

# Ibn al-‘Arabī’s Testament on the Mantle of Initiation (*al-Khirqah*)

*Gerald Elmore*

## Introduction

The short work translated here in its entirety is important for at least three reasons: Firstly, in its conclusion it gives the precise line of descent, or derivation (*nasab*) – actually, four of them – of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s formal spiritual affiliation with the hierarchic Messenger of God as represented by the Shaykh himself. Second, the main body of the text constitutes an attractive literary composition which begins by adumbrating the author’s view on the tradition of investiture of the Ṣūfī ‘mantle of initiation’ (*ilbās al-khirqah*), then proceeds to offer an extended string of moral imperatives – pearls of wisdom (*ḥikam*) cultivated over a long life of intensive mystical experience. At the time of setting the *Nasab al-khirqah* to paper that full, rich life was drawing to its natural close – which brings us to the third distinction of the book: the fact that it represents Ibn al-‘Arabī’s maturest thought on the right conduct of life.

The *Nasab* seems to have been composed in Damascus in or sometime before 633/1236 – that is, presumably around the time of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s autobiographical work written for al-Malik al-Muẓaffar (viz., the *Ijāzah*) and a few years after the one he drew up for Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (the *Fihrist*), neither of which list the work. As it is not mentioned by the author anywhere else either, the only evidence of it that we have is the assortment of two-dozen or so manuscripts listed by Yahia, ‘Awwād and Brockelmann.<sup>1</sup> There the situation is somewhat ambiguous. The good news is that the book is definitely by Ibn al-‘Arabī and it survives reasonably intact in many of the said manuscripts. What is *not* so encouraging, however, is the quality of the source-material when compared to most of the Shaykh’s other major works. The fact that none of the extant sources appear to be older than the 10th/16th century is both

1. See Osman Yahia, *Histoire et classification de l’oeuvre d’Ibn ‘Arabī* (Damascus, 1964), pp. 407–8, no. 530, where most of the references of Brockelmann and ‘Awwād are also given. In addition, Claude Addas has discovered several more manuscripts at the Zāhirīyah archive in Damascus (see her translation, cited below) and there are two copies at Princeton University. Surely many others will yet turn up, but it is not so likely that any will be greatly superior to those described below.

substantively unfortunate and worrisome in its implications: How has it come to pass that all of the earlier copies of such a manifestly significant document have disappeared? Might this not portend that for one cause or another, accidental or otherwise, the later transcripts do not perfectly reflect the original text? When we examine the material closely these suspicions are hardly allayed. Most of the known codices which I inspected in Turkey were very late and inferior.<sup>2</sup>

The four most serviceable manuscripts of the *Nasab* that I have seen are MSS. *Esad Efendi* 1507/ff. 87–98b, *Şehid Ali Paşa* 1344/156b–159b, *Zāhirīyah* 5924/21b–25,<sup>3</sup> and *Nafiz Paşa* 384/228b–235. Of these, *Şehid Ali*, copied in 948/1541, is materially the earliest, but *Esad Efendi* purports to be based on a certified master-copy in the author's own hand, which was dated 633/1236. For the most part that claim may be taken at face value, so *Esad* – along with *Şehid Ali* and *Zāhirīyah* – will form the basis of the text translated here.<sup>4</sup> *Nafiz* is also useful, however, for being fully vocalized.

The *Nasab al-khirqah* was published in Cairo in 1987 ('Ālam al-Fikr) by 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ḥasan Maḥmūd as an appendix to his edition of Ibn al-'Arabī's *K. al-Masā'il* (under the title of *Al-Tanazzulāt al-layliyah fī l-aḥkām al-ilāhīyah*), on pp. 79–96 [hereafter, C]. The source of this text was a learned (but uncritical) monograph entitled *Al-Burhān al-jalī fī taḥqīq intisāb al-ṣūfiyah li-'Alī* (published in the Cairene journal, *Liwā' al-Islām*, from Feb., 1979 to May, 1981)<sup>5</sup> by a Moroccan *sharīf* and Shādhilite traditionist then resident in Egypt, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Şiddīq al-Ghimārī al-Ḥasanī al-Idrīsī, who quoted Ibn al-'Arabī's *Nasab* to show that the Şūfīs recognized that their *khirqah* did not actually extend back continuously to the Prophet's noble house. The material appropriated by Maḥmūd was only part of the *Nasab* offered in Shaykh al-Ghimārī's study, however, so the journal series must still be consulted for about a third of the work (including the chains of transmission). But as far as it goes, the printed Arabic text is fairly sound, so that the manuscript basis – whatever it may

2. Included in that category would be MSS. *Hafid Efendi* 482, *Halet Ef.* 93, and *Hacı Mahmud* [= *Yahya*] *Ef.* 2415, 2718 & 5322 (all kept at the Süleymaniye). *Carullah* 2111 may have been produced as early as 915/1509, but it is incomplete and corrupt. *Nafiz* 384 is very neat but probably quite late. Besides the other sources mentioned *infra*, I have also consulted two late manuscripts at the Firestone Library in Princeton (*Yahuda* 4235 & 4098) and several others in Istanbul.

3. I am indebted to Jane Clark, librarian of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabī Society (Oxford), for providing me with a photocopy of this transcript. The other three manuscripts listed here were consulted at the Süleymaniye.

4. For a fuller account of the manuscript basis of the *Nasab*, see my review of Claude Addas's translation of the work (in this issue, pp.133–7) [included as appendix at the end of this article].

5. Vol. 33, no. 7, to vol. 35, nos. 9–10. The bulk of the first two-thirds of the *Nasab* may be found in the issue of June–July, 1980, pp. 39–42. The *silsilahs* are on p. 40 of the June, 1979, and p. 33 of the July issues. The journal ceased appearing for a year after President Sadat was assassinated, and, indeed, never resumed with its former quality.

have been – apart from the omissions, was evidently quite as good as those sources mentioned above.

Latest in time but certainly not least in authority, the recent French translation of the *Nasab* by Claude Addas – “Le Livre de la filiation spirituelle” (*‘Ayn al-Ḥayāt*, 5 [1999], pp. 5–44) – has greatly assisted me in the final revision of my own translation presented here, and I cannot fail to express my admiration for Addas’s scholarship and insight even where we, quite naturally, take a different view on this or that issue. Here and there we have established/interpreted the Arabic text of the *Nasab* differently, as well, and it is this that justified the publication of my own attempt, even after Addas’s superb accomplishment.

I first edited and translated the *Nasab al-khirqah* in the spring of 1993 during a study-mission to the magnificent Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi in Istanbul. At the time I did not know that Addas had already reached an advanced stage of work on the same project, and having completed my immediate task involving the *‘Anqā’ mughrīb* source-material, I decided to take the opportunity to collate the text of the *Nasab* on the basis of the best manuscripts available in Turkey. Later this collation was expanded to include two sources at Princeton and photocopies of other manuscripts. Meanwhile, my provisional rendition had undergone several recensions before I belatedly learned of my colleague’s final preparations to publish the same work just last year. It is hoped that this sudden *embarras de richesses* concerning a book which had barely been discussed until this year<sup>6</sup> will not disappoint those students of the Shaykh who are so rightly aware of the need for scholars to economize their energies in tapping the great Ibn al-‘Arabian Reservoir.

At a later date I plan to publish my edition of the Arabic text of the *Nasab*, along with a more detailed study of the form and content of the document. For the time being, however, Ibn al-‘Arabī’s own voice remains clear enough herein (despite the inevitable distortions of translation) that we may trust him to speak for himself. My own close work with this little book has affected me more personally than with any other writing by the Shaykh. If that counts for companionship (*ṣuḥbah*), then we all might be ‘Akbarians’ who read the present work with attention, *in shā’ al-Lāh!*

6. That is, beyond the several adversions to the *Nasab* (and relevant translated passages) in Addas’s *Quest for the Red Sulphur* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 42–6 and 316–7, *et al.*

## The Descent of the Mantle of Initiation (*Nasab al-Khirqah*)

of the poor Servant of God,  
 Muḥammad b. ‘Alī Ibn al-‘Arabī  
 (May God grant him success!)

*In the name of God, the Merciful Mercifier!*

PRAISE BELONGS TO GOD, Who confers upon His Servants, the People of Providence, His Beautiful Names, that He might transport them (*li-yuḥilla-hum*) in that most-radiant, noble Place of abiding (*al-maḥall*).<sup>7</sup> Thus, God caused to ascend (*‘arraja*) the one who ascended by [His Names],<sup>8</sup> who was among those whom He chose for His worship and bound to Himself up to [the Station of] “Two bows’ length or closer” (*qāb qawsayn aw adnā*).<sup>9</sup> On account of that Divine Closeness (*al-qurb al-ilāhī*) God’s Servants live the most carefree and agreeable way of life. Moreover, He declares to them: “Know that it is not possible for one who is from Us to take aught from anyone but Us!”

Among [God’s chosen Servants, the Prophets] is the one who is at rest [at the summit] of his Ascent (*mi‘rāju-hu*), though he was not adopted as a son;<sup>10</sup> and among them is the one who perseveres in his Night-journey (*isrā’u-hu*) and who agonizes [in his continuing struggle], though he cares not what troubles he may meet along the way if he attains the intended Object [in the end].<sup>11</sup> And among them is he whom God takes as a Companion and a Confidant, a beloved Friend and an Intimate<sup>12</sup> – the whole

7. Elect man is invested with the Divine names (attributes) as a robe of honor (*khil’ah*, cognate with the first verb used here). The *maḥall*, or ‘location’, is man’s heart, which – according to the celebrated tradition quoted below (at n. 36) – is the only thing that may ‘contain’ God. The ‘translocation’ of the mystic, then, is something of a *transubstantiation*, or apotheosis.

8. An allusion to the Prophet Muḥammad, who ascended to the highest heavens in his *Mi‘rāj*.

9. *Qur.* 53: 9, referring to the Angel Gabriel’s appearance to Muḥammad.

10. *Wa-in lam yutabanná*. The reference, I think, is to Jesus, who – though he is “at rest” with God after being raised up to Him (see *Qur.* 3: 55) – is not himself Divine as the false Christians suppose.

11. That is, Muḥammad, who journeyed by night from Mecca to Jerusalem (see *Qur.* 17: 1). While he may be said to remain in a condition of ‘becoming ever closer’ to God, he is not thereby inferior to one (such as Jesus) who has already ‘arrived.’

12. *Ṣafī wa-naḥī wa-ḥabīb wa-khidn*. The terms (which are virtually synonymous, all signifying a ‘friend’) could be construed to refer to the prophets, Adam, Moses, Abraham and David (among others).

