr al-Dīn Rānīrī (d. 1068/1658), and ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf Singkilī (d. after 1104/1693) [see INDONESIA, vi].

(c) Despite the numerous authors who wrote books concerned specifically with the fine points of metaphysics, theology, cosmology, and psychology, by far the most common genre of Ṣūfī writing during this period is category (c), especially when we remember that most if not all the authors of works in category (b) also wrote books pertaining to it. Among authors of special importance here one can mention Ibn ‘Atā’ Allāh al-Iskandarī (d. 709/1309 [q.v.]), a major theorist of the Shādhiliyya who wrote the famous collection of aphorisms known as *al-Ḥikam*; ‘Izz al-Dīn Kāshānī (d. 735/1334-35), who composed among other works the Persian *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāya* (which is not, contrary to some reports, a translation of Suhrawardī’s *Awārif al-ma’ārif* though it was certainly inspired by it); Ibn Ḳayyim al-Djawziyya (d. 751/1350 [q.v.]), the most important student of Ibn Taymiyya; and the Firdawsī *shaykh* Makhdūm al-Mulk Manīrī (d. 782/1381 [q.v.]) and the Shādhilī *shaykh* Ibn ‘Abbād al-Rundī (d. 792/1390 [q.v.]), both of whom are famous for their letters to disciples.

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(W.C. Chittick)

3. In North Africa. See ṬARĪQA . II. 2.

4. In 19th and 20th-century Egypt.

In Egypt, the 19th century witnessed the emergence and institutionalisation of central authority over the Ṣūfī orders and the institutions linked with the orders: *zawāyā* [see [ZĀWIYA](#)], *takāyā* [see [TAKIYA](#)], and the shrines of saints. This position of central authority was granted to the *shaykh al-saḏḏjāda al-bakriyya* [see [BAKRIYYA](#)] in a *firmān* proclaimed by Muḥammad ‘Alī [q.v.], the then Ottoman governor of Egypt, in 1812. State agencies became active in support of al-Bakrī’s administration of the Ṣūfī orders from the 1840s, and the *shaykh al-Azhar* was excluded from interference in the affairs of the orders in 1847. These developments allowed for a more specific actualisation of the somewhat diffuse authority granted in the *firmān*, and contributed to an increased administrative importance of the office of *shaykh al-saḏḏjāda al-bakriyya*. In the second half of the 19th century, the principle of right of *ḡadam* (i.e. priority) became central to the administration of the Ṣūfī orders. This principle implied the exclusive right of a Ṣūfī order to proselytise and to appear in public in an area, if it could be proved that it had been the first to do so, i.e. that it had *ḡadam* (seniority). The rise of the principle of right of *ḡadam* was a development in conjunction with the abolition of the *iltizām* [q.v.] system, and possibly the result of this abolition, by Muḥammad ‘Alī between 1812 and 1815. Since the administration of the Ṣūfī orders under the *shaykh al-saḏḏjāda al-Bakriyya* was instrumental in consolidating the positions of the majority of the heads of the orders and safeguarded their established interests, its legitimacy went largely unchallenged. It functioned effectively until early 1881, when the then *shaykh al-saḏḏjāda al-Bakriyya* was pressured by the Khedive Tawḡīḡ to initiate reforms pertaining to ritual practice, and to encroach upon the internal autonomy of the heads of the orders. Moreover, in consequence of the increased efficiency of the state’s administration, following its reorganisation in the wake of the British occupation in 1882, the administration ¶ of the Ṣūfī orders lost much of its significance for the state and its agencies. These ceased to act fully in support of the orders, even when adequate maintenance of rights of *ḡadam* was at stake. Inadequate maintenance of these rights allowed for the rise and spread of a number of new Ṣūfī orders and for the secession of others, some of which obtained official status as independent Ṣūfī orders in their own right. In consequence, most of the heads of the established Ṣūfī orders and many of the heads of the *takāyā* tended towards self-containment and distanced themselves as much as possible from the *shaykh al-saḏḏjāda al-bakriyya*. The decline of the authority of this official was reversed with the promulgation of the Regulations for the Ṣūfī Orders (*Lā ḡḡat al-ḡuruḡ al-ṣūfiyya*) by khedivial decree in 1895. These Regulations, which were revised in 1903, provided a new legal base for the office of supreme head of the Ṣūfī orders, i.e. for the office of *shaykh mashāyikh al-ḡuruḡ al-ṣūfiyya* (this term seems to become current only after 1880, and is not used in official communications and documents until 1892), whereas the members of a council, known as *al-maḡlis al-ṣūfi*, and chaired by the *shaykh mashāyikh*, represented the heads of the orders in the central decision-making process. The regulations strengthened the position of the *shaykh al-saḏḏjāda al-bakriyya* in his capacity of supreme head of the orders (the heads of the *takāyā* and the *zawāyā* were placed under the authority of the *Dīwān al-Awḡāf*).