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# The Light beyond the Shore in the Theology of Proper Sufi Moral Conduct (*Adab*)

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Studies on proper moral conduct in the Islamic world have often been analyzed in terms of social limitations, adhering to hierarchies, asserting authority, and conflicting political interests. This article demonstrates that Sufi instructional manuals written by scholars, like the one written by Shaykh ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī (d. 1234), emphasized proper moral conduct (*adab*) primarily to prepare Sufi disciples for the ultimate return to the divine. I propose that the detailed instructions for spiritual exercises, guidelines for meditation, prayers, and the theological connection among faith, law, and the etiquette of morality suggest an *adab* theology. It was a theology that taught the spiritual aspirant to master the intricacies of cultivating a compassionate heart, to embody perfectly the knowledge from God, and to surrender completely the self in order to meet the creator with real practical knowledge.

The law requires *adab*. Where *adab* is not found there is no law, no faith, and no God consciousness.

—‘Abū Hafs ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī,  
*‘Awārif al-Ma‘ārif*

THE COMMONALTIES BETWEEN the Greco-Roman–early Christian *paideia* and the Islamic rules for social and moral conduct (*adab*) are often understood within a social, political, intellectual, urban-grooming, historical, and religious context (Alföldi; Brown). The guidelines for moral development and for a comprehensive channel for all human

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activities within Sufi Islam (*tasawwuf*) cannot be easily reduced to compartmentalized partial pieces that compose the whole. Instead, a deeper analysis of the ways in which Sufi authorities instructed their disciples to develop an inner structure as well as an outer structure for meeting the demands of preparing oneself for the journey toward God is valuable in understanding Islamic moral philosophy. The Sufi tradition has an enormous amount of erudite literature that addresses *adab*—its importance for strict Sufi adherence, practice, beliefs, law, ethics, and philosophy. In all of these areas there is a grander vision of an *adab* theology that assists the spiritual aspirant in mastering the unveiling process of gaining access to the divine.

The art of perfecting public moral conduct, or what is often referred to as the outer etiquette of the individual, is commonly called *adab*; however, historically the word has had a variety of meanings in the Islamic tradition.<sup>1</sup> In the classical periods of Islam, the usage and concept of *adab* referred to the ethical and practical norms that set the standard for a devout Muslim. In much of the literature during the early ‘Abbasid dynasty period (eighth–ninth centuries), the word *adab* referred to aristocratic manners, refined tastes, a cultivated knowledge of wisdom, manners relating to cosmopolitan life in the urban centers, proper styles in conversation and in gentlemanly behavior, and, particularly, the general codes of conduct while appearing in the ‘Abbasid court (Bellamy; al-Muqaffa‘). The word *adab* appeared in texts about the upbringing of children; in the specific conduct rules for scribes, courtiers, scholars, and military leaders; and in the training for statesmen. In wider Islamic usage *adab* was more about the proper codes for conducting one’s life that were connected to a system of ideas based on essential teachings of the Islamic faith and its beliefs (Malamud: 427–442).

In order to understand the complete concept of *adab*, one needs to move beyond the textual usage of the word and view the larger system of interrelated religious concepts to which it is connected. Historian Ira Lapidus explains that *adab* is a comprehensive, inclusive, and central concept to Islamic faith (*imân*) whose purpose is inherently to seek knowledge (*‘ilm*). *‘ilm* is not merely the scholarly practice of researching and writing on knowledge or being active in the general discipline of intellectual inquiry (Lapidus: 38–45). It is the search for insight: to find the essential meaning in the revelations so that it bears the truth from God. It encompasses the spirit behind searching for knowledge that will lead the individual’s sacred quest to a better understanding of the self in relation to the divine. From the earliest days of Islamic learning the field of *‘ilm*, consisting of Qur’anic studies, the literature surrounding the

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<sup>1</sup> For more on the usage of *adab*, see Gabrieli: 175–176 and Bonebakker.

Prophet (*hadīth* and *sunna*), philosophy, law, and linguistics, maintained the basic elementary idea of searching for the presence of God and its crucial relational component of touching the outcome of faith. To be engaged in exploring the field of *‘ilm* meant that the scholar was responsible for finding new ways to make existing faith meaningful so that it might enhance devotion, spiritual growth, trust, and love for God. For these Muslim scholars, the search for knowledge required them to think in innovative ways to enrich the practice of *islam*, that is, peaceful surrender to the will of God and complete trust in the divine’s commandments and His eternal compassion toward creation.