[of mankind] by predestination being Lords of the ‘People of the Trusteeship’ (*sādāt ahl al-amānah*), who are trustworthy.<sup>13</sup>

There [in Destiny] he who stands with the Divine Spirit and he who stands with the one sprung “from spilled semen”<sup>14</sup> shall be distinguished, there being naught but two groups [of creatures in the Hands of the Creator] (*qabdatān*) – one of the Left, which is lesser, and another of the Right, made fortunate.<sup>15</sup> But Mercy encompasses every single thing,<sup>16</sup> by virtue of which God enables the distant to become the close, if He so will, that he might be distinguished by Closeness [to God – that is, saintliness]<sup>17</sup> at the time of the Setting-forth [for Judgment] on account of His Foreknowledge that he was one who had attained unto [that Closeness], having reached his Destiny [in pre-eternity]. For the Real had spoken to him in his Innermost being (*sirru-hu*) in the silent ‘Voice of Reality’ (*lisān al-ḥāl*): “That is only by Our Will!” And He averred in the breasts of His Servants that the Divine Presence comprehends both the very highest and the lowest attribution.

I praise God with the Praise of one who speaks by the [Divine] ‘He’, not by the [human] ‘I’<sup>18</sup> – and when [that Divine Praise] is delivered to its keeper and [revealed] within its vessel,<sup>19</sup> it brings great benefit! And I bless His chosen Messenger who does not cease chanting the Qur’ān (May God bless and keep him!) as long as letter joins to letter and meaning to meaning, and the meanings take the utterance of the articulator (*kalimat al-lāfīz*) as a dwelling . . .<sup>20</sup>

NOW THEN, after Praise and Blessings and [mention of] the abundant gifts and delights which God granted us when we sought refuge in Him, I say: “*Praise belongs to God, Who guides us to this – and we would not be well-guided were not God to guide us. Verily, the Messengers*

13. See *Qur.* 33: 72, where man accepts the “trusteeship” over which all other creatures demurred.

14. An allusion to *Qur.* 75: 37, referring to the man (*al-insān*) of physical nature.

15. That is, the damned and the blessed.

16. Cf. *Qur.* 7: 156.

17. *Al-qurb* = *walāyah* (sainthood, “closeness,” ‘nearness, or proximity’ to God).

18. See Addas’s perceptive comment in “La Filiation spirituelle”, n. 70.

19. *Al-ḥāfiẓ wa-l-inā’*. The Divine praise of al-Biṣṭāmī (“Glory be to Me!”) is tantamount to the “I am the Real!” of al-Ḥallāj, and both indicate the sense of the genuine Divinity of Christ as the Word of God delivered to the Virgin Mary (in *Qur.* 4: 171).

20. This line has puzzled the copyists, who all offer different readings of it. The meaning is evidently as Addas has suggested: The Prophet’s recitation of the Scripture lives on, as it were, in the continuous chanting of it on the lips of his followers, the Ṣūfīs. Each clause of the opening poem, which is simply a stylized *basmalah*, rhymes in *-nā*. Note also that the section contains no mention of the proper theme of the present work (although an oblique reference was noted in the first sentence).

of our Lord have brought the Truth!”<sup>21</sup> And one of the verses brought from ‘the Exalted, the Wise’ [Matrix of the Scripture]<sup>22</sup> by the Noble Messenger in the Scripture sent-down, which is the Glorious Qur’ān, [is the following]:

O Children of Adam, We have sent down upon you a Vestment (*libās*) to cover your shameful parts, and beautiful Raiment (*rīsh*); and the Robe of God-fearing (*libās al-taqwā*) – that is best. [*Sūrat al-A‘rāf*: 26]

The ‘indispensable’ [aspect] of the Outer Vestment (*al-libās al-zāhir*) is that which covers the shameful parts – that being the “Robe of God-fearing” [*i. e.*, decency] – for the sake of protection.<sup>23</sup> The “beautiful Raiment” is what exceeds that, in which there is adornment (*al-zīnah*) – “the Adornment of God which He brings forth for His Servants”<sup>24</sup> from the treasuries of His Transcendencies, and which He has made a Saving grace (*khāliṣah*)<sup>25</sup> for the Believers during the life of this World and on the Day of Resurrection,<sup>26</sup> when they shall not be called to account for it. But if they wear it and adorn themselves therein without this Intent and without this Presence,<sup>27</sup> wearing it in vanity and conceit, then that is “the adornment of the life of this World (*al-ḥayāh al-dunyā*).”<sup>28</sup> For the cloth (*al-thawb*) is one, but the judgment upon it is various, in accordance with the variety of intentions.<sup>29</sup>

Again, the [real] Robe of God-fearing – which is the “Best” Vestment [in the above-quoted verse] – was sent down into the hearts of the Servants of God, it being in the exact form of the Outer Vestment.<sup>30</sup> Like the latter, it is an ‘indispensable’ vestment (*libās ḍarūrī*) which covers the shameful things of the *Inner* aspect (*saw’āt al-bāṭin*) –

21. *Qur.* 7: 43.

22. God is described by the epithets, *al-‘Alī al-Ḥakīm*, in *Qur.* 42: 51 (and, separately, in many places). Just six verses later, in 43: 4, however, the same terms are applied to the celestial prototype, or metaphysical matrix, of the Qur’ān (the *umm al-kitāb*), and our present passage is not without a like ambiguity.

23. In current usage, *libās al-taqwā* has become an expression for modesty, or common ‘decency’.

24. *Qur.* 7: 32.

25. An allusion to the second half of the verse just quoted; but the key-word, *khāliṣah*, is explained more clearly in *Qur.* 38: 46: “Verily, We have saved them with a Saving qualification (*khāliṣah*) – the recollection of the Final Abode.”

26. Maḥmūd (the editor of C) reads “the day of Establishment” (*iqāmah* instead of *qiyāmah*) in the eternal Abode (*dār al-muqāmah*), with reference to *Qur.* 35: 35.

27. That is, without the intent to recollect the Hereafter and, hence, be *present* therein even now (see n. 25).

28. See *Qur.* 18: 28 & 46; and cf. 57: 20.

29. The “beautiful Raiment” and the “Adornment of God” are the spiritual–intellectual endowments and virtues which, in the Ṣūfīs, bring the recollection of eternity, and are the ‘saving grace’ which purifies them for eternal bliss in the Hereafter; but in the worldly these same endowments are mere vainglory, leading to damnation.

30. Note that the Shaykh already identified the *outer* most garment as the prerequisite *libās al-taqwā*

that being fear of God regarding everything forbidden (*taqwá l-mahārim*), in principle. In it, also, is that which is like the “beautiful Raiment” in the Outer aspect – that being the Vestment of the Noble Moral qualities (*makārim al-akhlāq*), such as the supererogatory acts of devotion, like forgiveness and peace-making in cases when the Lawgiver has permitted you to assert your right.<sup>31</sup> But the relinquishing of one’s right is one of the things whereby Man may adorn himself within, for that is the Adornment of God in the Inner aspect – that being every Inner Vestment to which the Law shows you the way.<sup>32</sup>

The Inner Vestment has been realized in the form of the Outer as to the Law; and, even as the Outer is various in its purposes and intents, so the Inner Vestment differs in intents and purposes. When this was determined in the minds of the People of God,<sup>33</sup> they desired to bring together the two modes of Vestiture (*libsatān*) and to adorn themselves with the two types of Adornment in order to combine the two Most-excellent Qualifications (*al-ḥusaynayayn*)<sup>34</sup> and, thus, come back from the two extremes.<sup>35</sup> For the cause of their donning this Distinguished Mantle (*al-khirqah al-ma’lūmah*) is that it might be an indication (*tanbīh*) of that to which they aspire for the Vestment of their Inner parts; and they deem that [to be a sign of] good Companionship and Moral instruction (*ṣuḥbah wa-adab*).

The origin of this Vestment, in my view – according to what was revealed to my Innermost being – is God’s own ‘putting on’ the Heart of His Servant. For verily, He has declared: “My Earth and My Heaven do not contain Me, but the Heart of My faithful Servant contains Me.”<sup>36</sup> For the clothing ‘contains’ its Wearer. When that [*i.e.*, the Divine presence] was decreed in my Innermost being, and my standing among the Knowers of God became magnified, I composed these verses on the subject:

---

(= basic decency), but this, the glorified *inner* one, is the “best” of them – the *bona fide* robe of God-fearing/piety, which, however, takes the same generic form as the outer.

31. Such as, for instance, turning the other cheek if someone should strike you without cause (see *Matt. 5: 39*). Most of the commandments of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount would be classed as acts of supererogation (*nawāfil*). It is precisely their voluntary (creative) nature that lends them salvific efficacy.

32. That is, as an ideal (not a mandatory) objective.

33. “When this was determined”: that is, in the mid-4th/10th century, when the tradition of the symbolic mantle of initiation was first instituted by Ṣūfīs like al-Shiblī and Ibn Khafīf, as we will see below (at nn. 40–1).

34. See E. W. Lane, *Arabic–English Lexicon* (rep., Cambridge, 1984), s.v. *ḥusaynā*.

35. *Fa-yathābū minā l-ṭarafayni*. The verb is cognate with the word, *thawb* (clothing; garment). The “two extremes,” or ‘extremities’, have various significations in proverbs (see *ibid.*, s.v. *ṭaraf*), but the usage here is probably rhetorical.

36. On this very popular (but non-canonical) *ḥadīth qudsī*, see Su‘ād al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mu‘jam al-ṣūfī* (Beirut, 1981), pp. 1265–6.

[THE MANTLE OF THE HEART]<sup>37</sup>

Of knowers, am I not most avaricious  
 with my Way and my Secret<sup>38</sup> – most ungenerous?  
 No! This is not avarice, but, rather,  
 it is the most *generous* form of Favor:  
 I will accommodate [my Lord] whenever  
 my knowing Heart realizes His [Presence]!  
 I am the Sun, disclosed by my own Essence,  
 if I will; and the waning Moons reveal me  
 When I will *that* – All of this in accordance  
 with my Station. And the Stars will reveal me  
 When the Night becomes most dark from my Absence  
 and the World benighted loses sight of me.  
 But when my Mantle ‘covers’ [God’s] Essence,<sup>39</sup>  
 all will be bewildered by its brilliance!