In this field of the Islamic religious sciences and epistemology, from as early as the eighth century onward, Sufis treated their spiritual and intellectual quest with great importance as integral to their encounter with God. In the matrix of *adab* many of the monumental Sufi masters, such as as-Sulamī (d. 1021 C.E.), stated irrefutably that “the whole of sufism is entirely based on the ways of behavior [*at-tasawwuf kulluhu ādāb*]” (as-Sulamī: 119). Aside from commentaries on the Qur’ān, Sufi scholars wrote their esoteric experiences, collected Sufi biographies, and manuals that contained specific and complex guidelines of law, customs, and detailed ways to conduct oneself in the Sufi tradition (*tasawwuf*). Influential works by Abū Nasr as-Sarrāj (d. 988 C.E.), author of *Kitāb al-Luma*, and ‘Alī al-Makki’s (d. 996 C.E.) *Qūt al-Qulūb* categorized the practices of Sufism and connected such practices with a proper *adab*. The sections of Sufi *adab* were written in a context of disciplinary rules for spiritual seekers so that they might connect the tenets of Sufism with *adab*. In these early Sufi texts the themes of *adab* were prominently connected with the different states (*ahwal*) or stages (*maqamāt*) in which Sufis achieved their mystical virtues and encounters. The Sufi manuals outlined precise ways for disciples to practice the proper ways of behavior for novices (*adab as-sūfiyya wa adab al-murīdīn*). The Sufi journey toward God and meeting the creator meant that Sufi disciples had to master and embody the perfect practices of *adab*. Sufi *adab*, unlike other “secular” types of *adab*, worked within an esoteric and exoteric epistemological context, and the search for truth was more than a contemplative or an intellectual exercise; rather, it forced Sufi disciples to structure their inner and outer lives around a mystical *adab* theology.

### POLITICS, THE SUHRAWARDĪ SUFI ORDER, AND MORAL ETIQUETTE

Shaykh ‘Abū Hafṣ ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī was born in the Islamic calendar of Rajab, 523 Hijri, or January 1145 C.E., and died in 1234 C.E. He studied theology from the prominent Sufi teacher Shaykh ‘Abdul Qādir Jilānī

(d. 1166 C.E.) and was eventually initiated into Sufism by his uncle, Shaykh Abû Najîb al-Suhrawardî. The uncle was born in 1097 C.E. in the town of Suhraward, which is located west of Sultaniyya, in the province of al-Jibâl, and established the Suhrawardî Sufi order. Shaykh ‘Umar al-Suhrawardî, like many other distinguished Sufi thinkers, tried to bring about a deeper theological understanding in the Sufi tradition by analyzing the Qur’ân, the customs of the Prophet as recorded in the *hadîth*, and the texts of past Sufi shaykhs. His best extant Sufi text, *‘Awârif al-Ma‘ârif, The Benefits of the Spiritually Learned*, was one of the more popular Sufi books of his time, and after his death it became the standard preparatory textbook for Sufi novices.<sup>2</sup> One of the many reasons for its esteemed reputation in the Sufi world was that the manual attempted to reconcile the practices of Sufism with the observance of Islamic law. To later generations of Sufis and to a wide cross section of Sufi orders the book became one of the most closely studied and memorized texts in the Sufi tradition (Ghawathî; al-Kâlâbadhî).

Al-Suhrawardî was a trained jurist (*faqih*) in the Baghdadi Hanbalî legal tradition, specializing in law (*sharî‘â*), Qur’ânic exegesis (*tafsîr*), reasoning and ethics in *tasawwuf*, and philosophy (*falsafa*), and was a scholar on the paradigmatic literature on Prophet Muhammad as found in the *hadîth* (*dîrasât as-sunnâ wa ahadîth*). As a student of two prominent Sufi teachers, ‘Abdul Qâdir Jilânî and Abû Najîb al-Suhrawardî, he was influenced by a pragmatic practice that asserted the supremacy of obeying the law while bringing a rational interpretation of Sufism. A respected *muhaddith* scholar (an authority in *hadîth* studies) with a background in *fiqh*, *sharî‘â*, *falsafa*, and Sufi lineage, al-Suhrawardî was one of the intellectual giants in the class of scholars on religion (*‘ulamâ*). As a Hanbalî jurist he followed the tradition of presenting evidence with passages of the Qur’ân, citing evidence from the *sunnâ* and *hadîths* and sayings from past eminent Sufi masters. In 1200 C.E., the ‘Abbasid caliph al-Nasir (1179–1225 C.E.) designated al-Suhrawardî as “Shaykh al-Islam,” the prestigious position that administered the religious affairs for the state, which resulted in al-Suhrawardî advocating for Sufi–state cooperation and emphasizing the role of his own Sufi order at the forefront of Islamic religious politics.