Now, the combination of the two types of Vestiture appeared from the time of [the tenth-century Eastern Ṣūfī masters] al-Shiblī<sup>40</sup> and Ibn Khafīf,<sup>41</sup> *et cetera*, and our own course has followed their way (*madhhab*) in that.<sup>42</sup> We have donned [the Mantle] at the hands of a number of noble Ṣūfī masters<sup>43</sup> after having been their companion and followed their Moral example, so that my wearing of the Vestment might be authenticated, both externally and internally. But *our* way regarding the investiture of

37. The poem is included in the *Dīwān Ibn al-‘Arabī* (Bulaq, 1855), p. 58 (no. 147). The metre is *al-mutaqārib*.

38. *Dīn-ī wa-sirr-ī*. For the many possible connotations of these two words, see Lane, *Lexicon*, s.v.

39. *Idhā labbisat khirqat-ī dhāta-hu*. God ‘wears’ the mantle of the Ṣūfī’s heart, which is His proper ‘garment’ – the only created thing that might be said to contain Him.

40. Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Dulaf b. Jaḥdar al-Shiblī of Baghdad (d. 945). See also at n. 116, below.

41. Abū ‘Abd al-Lāh Muḥammad Ibn Khafīf b. Isfakshādh of Shiraz (d. 982). See also at n. 135.

42. Al-Shiblī was the initiator of the first formal investiture, or line of descent, listed below which ultimately was received by Ibn al-‘Arabī, and Ibn Khafīf instituted the second. In each case these masters had themselves been the final link in a chain leading back to God (through Gabriel and the Prophet), but the associations before the mid-tenth century had not been formalized by an actual hierurgic rite of investiture (as is clear from the technical language used in the *silsilahs* themselves).

43. The word translated “a number” here actually implies a rather numerous company (*jammah*), raising at least the possibility that Ibn al-‘Arabī may have received *other* than the four investitures certified in the *Nasab*.



Aspirant-disciples (*libās murīd al-tarbīyah*) is different from what is current today<sup>44</sup> – and that is that the Master should carefully examine the Aspirant who aspires to be invested with the Mantle, since any spiritual State (*ḥāl*) in which the Disciple finds himself may be for him a deficiency.<sup>45</sup> So the Master ‘invests’ himself in that State in order to ascertain the reality of it as it inundates him, the power of the State flowing into the garment (*al-thawb*) that the Master happens to be wearing. Then he takes off the garment while in that State, and clothes him – the Aspirant – in it, so that the flow of spiritual ‘Wine’ (*sarayān al-khamr*) might permeate him, pervading his members, and inundate him, perfecting the State for him. But nowadays this [sort of initiatic procedure] is quite rare,<sup>46</sup> and when the spiritual energies (*himam*) of people fall short of the kinds of things of which we have just been speaking, they degenerate to the level of the common masses. Even then, however, they stipulate therein certain conditions (*shurūṭ*) – this Distinguished Mantle being conditional on the form of what the Real has proclaimed with regard to covering shameful things (*sitr al-saw’āt*):

For the shameful of falsehood should be covered with the vestment of Truthfulness (*libās al-ṣidq*); and the shameful of treachery with the garment of Trustworthiness (*thawb al-amānah*);

And perfidy is covered with the mantle of Fidelity (*khirqat al-wafā’*); and hypocrisy with the mantle of Sincerity (*al-ikhhlās*);

And foolish morals are covered by the mantle of Noble morals (*makārim al-akhlāq*); and reprehensible acts by the mantle of Praiseworthy acts (*al-maḥāmid*); and every base nature with the mantle of every Sublime nature (*khuluq sanī*);

And the mere renouncing of [belief in] the secondary causes (*al-asbāb*) must be covered with the Absolute Affirmation of the ONE (*tawḥīd al-tajrīd*);

And trust in finite entities (*al-tawakkul ‘alá l-akwān*) is covered with complete Trust in God alone;

44. This line is only found in some of the sources; and although it is probably an interpolation, it could well have been added by the author himself.

45. For instance, a highly intelligent disciple might lack compassion or common sense, and even one who is very virtuous may still suffer from spiritual pride (*à la* the young man in *Matt.* 19: 16–23).

46. Recall that this was written at the end of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s career. A similar glimpse into the Shaykh’s empirical teaching method may be found in an early work, the *‘Anqā’ mughrīb* (Cairo, 1954), pp. 11–12 (translated in G. Elmore, *Islamic Sainthood in the Fullness of Time* [Leiden, 1999], pp. 264–5); and an even more germane passage is in the *Futūḥāt al-makkīyah* (Cairo, 1911), vol. I, pp. 186–7, translated below (n. 147).

And thanklessness (*kufr al-ni'mah*, the 'unbelief of the benefit') with Thankfulness towards the Benefactor (*shukr al-Mun'im*).<sup>47</sup>

Then adorn yourself in the Adornment of God (*zīnat al-Lāh*) with vestiture of the Praiseworthy Morals (*malābis al-akhlāq al-maḥmūdah*), such as:

Silence (*al-ṣamt*) regarding what does not concern you,  
Averting the eyes from what is improper to gaze upon,  
Inspecting the bodily members with timorousness,  
Relinquishing mistrust of people,

Perusing (*taṣaffuh*) the daily pages of your actions and what the pens of the Noble Scribes record against you,<sup>48</sup>

Contentment (*al-qanā'ah*) with little sustenance – not looking for an increase in anything but good deeds,<sup>49</sup>

Examination of the soul's dispositions (*akhlāq al-nafs*),

Repeatedly seeking God's Forgiveness (*ta'āhud al-istighfār*) and turning to recite the Qur'ān,

Adherence to the edifying manners of Prophetary Culture (*al-ādāb al-nabawīyah*) and studying the morals of the Righteous (*akhlāq al-ṣāliḥīn*),

Striving emulously (*al-munāfasah*) in matters of Religion and Kinship relations,  
Diligence in friendliness towards neighbors,

And the expending of one's very self/honor (*badhl al-'ird*). The Messenger of God (May God bless and keep him!) spoke of that, saying: "Is anyone of you able to be as Abū Ḍamḍam? When he woke up in the morning he used to declare, 'O God! Verily, I give my self/honor ('*ird-ī*) as alms to Your Servants.'"<sup>50</sup>

[Similarly,] you must be generous of soul (*sakhā' al-nafs*, = 'ready to relinquish what one has') – that is, expend the soul/self to satisfy the needs of mankind;<sup>51</sup>

Do favors (*iṣṭinā' al-ma'rūf*) for both friend and foe, treating all alike with humility, gentleness and long-suffering;

47. These first 'ten commandments' correspond to the "indispensable" aspect of the robe of God-fearing. What follows represents the pearls of cultivated virtue, which adorn those more spiritual whose "treasures are in Heaven."

48. Cf. *Qur.* 82: 10–13.

49. The second clause is added only in E (and those sources based on it) and C.

50. Not included in any of the major collections of *ḥadīth*, but compare the saying of Abū Dardā': "Lend from your self/honor for the day of your need." Though it may connote 'honor' (*ḥasab, sharaf*), '*ird*' is a synonym of *nafs* (self); hence, Abū Dardā''s maxim is similar to the lines following.

51. From this point I have translated the continuous series of recommended virtues as imperatives (although the author does not actually begin using the imperative mode until later).

Overlook the misstep of Brethren;

Do not go into the disputes that broke out among the Companions [of the Prophet] and the great ones of the past;<sup>52</sup>

Abandon the company of the heedless, except to call them to the Recollection of God or to mention His Name in their presence;

Refrain from becoming engrossed in the subject of the non-essential accidents (*al-a'rād*) or in the Signs of God (*āyāt al-Lāh*);<sup>53</sup>

Abstain from speaking evil of rulers<sup>54</sup> and of sinners in the Community of Muḥammad (May God bless and keep him!);

Renounce anger – except over violation of the Sacred things of God (*maḥārim al-Lāh*) – and relinquish malice and spite in your heart;

Pardon the one who has harmed you – that is, do not even defend yourself [from harm];<sup>55</sup>

“Annul the inadvertent stumblings” of men of Virtue (*ahl al-murū'ah* = ‘gentlemen’), “those of Goodly-qualities” (*dhawū l-hay'āt*);<sup>56</sup>

Maintain the protection of women (*ahl al-sitr* = ‘ladies’);

Revere Religious scholars (*al-'ulāmā'*) and all people of Religion (*ahl al-dīn*);

Honor the aged;<sup>57</sup> and honor the ‘Honored one of the nation’ (*karīmat al-qawm*) – whoever that may be, whether Muslim or infidel – all of that in accordance with the Divine-legal statute as to how you should honor that personage;<sup>58</sup>

Show ‘courtesy’ (*ḥusn al-adab*) toward God and toward everyone else – living or dead, present or absent;

Refute the slander against a Muslim’s reputation;

Beware of much talking, affectation and bragging – for, truly, much talk leads to a fall;

But have due respect for the great, kindness for the weak, and mercy for him of little stature – seeking out those who are needy to share your possessions with them by means of charitable donation and gift;

52. This is found only in E and C and, indeed, a similar dictum is given below (at n. 74).

53. The accidents are unintelligible in their phenomenal nature and the Signs of God are inscrutable as noumena.

54. “Of rulers”: only in E and C.

55. Only he who does not resist evil can sincerely pardon it, because he has not personally interacted with it.

56. An allusion to the *ḥadīth*, “Annul the inadvertent stumblings of those of goodly qualities” (see *Musnad Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal* [Cairo, 1894–6], vol. VI, p. 181; and *Sunan Abī Dā'ūd* [Cairo, 1950], vol. IV, p. 189, no. 4).

57. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 361, no. 23: “Part of the honoring (*ijlāl*) of God is the honoring (*ikrām*) of the aged.”

58. The reference, I think, is to the *de facto* ruler of the land (who, in Crusader times, might well be a Christian or an Ismā'īlī).

Be easy-going in your speech and guidance,<sup>59</sup> and entertain the guest;

Disseminate peace and long life [in your social greetings] to people, pursuant to the Divine-legal statute, and be not one who curses and defames, finds fault and loudly scolds;

Requite no one with evil though you be in your right, except by way of doing good (*iḥsān<sup>an</sup>*);<sup>60</sup>

Give “sincere counsel (*al-naṣīḥah*) for the sake of God, His Messenger and the leaders of the Muslims and their common people”;<sup>61</sup>

Do not look for misfortunes for anyone, and curse no one – specifically, one of God’s Servants [i.e., any human being] – whether living or dead. For you cannot know what will be the end of the infidel who is still living, nor [do you know] what was the end of the departed [if he was not an unbeliever].<sup>62</sup>

Do not condemn any of those addicted to carnal appetites (*al-shahawāt*) for their lusts;

Do not urge leadership (*al-riyāṣah*) upon anyone;

Do not hold down your children to serve your own interests;

Beware lest you let people ‘urinate’ in your ear by passing on to you what you will be sorry to hear about yourself or another;<sup>63</sup>

And, certainly, you should love the Believers, *all* of them – those who do you harm and those who are good to you – because of their love of God and His Messenger. Do not despise them on account of their contempt for you or anyone else other than God and His Messenger. This I was advised by the Messenger of God (May God bless and keep him!) in a Dream (*al-manām*) concerning someone [namely, Abū ‘Abd al-Lāh al-Ṭarṭūsī] who had slandered my Master [Abū Madyan] so that I became angry with him.<sup>64</sup> Then I saw the Messenger of God (May God bless and keep him!) in the Dream, and he asked me:

59. Or perhaps this word should go with the following clause: ‘Guide and entertain the travelling guest.’

60. Maḥmūd cites *Qur.* 41: 34 in this connection.

61. This is part of a well-known *ḥadīth* (recorded by both al-Bukhārī and Muslim) which identifies ‘sincere counsel’ as the very essence of religion (see A. J. Wensinck, *et al.*, *Concordance et indices de la tradition musulmane* [Leiden, 1936–69], s.v. *naṣīḥah*, for references to this and related traditions). Addas points out that Ibn al-‘Arabī has discussed this *ḥadīth* at length in the *Futūḥāt* (IV, 468–70).

62. The unbeliever who is still alive may repent before his death, and even a professed Muslim who has died may not have his belief accepted by God. (One can be sure only of the fate of unbelievers who have died). This passage can be read otherwise, however, by taking the mention of the infidel’s end (*mā yakhtimu la-hu*) as a reference to *Qur.* 2: 7, *et al.*, where it is said of the unbelievers that “God has sealed (*khatama*) their hearts,” etc.

63. Some sources read: “What will delight you to hear.”

64. We are told the identities of those concerned in Ibn al-‘Arabī’s *Al-Durrah al-fākhīrah* (MS. Esad Ef. 1777,

“Why are you angry with So-and-so?” “Because of *his* anger,” I answered, “and his slandering my Master.”

Then he said (Peace be upon him!): “Do you not know that he loves God and he loves me?” I answered, “Yes, of course.”

“Then why do you not love him for his love of me,” he asked, “when you are angry with him because of his anger for your Master?” “O Messenger of God,” I replied, “from this very moment I will do so! There is no better Teacher (*mu‘allim*) than you, who have called my attention to something of which I had been forgetful.”

Take no joy in a reputation flattering to yourself spreading among the general public, even if you deserve it. For you never know – will it *remain* with you or be stripped from you?<sup>65</sup>

Do not set yourself apart from the Believers by a praiseworthy, extraordinary Virtue (*khulq gharīb maḥmūd*) distinguished from you, except you be counted among those who merely seek to emulate that Virtue.<sup>66</sup>

Do not put on a display of humility (*al-khushū‘*) in your outward behavior (*ẓāhiru-ka*) by casting yourself supine on the ground, unless you are really so disposed in your Inner being (*bāṭinu-ka*).

Desire not vain increase (*al-takaththur*) from the World.

Care nothing for the ignorance of him who does not know your worth; rather, it is not seemly that there be any sense of your worth even in your own eyes.

Have no desire that people should listen to your speech.

Be not anxious<sup>67</sup> to give answer to anything displeasing said about you.

Be patient ‘with’ the Real and ‘along with’ the Real:<sup>68</sup> “And be patient<sup>69</sup> along with those who call upon their Lord, morning and evening, seeking His Face. Do not look beyond them, desiring the adornment of the life of this World (*zīnat al-ḥayāh*

---

f. 105, translated by Ralph W. J. Austin in *Sufis of Andalusia* [London, 1971], p. 155), and in the *Futūḥāt* (IV, 498, ll. 27–33seq.) we learn that the episode took place in Tlemcen in 1194.

65. As a coat of arms is stripped from a fallen enemy.

66. That is, your ‘genius’ is the “virtue” (*khulq*: ‘natural disposition; moral characteristic’), not yourself.

67. *Lā tajza‘u*. The verb is the contrary of *iṣbir* (“be patient”) in the next line.

68. *Wa-ṣbir li-l-Ḥaqqi wa-ma‘a l-Ḥaqqi*. The first verbal phrase has ‘with’ (*li-*) in the sense of *against*: ‘withstand, endure’; and the second is its contrary: ‘along with’ (*ma‘a*). Thus, the Divine reality is to be viewed as both ‘Agent’ and ‘Patient’ of the trials of life requiring endurance – both “those who call” for help and their “Lord” to Whom they appeal in the verse following.

69. *Wa-ṣbir nafsa-ka*. The object here is actually redundant, being implicit in all intransitive usages of this verb. Moreover, God is the implicit cause of the afflictions requiring the soul’s patience, as we may see in ‘Amr b. ‘Uthmān’s definition of *ṣabara* (quoted by Lane): “to maintain patience with/against God and to receive His trials with an unstrained mind” (*Lexicon*, s.v.).

*al-dunyā*), and obey not him whose heart We have made heedless of Our Remembrance, who follows his pleasure and whose affair is lost.<sup>70</sup> Say: ‘The Real/Truth is from your Lord!’ So, whoever will, may he believe; and whosoever will, let him disbelieve.”<sup>71</sup>

Be equitable in the face of [the demands of] your lower-soul, but do not demand equity from anyone else in regard to your own right.

Greet Muslims in the first place; and return the greeting of Peace upon whomever greets you – loud enough that he can hear.

Be careful not to speak evil of the wealthy when they are niggardly or of worldly people when they vie with each other in the World, and do not covet what they have.

Invoke God in favor of the rulers and those in authority, not against them, even when they are oppressive.

Strive against your lower-soul and your passion, for, truly, it is your greatest enemy.<sup>72</sup>

Do not sit much in the market-streets, nor even stroll therein.

Forbear presenting your [complaint of] damage to the Religious authorities (*a’immat al-dīn*), and do not even bear testimony against the people of the *Qiblah* (*viz.*, Muslims) in anything that may lead the hearer thereof to depart from the Community.<sup>73</sup>

Hold back from going into what was disputed among the Companions [of the Prophet] – indeed, regarding [anything having to do with the condition of] the dead, “for they have reached what they sent ahead”.<sup>74</sup>

Abandon him who is a hypocrite (*al-murā’*) with regard to [faith in] the Qur’ān and Predestination (*al-qadar*).<sup>75</sup>

70. *Qur.* 18: 28. The ostensible purpose for quoting this verse in this context is the mention of *zīnah* (adornment; clothing). The adornment of this world are pleasures (*ahwā’*), while the ‘Adornment of God’ is the saving grace of His Remembrance (*dhikr*), made manifest within in the moral teachings which are the subject of this portion of the *Nasab*.

71. *Qur.* 18: 29. “The Real/Truth is from your Lord”: *Al-ḥaqq min Rabbi-kum*. That is, while we are to be patient “along with” those who believe and “call upon their Lord” through the trials of life, we are also to remind ourselves that the reality of our suffering has its true source in God, and we are, thus, to be patient with/against Him as the Lord even as we are *along* with Him in the company of His servants.

72. The ‘greater *jihād*’ is the struggle of one’s true, higher self and intellect (*‘aql*) against the lower-self (*nafs*) and passion (*hawā*).

73. That is, to turn away from the *qiblah* (the direction of Mecca, which all Muslims face in prayer).

74. *Fa-anna-hum afdaw ilā mā qaddamū*. This is a quote from a *ḥadīth* which begins: “Do not revile the dead...” (see al-Bukhārī, *Al-Jāmi’ al-ṣaḥīḥ*, 23: 97 and 81: 42; and *Musnad*, VI, 180, *et al.*). The point is that all we can really know about the state of the Afterlife (*mā ba’d al-mawt*) is that it is determined by our actions in this life. And it was precisely such matters as eschatology and the Hereafter on which the Companions did not always agree.

75. That is, faith in the eternity (uncreatedness) of the Qur’ān as the Speech of God and in predestination as a sixth tenet of Islam (after belief in God, His angels, His books, His prophets, and the Resurrection of the body).

Avoid the company of sectarians and innovators (*ahl al-ahwā' wa-l-bida'*) pernicious to Religion and secular authority (*al-dīn wa-l-mulk*).<sup>76</sup>

You must expel greed, envy and vanity from your heart when you give free rein to these qualities in other than their legitimate places (*al-mawāṭin al-mashrū'ah*).<sup>77</sup>

You must enter into the company of people (*al-jamā'ah*), for 'the wolf eats none but the stray [sheep]'

Beware of haste in your affairs, except in five things: in Prayer, to begin at the right time; in undertaking the Pilgrimage as soon as you are able; in giving food to guests before beginning conversation; in preparation of the dead for burial; and the marrying-off of the virgin as soon as she reaches maturity.

Exert every effort in the sincere counsel (*naṣḥ*) of God's Servants – whether Muslim, infidel or polytheist – with knowledge and practical advice.<sup>78</sup>

Cut off the causes/occasions of carelessness [in matters of formal Religion], and uphold the performance of [the five daily] Prayers and the perfection of their ritual form.

Carry out a reckoning (*al-ḥisbah*) upon the lower-soul [before you are called to the Reckoning].<sup>79</sup>

Depart from ignorance in the pursuit of Knowledge: And [an instance of that is] that you have the best intentions towards anyone pursuing Knowledge; and regret any neglect in putting those intentions to good use.<sup>80</sup>

Shun passions and the Abode of Illusion (*dār al-ghurūr*) [= this World].<sup>81</sup>

Believe that the lower-soul (*al-nafs*) is loathsome, for the lower-soul – in the belief of the People of God – is every objectionable thought/inclination (*khāṭir madhmūm*).

Oppose acts of injustice;

Improve your eating habits;<sup>82</sup>

76. The last word is read as *mulūk* (kings), *milk* (property), and *milal* (minority religious communities) by the various sources, and is omitted by others.

77. Greed for knowledge, envy of the virtuous and pride in accomplishment may not always be wrong.

78. '*Ilm wa-siyāsah*. From this point on in the series, the 'praiseworthy morals' (*akhlāq maḥmūdah*) are no longer phrased as imperatives in the Arabic, though I have continued to render them as such for stylistic reasons.

79. As Maḥmūd suggests, this could be reminiscent of the *ḥadīth*, "Call your selves to reckoning before you are called to the Reckoning" (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī* [Cairo, 1931], 35: 25).