In his Sufi writings Shaykh al-Suhrawardî asserted a conservative tone and spoke out against his contemporaries, such as Ibn al-‘Arabî

<sup>2</sup> *‘Awârif al-Ma‘ârif* has been translated by some as *Knowledge of the Gnostics, Manual of the Dervishes*, or *The Gifts of the Spiritual Perceptions*, but I believe that all of those translations bring confusion to the theology of the Suhrawardîyya order and to the intellectual dimensions of Shaykh al-Suhrawardî’s Sufism.

(1165–1240 C.E.), for excessive reliance on philosophical method in theological reflection. He was a strong proponent of obeying the law closely as well as all its related disciplines, mainly because a strict observance of the law (*shari‘a*) was, in his view, related to spiritual ascension. According to him, obeying Hanbalī law meant complete obedience to the caliph’s authority, paying the required taxes, and adhering to the civil, religious, and social codes mandated by the state. For him, the *shari‘a* was more than a set of legal codes to follow; rather, it was a divine path that led the individual back to the creator. This opposition to philosophical speculation as the primary path of contemplating the nature of the divine was caused by the fear that an untrained person could put forth an interpretation that was false to the tradition and that this interpretation could be misconstrued as authentic to Sufi teachings. Another reason for al-Suhrawardī’s opposition to philosophical methods in Sufi contemplation was the controversial nature of Neoplatonic thought in Islamic philosophical studies and its overwhelming emphasis on reason over revelation, especially the place of the philosopher as the exemplary seeker for truth. Nevertheless, although Shaykh al-Suhrawardī was tolerant of all kinds of Sufi beliefs and practices, he was interested primarily in those who followed the particular Suhrawardīya path of Sufism and Hanbalī law.

### THE POLITICS OF ADAB

As Shaykh al-Islam al-Suhrawardī advocated that the caliph was the supreme leader for Muslims and the representative of God on earth. According to him, God chose a mediator, *wasila*, between Himself and human beings, and ultimately it was the caliph’s role to bring human beings back to Him from a corrupt way of living (Cahen 1959; Haartmann). A main reason for al-Suhrawardī to set up such a hierarchy was that perhaps he wanted to reform certain dissident antisocial groups, or *futūwwas*, and realign them with his own Sufi order.<sup>3</sup> In the urban centers *futūwwa* groups were the main channel for expressing lower-class interests, and gradually these groups adopted Sufi teachings and rituals and became closely connected with the Sufi networking system. Al-Suhrawardī believed that these *futūwwas* were essentially part of the Sufi way, set up for the ordinary people who found Sufi orders too demanding. He argued that *futūwwas* were inherently part of the larger *shari‘a* system, where, as mentioned, the caliph was responsible for all religious, social,

<sup>3</sup> For a further examination on the study of *futūwwa* (literally, “young manhood”) as an institution and its strong idealistic values with lower-class men, see Taeschner and Massignon.

and political activities, and that these caliphal powers were sanctioned by the divine (Huda 2003).

It has been argued that because al-Suhrawardî was Shaykh al-Islam for the 'Abbasid state, he wanted to incorporate these *futûwwa* groups into state control so as to bring a greater sense of social, political, and economic stability to the caliph's rule. Also, as the leading Sufi shaykh of the Suhrawardîyya order, he planned on reforming the *futûwwa* institutions to embrace their members as his own disciples for the Sufi order. This would explain the primary reasons for his insistence on strictly obeying the Hanbalî law school, especially for the ex-*futûwwa* members who would have been familiar with competing Islamic law schools. Another reason for such a focus on the law was to inculcate a disciplined internal and external structure in new disciples. For him, complying with *adab* required (1) a precise observance of all social structures—Sufi and legal hierarchies, ritual, worship, political authority, social etiquette, *tasawwuf* practices—and (2) a rigorous familiarity with the *shari'â*, Qur'ân, and *hadith* literature (Cahen 1953).