80. Like Jesus, Ibn al-'Arabī often takes a general moral platitude and expands upon it in provocative new ways.

81. An allusion to *Qur.* 57: 20, describing the life of this world.

82. *Ṭī'mah*: 'one's manner of eating'. To be *ṭayyib al-ṭī'mah* is to be careful to eat only what is lawful (see *Lexicon*, s.v. *ṭī'mah*). In a tradition (quoted by Maḥmūd), the Prophet told a companion that if he

Strive to reconcile discord<sup>83</sup> – for God will bring together His Servants on the Day of Resurrection;

Drop suspicion [of people], but always be cautious;

And have fear and anxiety (*al-khashiyah wa-l-hamm*) only with respect to [the Judgment of] God.

And have love and hate (*al-ḥubb wa-l-bughd*) for the sake of Him, loving affection (*al-mawaddah*) for the Family of God's Messenger – May God bless and keep him! – and friendship (*al-muwālāh*) for the Righteous.

Weep much [for the love of God];

Implore God and supplicate Him, night and day;

Flee from the path of leisurely comforts;

Humble yourself in every circumstance (*ḥāl*) before God – Be He exalted!;

Watch out for inordinate sadness and spoiling life by mulling over the debt you owe the Benefactor (*shukr al-Mun'im*) for all that He has bestowed upon you.

Aspire to God in every circumstance you are in;

Help each other to Piety and Fear of God (*al-birr wa-l-taqwā*);

[Answer the call of the Summoner (*ijābat al-dā'ī*)];<sup>84</sup>

Support the oppressed (*nuṣrat al-mazlūm*) and answer the one who calls out for help;<sup>85</sup>

Aid the one who is grieving and dispel the sorrow of the sorrowful;

Fast by day and rise to pray at night – and if it be to spend the whole night in prayer (*al-tahajjud*), that is better.

Commemorate the dead and undertake to visit their graves, but do not use evil speech (*hujr*) while you are there.<sup>86</sup>

Give your blessing to funeral processions and follow in them – in the forefront if you are on foot, and at the rear if you are riding.

Stroke the heads of orphans,<sup>87</sup> visit the sick, dispense free-will offerings of charity

---

improved his eating habits his prayer would be answered. We could also read *tu'mah* (means of subsistence; manner of gain, livelihood).

83. Cf. *Qur.* 8: 1 and 49: 9–10.

84. Only in E and C (the first of which evinces Imāmīte sympathies).

85. The Egyptian editor of C opines that this applies to the obligation to help Muslim countries under attack by infidels.

86. The last clause is omitted in E. *Hujr* here probably refers to some kind of tabu language related to pagan superstitions concerning supplication of the dead. As we may infer from many traditions cited by Wensinck (see *A Handbook of Early Muhammadan Tradition* [rep., Leiden, 1971], s.v. grave[s]), visiting cemeteries was at first prohibited by Islamic law, but later allowed.

87. Cf. *Musnad*, II, 263 & 287 and V, 250.



[to the poor] (*al-ṣadaqāt*), and love those who are good (*ahl al-khayr*).<sup>88</sup>

Continuously remember [the Names of God] and fear [Him] (*dawām al-dhikr wa-l-murāqabah*).<sup>89</sup>

Have your soul keep strict account of its actions (*muḥāsabat al-nafs ‘alá l-af‘āl*), external and internal.

Become intimately familiar with the Speech of God [*viz.*, the Qur’ān] (*uns bi-kalām al-Lāh*).

Take wisdom (*al-ḥikmah*) from the words of every speaker – indeed, from your observation of everything seen.

Bear patiently with God’s Judgments (*aḥkām al-Lāh*) – for, verily, you are before His Eye (*bi-‘ayni-hi*), as He has declared to you: “Wait patiently for your Lord’s Judgment, for, indeed, you are before Our Eyes.”<sup>90</sup>

Give preference/your whole attention to the Command/Affair of God (*al-uthrah li-amr al-Lāh*),<sup>91</sup> and resist [turning to] every secondary cause brought close (*sabab muqarrab*) to Him.<sup>92</sup>

Use all of your strength (*tāqah*) to satisfy the ‘conditions’ of God’s Love and His Acceptance (*maḥābb al-Lāh wa-marādī-hi*).<sup>93</sup>

Be content with [God’s] Decree (*al-qaḍā’*) – not necessarily with each thing decreed (*al-maḍī*), but, rather, with its Decree itself<sup>94</sup> – and receive with joy whatever may come from Him (Be He exalted!).<sup>95</sup>

88. That is, treat all for the best according to their circumstances.

89. *Murāqabah* means to ‘observe carefully, watch out for, keep an eye on’, but the undertood object is God, not the heart (as is frequently assumed by westerners); so, unless otherwise qualified, the expression should best be translated as ‘fear of God’ in the sense of constant watchfulness.

90. *Qur.* 52: 48. The verse actually applied specifically to Muḥammad.

91. C alone reads *īthār*, which is a synonym of *uthrah*. *Athira li-l-amri*: ‘He gave his whole attention to the matter to the exclusion of all other things’ (see *Lexicon*, s.v. *athira*, *uthrah* and *atharah*). The *double entendre* seems to comprise both meanings: ‘Give the first choice in any matter to the Command of God’; ‘Give your whole attention to the Affair of God’.

92. Compare this with a similar counsel among the first ten listed above. It would be equally plausible to read the last clause (as Addas has): ‘Inquire into everything that might bring you closer to God’.

93. *Maḥābb* is the plural of *maḥabbah* in the sense of ‘something which causes love’; while *marād*<sup>in</sup> is the plural of *marḍāh* (something that causes/occasions satisfaction).

94. Maḥmūd indicates that this is the subject of one of the *masā’il* (questions) in Ibn al-‘Arabī’s book of that title (edited by him on the basis of an Azhar manuscript under the title of *Al-Tanazzulāt al-layliyah* [Cairo, 1987], p. 28, no. 46), which may also be found in the *Futūḥāt* (I, 45, ll. 26–7); and Addas points out that the same idea is treated in the context of Job’s patience in the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (see R. W. J. Austin, trans., *The Bezels of Wisdom* [New York, 1971], pp. 216–17).

95. It is very hard to see how this does not contradict the preceding clause: Does not the “thing decreed” proceed directly from the Divine “Decree” itself? But inasmuch as different conditioned resolutions may result from a transcendent imperative, some, of course, will be preferable to others.

Be the Friend/Partisan of the Real (*muwālāt al-Ḥaqq*) in being with Him always – ‘for He is with His Servants wherever they may be’<sup>96</sup> – and turn with the Real wheresoever He may turn;<sup>97</sup>

And rid yourself of falsehood (*al-bāṭil*).<sup>98</sup>

Be patient in times of trial;

Be abstemious even regarding what is lawful;

Concern yourself with what is most important at the time;

Seek Paradise with all longing for its being the place where you will see the Real (*maḥall ru’at al-Ḥaqq*);

Keep company respectfully with those undergoing tribulation; converse with the poor, sitting down with them in their humble quarters; and give assistance to him whose condition demands that you assist him.

Be of sound heart (*salāmat al-ṣadr*);

Pray for the Believers in secret, and serve the Poor [in spirit] (*al-fuqarā*).<sup>99</sup>

Be *for* other people and against your *self*, for it is when you are *against* it that you are really *for* it.<sup>100</sup>

Take joy in the goodness of the Community (*ṣalāḥ al-ummah*), and be sad at its corruption (*fasādu-hā*).

Give priority to the one to whom God (Exalted be He!) and His Messenger have given priority in that [degree to which] he has been given priority; and hold back the one whom God and His Messenger have held back inasmuch as he has been held back.<sup>101</sup>

Now if you have ‘put on’ these [foregoing] Vestments (*al-malābis*), then it is permissible for you to be seated in the forefront of the Assemblies before God (*al-majālis ‘inda l-Lāh*) – Be He exalted! – and be among the People of the First Ranks (*ahl al-ṣufūf al-uwal*),<sup>102</sup> for this is the vestiture of those who fear God (*malābis ahl al-taqwā*), which

96. A paraphrase of *Qur.* 58: 7 (cf. also 57: 4).

97. The final clause is only in E and C.

98. Cf. *Qur.* 17: 81: “Say: ‘The Real has come and falsehood has passed away!’ Truly, falsehood was ever passing away.” The present dictum and the one preceding it may be understood in the light of *Qur.* 55: 26–7: “All that dwells on the earth is passing away (*fān* <sup>in</sup>); but the Face of your Lord shall remain (*yabqā*)...”

99. Or else the believers, having means, might repay you; while the “poor” (viz., the Ṣūfīs) have nothing with which to recompense you but their prayers, so your reward will be in Heaven (cf. *Luke* 14: 12–14 and *Matt.* 6: 5–6).

100. Cf. *Matt.* 16: 24–5 and *John* 12: 25.

101. Addas indicates that Ibn al-‘Arabī often makes this point, particularly when enjoining the (Zāhirite) principle of following the literal order of enumerations figuring in the Scripture (see *Futūḥāt*, I, 560, ll. 21 seq.).

102. Cf. *Qur.* 18: 48. In a canonical tradition the “first ranks” are said to be formed by angels in the presence of God (see *Concordance*, III, 323, l. 29).

is the “Best Vestment”.<sup>103</sup> Strive, therefore, to make this *your* clothing – or, at least, most of it – for [the Initiate-Şūfīs are] all in the state of [God-fearing]. In it Shaqīq of Balkh,<sup>104</sup> for instance, invested the likes of Ḥātīm ‘the Hard-of-hearing’ (al-Aṣamm).<sup>105</sup> He was not really deaf, you know, but a certain woman came to speak with him one day and [as she was about to ask a question] some wind suddenly broke from her – that is, she farted. The poor woman was mortified before the Shaykh, of course, but he simply called out to her, as if she had just said something to him, “Speak louder, please!” – pretending that he had not heard [her fart]. So her shame was relieved as she said to herself, “He didn’t hear me.” And, thus, he was known as Ḥātīm the Hard-of-hearing.<sup>106</sup>

[All of the Şūfīs] have proceeded in accordance with such Moral qualities as these, that being their vestiture and their ornament (*libāsu-hum wa-ḥilyatu-hum*). And I, too, have ‘put on’ such vestiture, and I have invested whom I have invested<sup>107</sup> accordingly, for God’s sake – praised be He for that!<sup>108</sup>

### [The Qādirite Investiture]

I HEREBY INVEST YOU by my own hand with [the Mantle of Initiation as a sign] of Companionship and Moral instruction, O my saintly Friend, Muwaffaq al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Aḥmad al-‘Absī of Seville.<sup>109</sup> I myself was invested with the Mantle at the hand of the Master, Jamāl al-Dīn Yūnus b. Yaḥyá b. Abī l-Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī al-Qaṣṣār,<sup>110</sup> in the Sacred Precincts of Mecca [in 1202–03], before the Sublime Ka‘bah. Yūnus had

103. That is, fear of God is the “best vestment” (see above, before n. 30).

104. Abū ‘Alī Shaqīq b. Ibrāhīm al-Balkhī (d. 809), a disciple of Ibrāhīm Ibn Ad’ham (see at nn. 139–40).

105. Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ḥātīm al-Aṣamm (d. 851), also from Balkh in Khurāsān.

106. In his *Tadhkirat al-awliyā’* Farīd al-Dīn al-‘Attār adds that for fifteen years, as long as the woman remained alive, Ḥātīm continued to feign deafness so that no one would tell her that he really could hear (see A. J. Arberry, trans., *Muslim Saints and Mystics* [London, 1966], p. 150).

107. “I...have put on” (*labistu*): ‘I have been invested with/dressed in the mantle of initiation’; “I have invested” (*albastu*): ‘I have attired (someone)/passed on the mantle of initiation.’ From here on I will translate these verbs according to their technical connotations.

108. C ends at this point.

109. I have been unable to obtain further information on this person. He is thus named as the addressee of the *Nasab* in most of the extant manuscripts (but another name, given by Addas, is substituted in those sources based on E). Conceivably he is related (a grandson?) to the Aḥmad al-Ishbīlī portrayed in the *R. Rūḥ al-quds* as a childhood neighbor and friend of Ibn al-‘Arabī, who later died in Egypt (see *Sufis of Andalusia*, pp. 91–5, no. 10).

110. D. 1211. Addas notes that he was a well-known Qādirite *muḥaddith* from Baghdad, under whom Ibn al-‘Arabī studied traditions in Mecca (see “La Filiation spirituelle,” p. 41, n. 123, for references). This was actually the third time Ibn al-‘Arabī had received the mantle.

received it from the Master of the Age, ‘Abd al-Qādir b. Abī Ṣāliḥ b. ‘Abd al-Lāh al-Jīlī,<sup>111</sup> who received it from Abū Sa‘īd al-Mubārak b. ‘Alī al-Mukharrimī,<sup>112</sup> who, in turn, had it from Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Hakkārī,<sup>113</sup> who had it from Abū l-Faraj al-Ṭarsūsī,<sup>114</sup> who had it from Abū l-Faḍl ‘Abd al-Wāḥid al-Tamīmī,<sup>115</sup> who had it from Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Jaḥdar al-Shiblī,<sup>116</sup> who was a companion of (*ṣaḥība*) Abū l-Qāsim al-Junayd,<sup>117</sup> whose moral instruction he followed (*ta’addaba bi-hi*).

Al-Junayd, in turn, was the companion of his maternal uncle, Sarī al-Saqāṭī,<sup>118</sup> whose moral instruction he followed, as Sarī had been the companion of Ma‘rūf al-Karkhī,<sup>119</sup> whose moral instruction *he* followed. Similarly, Ma‘rūf accompanied and followed ‘Alī [al-Riḍā],<sup>120</sup> who accompanied and followed his father, Mūsá [al-Kāẓim],<sup>121</sup> who accompanied and followed *his* father, Ja‘far [al-Ṣādiq],<sup>122</sup> who accompanied and followed his father, Muḥammad [al-Bāqir],<sup>123</sup> who accompanied and followed his father, ‘Alī [Zayn al-‘Ābidīn],<sup>124</sup> who accompanied and followed his father, al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī,<sup>125</sup> who accompanied and followed both his grandfather, Muḥammad, the Messenger of God (May God bless and keep him!), and his father, ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib,<sup>126</sup> who also accompanied and followed the Messenger of God.

111. Known best as ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, in whose name the Qādirīyah order of Ṣūfism was founded. He died in Baghdad in 1166 (one year after the birth of Ibn al-‘Arabī).

112. Ḥanbalite legal scholar, judge and head of a law school in Baghdad (d. 1119).

113. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Qurashī al-Hakkārī (*fl.* late 11th century). The *nisbah* is Kurdish, related to the region south of Lake Van. Addas supposes him to be the same individual listed in the second *khirqah*, below, as the initiator of Ibn Khafīf (d. 982; see at n. 134, *infra*; and *Quest*, pp. 316–17), but that would hardly be chronologically possible.

114. I have not been able to further identify this individual. His surname relates him to Tarsus in Cilicia.

115. ‘Abd al-Wāḥid b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Tamīmī (d. *circa* 1011–19), a Ḥanbalite scholar of Baghdad (see Louis Massignon, *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj* [rep., Princeton, 1982], vol. II, p. 135).

116. See n. 40, above. One source inserts at this point: “Down to here the [formal] investiture of the mantle (*libās*) extends, and what follows is [informal] companionship (*ṣuḥbah*) only” – which, indeed, seems to be the case.

117. D. 910 in Baghdad. For an account of al-Shiblī’s apprenticeship to al-Junayd, see *Muslim Saints and Mystics*, pp. 278–9.

118. Abū l-Ḥasan Sarī b. al-Mughallis al-Saqāṭī of Baghdad (d. 867).

119. Abū Maḥfūz Ma‘rūf b. Fayrūz al-Karkhī of Baghdad (d. 815).

120. Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Mūsá al-Riḍá (d. 818), the eighth Shī’ite imām. The legend that had Ma‘rūf converted to Islam by ‘Alī al-Riḍá is generally rejected by modern scholarship. He was more credibly said to have been the disciple of Dā’ūd al-Ṭā’ī (d. *circa* 782).

121. Abū l-Ḥasan Mūsá b. Ja‘far al-Kāẓim (d. 799), the seventh imām.

122. Abū ‘Abd al-Lāh Ja‘far b. Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq (d. 765), the celebrated sixth imām.

123. Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Bāqir (d. 735), the fifth imām.

124. Abū Muḥammad ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, known as Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (the ornament of the worshippers), the fourth imām (d. 712–13).

125. The third imām (after his elder brother, al-Ḥasan), who was martyred at Karbalá on ‘Āshūrā’ in 680.

126. The cousin of the Prophet and husband of his daughter, Fāṭimah, the fourth and last Rightly-guided

And Muḥammad ‘took from’ the Angel Gabriel (Upon him be peace!), and Gabriel ‘took from’ God (Be He exalted!). I asked Shaykh Yūnus: “What did [Muḥammad/Gabriel] ‘take’ from [Gabriel/God]?” and he replied: “I asked Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir [that same question] – or, it was asked of him – and he declared: ‘He took from Him Knowledge and Moral instruction (*al-‘ilm wa-l-adab*).’ ”

[*The Maḥmūdite Investiture*]

LIKEWISE, I hereby invest you, also, with the Mantle which I received (in the city of Fez at the Azhar Mosque in the quarter of the Horse Well in 593 [= 1197])<sup>127</sup> at the hand of Abū ‘Abd al-Lāh Muḥammad b. Qāsim b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Tamīmī<sup>128</sup> of Fez and from Taqī al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Alī b. Maymūn b. Ābb al-Tawzarī of Egypt.<sup>129</sup> Both of them told me that they received the Mantle from Abū l-Faṭḥ Maḥmūd b. Aḥmad b. Maḥmūd al-Maḥmūdī,<sup>130</sup> who received it from Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Muḥammad of Basra,<sup>131</sup> who had it from Abū l-Faṭḥ b. Shaykh al-shuyūkh,<sup>132</sup> who had it from Abū Ishāq b. Shahriyār al-Murshidī,<sup>133</sup> who had it from

---

caliph and first Shī‘ite imām, who was murdered in Kufa in 661.

127. This information is supplied only in E, and it may well be a false interpolation by the copyist, since the same place and date is mentioned in the *Futūḥāt* (II, 486, ll. 23–4; IV, 503, ll. 23–5; and I, 491, l. 7), as Addas points out.

128. D. 1206. He was the sometime imām of the Azhar Mosque in Fez (see *ibid.*, IV, 503 [23–5]), all of whose writings Ibn al-‘Arabī studied, according to his declaration in the *Ijāzah li-l-Malik al-Muẓaffar* (A. R. Badawī, ed., “Autobibliografía”, in *Al-Andalus*, 20 [1955], p. 120). He also received traditions from him – Prophetary *ḥadīth* and *akhbār* of Ṣūfīs of Fez (see *Futūḥāt*, IV, 541 [22–3] & 549 [25–6]) – which al-Tamīmī collected from many teachers over a fifteen-year tour of the East (see Ibn al-Abbār, *Al-Takmilah li-Kitāb al-Ṣilah* [Madrid, 1886], vol. I, pp. 374–5, no. 1064). Ibn al-Abbār, by the way, did not have a favorable opinion of al-Tamīmī’s accuracy as a transmitter, accusing him of publishing “conjectures and errors” (*awḥām wa-aghlat*).

129. *Al-Miṣrī* is found only in al-Ghimārī’s text (see n. 5; and cf. n. 147), who also asserts that this investiture took place in 1190. Addas shows that al-Tawzarī is the ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Alī...b. Maymūn...al-Qaṣṭallānī treated briefly by Ibn al-Abbār (in *ibid.*, vol. II, p. 591, no. 1654), and gives some further particulars about his family (which hailed from Tozeur/Qaṣṭīliyah in southern Tunisia) in *Quest*, p. 143 (and nn. 42–4). The only other occasion known to me that Ibn al-‘Arabī mentions him, in *Futūḥāt*, I, 186–7 (translated below, n. 147) brings up a whole other problem which is outlined in *Quest*, pp. 144–5, but which need not concern us at this time.

130. Or: Abū l-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad Faṭḥ Maḥmūd al-Maḥmūdī (see *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj*, vol. II, p. 477).

131. I have not verified the identities of this or the next individual listed.

132. The office of *shaykh al-shuyūkh* was ostensibly in charge of the general superintendence of Ṣūfī convents for a particular city or region (see *ibid.*, vol. I, p. 44, for an interesting case).

133. Or: Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm al-Murshid b. Shahriyār al-Kāzarūnī (d. 1033), founder of the Kāzarūnīyah/Murshidīyah order in Fars. He was a descendent of Salmān al-Fārisī, and, according to Massignon, his *khirqah* extended to Salmān as well as Uways (see *ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 186–7).

Ḥasan or Ḥusayn al-Akkār,<sup>134</sup> who had it from Abū ‘Abd al-Lāh Ibn Khafīf,<sup>135</sup> who was the companion of Ja‘far al-Ḥadhdhā’.<sup>136</sup>

Al-Ḥadhdhā’, in turn, was the companion of his master, Abū ‘Amr al-Iṣṭakhrī,<sup>137</sup> who was the companion of his master, Abū Turāb al-Nakhshabī,<sup>138</sup> who accompanied his master, Shaqīq of Balkh,<sup>139</sup> who accompanied his master, Ibrāhīm Ibn Ad’ham,<sup>140</sup> who accompanied Mūsá b. Zayd al-Rā‘ī,<sup>141</sup> who accompanied Uways al-Qaranī,<sup>142</sup> who accompanied ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb<sup>143</sup> and ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib,<sup>144</sup> who both accompanied the Messenger of God (May God bless and keep him!).

### [The Khaḍirite Investiture]

LIKEWISE, I invest you, also, with the Mantle which I received at the hand of Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. ‘Abd al-Lāh Ibn Jāmi’<sup>145</sup> (in his garden in al-Miqlá, on the outskirts of Mosul, in the year 601 [= 1204–05]).<sup>146</sup> Ibn Jāmi’ had been the companion of al-Khaḍir (Peace be upon him!), whose Moral instruction he followed and from whom he acquired

134. Thus in all of the sources. He is Abū ‘Alī Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. al-Akkār (or: ‘Akkār) Bāzyār Firūzābādī al-Jūrī (d. 1001; see *ibid.*). Cf. n. 113.

135. See n. 41, above; and *ibid.*, pp. 182–6 *et seq.* Ibn Khafīf was also said to have received the mantle of Ruwaym b. Aḥmad (d. 915).

136. D. 952. The name (meaning ‘the cobbler’) is given thus in most of the *Nasab* sources, but it was also frequently spelled *al-Ḥaddā’* (the cameleer).

137. The name is thus in most sources, but the correct reading is perhaps Abū ‘Umar – in which case the reference could be to the son of ‘Umar b. Shallūyah al-Iṣṭakhrī (see *ibid.*, p. 110, n. 17).

138. D. 859. He was a celebrated exponent of *tawakkal* (trust in God), who was devoured by lions in the desert.

139. See n. 104.

140. Abū Iṣḥāq Ibrāhīm b. Ad’ham al-Tamīmī al-‘Ijlī of Balkh (d. *circa* 782), who left Khurāsān for Syria.

141. I have not been able to identify this individual, whose surname means ‘the shepherd’. We might speculate that the name is a confabulation inspired by the early precedent of Abū Ḥalīm b. Salīm al-Rā‘ī, who was a companion of Salmān al-Fārisī and who, according to al-Hujwīrī, was renowned for performing a miracle like that of Moses in *Qur.* 7: 160 (see R. A. Nicholson, trans., *The Kashf al-Maḥjūb* [London, 1936], pp. 90–1).

142. Uways b. ‘Āmir b. Jaz’ b. Mālik al-Qaranī of Yemen (d. after 657), the very type of the independent, ‘masterless’ *walī*.

143. The second Rightly-guided caliph, who was assassinated in 644.

144. See n. 126. Actually, according to legend, it was ‘Umar and ‘Alī who sought the company of Uways in Yemen (see my paper, “The *Uwaysī* Spirit of Autodidactic Sainthood as the Breath of the Merciful,” forthcoming in this journal).

145. He was a disciple of ‘Alī al-Mutawakkil and of the well-known Ṣūfī, Abū ‘Abd al-Lāh Qaḍīb al-Bān (see n. 147).

146. This and the parenthetic statement at the end of the paragraph are found only in E, and they may have been added by the copyist on the basis of the material found in *Futūḥāt*, I, 187 [1–3] (see next note).

Knowledge. (On the same spot that Ibn Jāmi‘ donned the Mantle he invested me with it, and in the exact same manner – without addition or omission).<sup>147</sup>

[A Fourth Investiture]

SIMILARLY, I myself had also been the companion of al-Khaḍir (Peace be upon him!), whose Moral instruction I followed and from whom I learned [by way of advice (*waṣīyah*) which he entrusted to me orally]<sup>148</sup> correct submission to the pronouncements of masters (*al-taslīm li-maḡālāt al-shukūkh*) – as to the letter [if not the spirit], ‘from his mouth to my mouth’<sup>149</sup> – and other points of Knowledge.<sup>150</sup> (I have seen

147. Ibn al-‘Arabī describes this investiture (signified by the placing of a small cotton cap) in his entry devoted to Ibn Jāmi‘ in the *Durrah al-fākhīrah* (see *Sufis of Andalusia*, p. 157). In addition, the following account occurs in *Futūhāt*, I, 186–7 (translated also by Henry Corbin in *Creative Imagination in the Sūfism of Ibn ‘Arabī* [Princeton, 1969], pp. 64–5; and in *Quest*, pp. 145–6): “One of our *shaykhs* had consociated with al-Khaḍir. He was ‘Alī b. ‘Abd al-Lāh Ibn Jāmi‘ – a companion of ‘Alī al-Mutawakkil and Abū ‘Abd al-Lāh Qaḍīb al-Bān – who used to live in al-Miqlā, outside Mosul, in a garden he owned. Al-Khaḍir had invested him with the Mantle in the presence of Qaḍīb al-Bān, and the Shaykh, in turn, transmitted it to me in the very same place in his garden [but indoors, according to the *Durrah* description] and observing the same procedure that al-Khaḍir had used in his investiture of *him*. I had already received the Mantle of al-Khaḍir – but in a way quite different from this – at the hand of our companion, Taqī al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḡmān b. ‘Alī b. Maymūn b. ‘Abb al-Tawzarī, who received it in Egypt from Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibn Ḥamawayh, the *Shaykh al-shuyūkh* [of Damascus (d. 1219)], whose grandfather, in turn, had it from al-Khaḍir.

“From that time onward I professed the Sūfī doctrine of the Mantle of Initiation (*libās al-khīraqah*) and I invested other people with it, since I saw how al-Khaḍir had esteemed it. But before that I had *not* espoused the doctrine of the Mantle as it is generally known today. For, really, the Mantle with us [latter-day Sūfīs] is simply a symbol for Companionship, Moral instruction and ‘Assimilation to the Divine Character-traits’ (*al-takhalluq*) – for which reason no Vestiture going all the way back to the Messenger of God will be found but, rather, only Companionship and Moral instruction. And this is all that is meant by the ‘Robe of God-fearing.’

“It is the custom among Masters of the spiritual States (*aṣḡāb al-aḡwāl*) that when they discern a deficiency in some matter in one of their companions and they want to perfect his State for him, the *shaykh* [mentally] becomes one with him (*ittahāda bi-hi*). Then, when he has done so, the *shaykh* takes the garment that he was wearing when he was in that State, removes it and casts it (*afraḡa-hu*) on the man so that the [psychic power of the] State flows into him, perfecting him. That, then, is the ‘Investiture’ as it is known among us and transmitted by the Fully-realized (*al-muḡaqqiqūn*) among our *shaykhs*.”

148. Only in E.

149. *Naṣṣ<sup>an</sup> min fi-hi ilā fiya*. That is, submit to the rightful authorities externally even if they are wrong (unless, of course, it is a matter of Divine law), but reserve your internal assent, allowing al-Khaḍir to speak through your mouth, as it were, with the proper intent (cf. *Luke* 12:11–12). For a description of the circumstances in which al-Khaḍir gave this instruction to Ibn al-‘Arabī in Seville in 1196, see *Futūhāt*, I, 336–7, translated by Addas in *Quest*, pp. 63–4.

150. At this juncture all of the sources except for E (and those based on it) proceed to the sentence after the next, then conclude with the ‘addendum’.

al-Khaḍir perform three miracles: I saw him walk on the water, ‘roll up’ the earth, and pray in the air).<sup>151</sup>

All of these [four above-mentioned Masters, along with al-Khaḍir] have authorized me to invest with the Mantle of Initiation whomever I will.<sup>152</sup> Then may my Friend [Muwaffaq al-Dīn Aḥmad] (May God grant him success!) invest with this Mantle in this same Lineage whomever he will and whomsoever he like – young or old, male or female – of the Believers, in accordance with the above-mentioned condition.<sup>153</sup>

God willing, I will now quote one of our poems on this Mantle and this special discipline:<sup>154</sup>

151. In *Futūḥāt*, I, 186 (12–18), Ibn al-‘Arabī describes a memorable moonlit night on a boat in the harbor of Tunis when he saw al-Khaḍir walking to him on the water. After talking to the Shaykh in a mode of expression peculiar to him, al-Khaḍir saluted him and suddenly traversed the distance to a lighthouse over two miles away in two or three steps. This supernatural transport over space is what is meant by ‘rolling, or folding up the earth’. The story of al-Khaḍir’s praying in mid-air is recounted in ll.18–26 on the same page (both passages are translated by Austin in *Sufis of Andalusia*, pp. 27 & 28–9).

152. This and the last sentence of the preceding paragraph are only found in E.

153. This presumably refers to the general condition of moral fitness (summed up in the fear of God) stated at the conclusion of the list of counsels (“Now if you have put on these vestments...”), making one suited to join the Ṣūfī brotherhood. The original recension of the *Nasab al-khirqah* probably ended here.

154. The poem, minus the first verse, may be found in the *Dīwān* (p. 52, no. 129), where it is the first of 26 occasional pieces devoted to the subject of investiture. The metre is *al-basīt*.



## [THE MANTLE OF GOD-FEARING]

Put on the Mantle, for Man's "Best Vestment" is God-fearing,  
 which is the truest Religion and the strongest World.  
 None fear God except every discerning one,  
 chosen and guided, whom God has distinguished:  
 He interrupts the night with Praise unto his Lord,  
 bleary-eyed [from rising] in the darkest hours;  
 He entreats: "My Master, O End-all of my hope,  
 who but his Lord shall have Mercy on His slave?"  
 God is much more Kind than this created Nature  
 and Attribute; for if they call Him, He complies!<sup>155</sup>  
 Were it not for Him, earth would not break out in laughter  
 with her flowers, nor reproving clouds overcome her.  
 God it is Who prefers [that a thing come into being],  
 God Who completes, balances and sets it in order.  
 O Essence of Religion, You are *All* of Religion:  
 Heaven is redolent with the fragrance of Your Name!<sup>156</sup>

[Addendum]<sup>157</sup>

There is no condition in the investiture of this Mantle, or Companionship, that it can only be received from one person. No one ever imposed such a condition. On the contrary, one Ṣūfī is known to have said that whoever wanted to see three-hundred men in one need only look at him, for he had been the companion of three-hundred masters and he had acquired a Moral quality (*khulq*) from each one. And just look at the Epistle [on Ṣūfism] by al-Qushayrī,<sup>158</sup> whenever he mentions any one of the Ṣūfīs – he hardly ever does so without saying that "he accompanied Such-a-one and

155. This line is garbled in the *Dīwān*. "Nature": *sajīyah*. "Attribute": *na't*. These are both 'creation' as the manifestation of the merciful Divine Essence.

156. The poem has only been included in those sources which are based on E.

157. I am not convinced that this would-be 'epilogue' is actually the work of Ibn al-'Arabī (for reasons which I will give in a later study).

158. The *Risālah fī 'ilm al-taṣawwuf*, by Abū l-Qāsim 'Abd al-Karīm al-Qushayrī (d. 1074), is one of the standard manuals of Ṣūfism from the middle-classical period of consolidation. It has been translated by Richard Gramlich as *Das Sendschreiben al-Qushayrīs über das Sufitum* (Stuttgart, 1989).

Such-another.” Investiture of the Mantle is nothing but Companionship and Moral instruction, and that is unrestricted. But a group of ignorant ‘Şūfis’ (*tā’ifat juhalā*) having no knowledge has sprung up, and they imagine that a man may not receive investiture except from a single person. But no one ever said that before. God is the Giver of success! There is no Lord other than He.

## Appendix

**“Ibn ‘Arabî: Le Livre de la filiation spirituelle” [Nasab al-khirqah]. Translated by Claude Addas. *‘Ayn al-Ḥayât*, 5, 1999. 44 pages.**

The recent annotated French translation of Ibn al-‘Arabî’s *K. Nasab al-khirqah* by Claude Addas, entitled “Le Livre de la filiation spirituelle”, marks the culmination of that scholar’s committed study of this important work which began with an initial translation of it as part of her Master’s thesis (*memoire de Maîtrise*), submitted in 1980. With the publication of Addas’s revised doctoral dissertation, *La Quête du soufre rouge*, in 1989 some passages and other significant information gleaned from the *Nasab* was made available for the first time in any western language.<sup>1</sup> In the subsequent English version of her book (*Quest*, 1993) a schematic *silsilah* of the ‘Akbarian’ mantle was featured as an appendix (pp. 316–17) diagramming all four lines of master-initiators claimed by Ibn al-‘Arabî as his formal spiritual pedigree and detailed by him in the *Nasab* (and *Futūḥāt al-makkīyah*). With the appearance of “La Filiation spirituelle” (including critical introduction and a *Note complémentaire* on the hierurgy of Şūfī initiation by the translator’s esteemed father, Michel Chodkiewicz) the entire *Nasab al-khirqah* has finally become accessible to non-specialists, marking yet another milestone in Addas’s career of original scholarship.

The quality of translation is exemplary (a fine comprehension of the Arabic rendered lucidly in French), but the greatest asset of Addas, as I have observed elsewhere, is her extraordinary familiarity with an extensive range of Ibn al-‘Arabî’s writings,

1. Although Ralph Austin had read the *Nasab* in manuscript (see his *Sufis of Andalusia* [London, 1971], p.39, n.1), and, of course, Osman Yahia had described it in *Histoire et classification de l’oeuvre d’Ibn ‘Arabî* (Damascus, 1964), pp.407–8, no.530.

particularly the whole gargantuan corpus of the *Meccan Revelations*. An instance of this capacity for in-depth contextualizing may be appreciated in her note 71, where an obscure passage in the *Nasab* concerning the Prophet Muḥammad's perpetual chanting (*taghann<sup>m</sup>*) of the Qur'ān is explicated by Addas with reference to descriptions in the *Futūḥāt* of the 'pentecostal' descent of the Scripture on the Prophet's followers, the *awliyā'*, by whose tongues his blessed enunciation may be said to live on. Some of the translator's comments are less illuminating but illustrative, nonetheless; as when she points out (in n. 75) that *Qur. 7: 32* ("the Adornment of God which He brings forth for His servants", quoted in the *Nasab*) is cited in the *Futūḥāt* (vol. I, p. 560, ll. 24seq.) as a proof-text in support of Ibn al-'Arabī's (typically Zāhirite) literalist rejection of luxury-taxes. Other examples of researcher-friendly footnotes: 80, 82, 91, 94, 99, 102, 104 and 118.<sup>2</sup>

Apart from the rhymed-prose prologue and densely-woven beginning of the work, most of the *Nasab al-khirqah* is relatively painless to read – at least by Akbarian standards. The 'genealogies' may offer little of interest to any but historians and specialists (who can argue about their tenability and whether or not a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, after all) but the heart of the book, the long series of moral instructions, or exhortations (*waṣāyā'*), will be found refreshingly attractive to the general reader – precious counsels to be cherished in practice by serious students of the Shaykh. The more substantive differences between Addas's presentation of the *Nasab* and my own (on pp. 1–33 of this issue) will be treated in a later study incorporating the Arabic text. In this review I will only address some technical matters and a rather important point of general interpretation affecting the whole perspective of Ibn al-'Arabī's various receptions of the mantle of initiation.

As a fellow text-critic I would have liked to see from my colleague a fuller description of the sources she used to establish her text. But since I myself thought best to burden the reader with even fewer technical details, let me say more precisely that Addas's account of two of her sources might have been less misleading. Specifically, *MS. Esad Efendi 1507* (E), which she declares as her basic text, is not as good as her brief description tends to imply, and the 1987 Cairo edition of A. R. H. Maḥmūd (C) not really so bad as she states (p. 24). In fact, the two are quite comparable, sharing most of the additional content not found in other sources, and they differ primarily

2. While Addas has made a promising start, a desideratum which remains would be a thorough critical comparison of the teachings in the *Nasab* with those of Ibn al-'Arabī's other practical treatises, such as *Al-Amr al-muḥkam* and *Kunh mā lā budda li-l-murīd min-hu*, as well as the *waṣāyā'*-chapter (560) of the *Futūḥāt* (IV, 444seq.).

in two respects only: E is marred by a number of careless errors of the copyist (even evincing a non-native grasp of Arabic grammar), whereas C is quite scrupulously printed;<sup>3</sup> but the Cairo edition *does* suffer from several gaping lacunae – notably, the *saj'* prologue and the chains of transmission – and, so, only about two-thirds of the *Nasab* is represented in C. Most of the absent material was provided in Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ghimārī's very serviceable study, *Al-Burhān al-jalī* (from which C was excerpted), published in 1979–80 in the journal, *Liwā' al-Islām* (see n. 5 of my translation), however, and Addas might have avoided a problem in her reading of the first two investitures by consulting that publication (see my n. 113). As it is, her suggestion (in n. 90) that a missing passage describing Ibn al-'Arabī's empirical method of initiation was deliberately "omitted" from C is a bit unfair since, in fact, a comparable description from *Futūḥāt*, I: 186–7, was quoted at length by al-Ghimārī – who, by the way, was personally very favorable towards Ibn al-'Arabī (as was Maḥmūd). The manuscript basis of C is not identified<sup>4</sup> but, as far as can be determined, it was quite as good as any other primary source I have examined.

As for E, although it does, indeed, appear to be a genuine copy of an original transcript of the *Nasab* read before Ibn al-'Arabī in the summer of 633/1236 at his home (with his son, Sa'd al-Dīn Abū Sa'ūd, and others present) by a disciple, Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Lāh al-'Alawī of Hama – that does not necessarily mean that it was *well* copied or that the form in which we have it now is free of interpolations. The full name of the original copyist (see "La Filiation spirituelle," at n. 121) makes clear that he was a *sharīf*, and there is evidence in E that either he or the second scribe harbored Imāmite sympathies (see n. 84 in my translation). That al-'Alawī was a serious student of the Shaykh al-Akbar is proven by the existence of *samā'*'s certifying his reading of portions of the *Futūḥāt*. But that really has no bearing on the credibility of the second (that is, the actual) copyist of E, who may have been a very late inheritor of the original manuscript. It is unlikely that *MS. Esad Ef. 1507*, for all its interest and value, is nearly as old as *MS. Şehid Ali Paşa 1344*, which dates from the mid-10th/16th century.

A more significant criticism that I have of Addas's representation of the *khirqah* motif does not relate, strictly speaking, to the content of the *Nasab* itself but, rather, to her reading of the important passage from *Futūḥāt*, I: 186–7, translated by her

3. For instance, C is the only source to give the correct reading of *lā tajza'u* (be not anxious), where the verb is the contrary of *işbir* (be patient) in the line following (see n. 67 of my translation). All of the manuscript sources contain at least as many mistakes as the Cairo edition.

4. As al-Ghimārī studied at the Azhar, we may conjecture that his source was *MS. Azhar 1070* [33580], ff. 29–36 (mentioned by Yahia).

in *Quest* (p. 145) and in “La Filiation spirituelle” (pp. 14–15). In the first version she left out the lines referring to Ibn al-‘Arabī’s investiture at the hand of al-Tawzarī – (compare my translation in n. 147), thus giving the false impression that what was mentioned before, the investiture by Ibn Jāmi’ in Mosul, was what caused the Shaykh to “revise his opinion . . . of the *libs al-khirqah*.” (She reiterates the same interpretation in “La Filiation spirituelle,” p. 16, even though there the entire passage was given.) But in the original Arabic it is the Khaḍirite investiture of al-Tawzarī which is clearly the point of reference of the words, “from that time”. The precise date and place of that first initiation remains uncertain (and the *Nasab* material only makes the question more complicated). Addas suggests that it took place in Seville in 595/1196 on the authority of a single anonymous manuscript (A) of dubious provenience, supplied to her by Osman Yahia. Al-Ghimārī’s source, however, asserts that the date was 586/1190; and Austin, for his part, assumed that it was six years earlier, when Ibn al-‘Arabī first encountered the mysterious, immortal Khaḍir. But whatever the case, it was obviously that first Khaḍirite initiation in the Maghrib that was the occasion of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s realizing the legitimacy of the practice of investiture (despite its not being an actual Prophetic institution, as he himself stipulates).

Finally, I should mention that *‘Ayn al-Ḥayāt* is a recently-founded journal of the *ṭarīqah Naqshbandīyah*, published privately in Italy and with a limited circulation. As the quality of the contributions (from such scholars as Addas and Hamid Algar) has so far been very high, there is certain to be an unrequited demand for issues of the journal, which, at least, will hopefully be available in the US through Interlibrary Loan (otherwise, copies may perhaps be acquired through the good offices of the librarian of the Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabī Society Oxford).

*Gerald Elmore*

Article and review both first published in the *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi Society*, Volume XXVI, 1999, pp. 1–33 and 133–7, respectively. © Gerald Elmore, 1999. You may download and print this article to read for your own personal use, but you may not copy or republish it without written permission from the Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi Society.