Al-Suhrawardî's emphasis on the caliphate as the capstone for the *shari'â* structure, where the caliph (in collaboration with the Suhrawardî Sufi leadership) was the ultimate guarantor for the Islamic religious, political, social, and economic order, did receive its share of criticism. The previous ousted Shaykh al-Islam, 'Abd al-Rahman ibn al-Jawzî (d. 1200 C.E.), one of Baghdad's most distinguished Hanbalî jurists, vigorously opposed al-Suhrawardî's eschatological ideas on the caliphate and his movement toward a Sufi–state alliance. Al-Jawzî felt that al-Suhrawardî's political agenda was too intermingled with his Sufi practices and obscured his interpretation of law. He accused al-Suhrawardî's teachings of furthering the cause of philosophical heresy and overstressing the Sufi path of Islam. In addition to the criticism of infusing the caliphate with philosophical and Sufi ideals, a major political theorist of the time, al-Mâwardî, argued against al-Suhrawardî's centralization of power in one person and one branch of government. Al-Mâwardî asserted that an effective caliph should relegate power to regional sultans in order to maintain a balanced centralized authority. In addition to wanting balance among institutions of government (judicial, executive, military), al-Mâwardî contested al-Suhrawardî's idea that the caliph was the "representative of God" on earth and said that this was a severe misreading of the Qur'ân and the *sunnâ* of the Prophet (Khale).

Another significant thinker of the time, Ahmad Ibn Taymîya (1263–1328 C.E.), criticized a number of al-Suhrawardî's theories on law, jurisprudence, governance, the Sufi path, and the *futûwwa* institution. According to Ibn Taymîya, the major issue with both Sufi and *futûwwa* groups was

whether it was ever permissible for these groups to coexist with *sharīʿā*; he meticulously argued against their evidence of certain practices that they claimed were documented in the life of the Prophet or his son-in-law, ʿAlī ibn Abī Tālib (d. 661 C.E.) (Makdisi). In this area Ibn Taymīya was primarily concerned with their acceptance of intercession, their celebration and adoption of cultural festivals from non-Muslim communities, their claim of blessings to be earned from visitation to Sufi tombs, their beliefs in attributing mystical powers to Sufi shaykhs and political leaders, and their membership in *futūwwa* organizations, all of which he considered to be derived from non-Islamic traditions. He stated, “It is imperative to differentiate between following the Prophet [sas] and making a *sunna* of his practice, and a practice which though connected with the Prophet [sas] was not intended as a *sunna* and is therefore a piece of innovation (*bidʿa*) to the tradition” (Ibn Taymīya: 77).<sup>4</sup>

Al-Suhrawardī’s observations that proper outer moral conduct was the basis for adhering to the law and to the authority of the caliphate were really tied to a complex political debate concerning his role as Shaykh al-Islam for the ʿAbbasid dynasty, his attempts at strengthening the caliph’s power, and his efforts at co-opting and consolidating the vast membership of *futūwwa* networks to his own Suhrawardīyya Sufi order. The distinguished scholar and statesman al-Jawzī went on record to state that al-Suhrawardī was practicing heresy in viewing the caliph’s position to be divinely ordained as mediatory between human beings and God. Jurists such as Ibn Taymīya disputed the theological and legal evidence furnished by al-Suhrawardī regarding whether the Sufi and *futūwwa* institutions were originally intended by the Prophet. For al-Suhrawardī, *adab* needed to be recognized as one of the crucial components in being a Muslim, or more accurately stated, a reformed *futūwwa* member entering as a novice in the Sufi order needed to obey *adab* as a foundational concept and practice in the Suhrawardīyya order. The real issue for al-Suhrawardī serving as religious adviser to the caliph was to ensure that *sharīʿā* was imbedded in the hearts of all Muslims under the caliphate. One of his objectives was to transform the transient, noncompliant, unruly antiestablishment *futūwwa* members into pious Sufis under his authority. The fierce politics of *adab* were entangled in the complex web of enforcing proper moral conduct as

<sup>4</sup> The standard method to argue any point was to quote Qurʾānic passages where verses supported a particular idea. Whenever there was a reference to the Prophet Muhammad, the proper benediction of *salā allāhu ʿalaihī wa salam* (“May peace and blessings be upon him”) was used. With references to companions of the Prophet, members of the Prophet’s family, Shiʿī *imāms*, and eminent Sufi shaykhs, the benediction *rahmat allāh alahī* (“May mercy be upon him”) was used. For the purpose of simplicity I use the letters “sas” and “r,” respectively, in brackets to abbreviate these benedictions.

an elementary component of *shari'â* for everyone to follow versus making it a mandatory devotional practice only for Suhrawardî Sufis.

### THE SUHRAWARDÎ SUFIS

Shaykh al-Suhrawardî viewed *tasawwuf* as a way to perfect devotion in which one can fully embrace divine beauty; at the heart of the Suhrawardî *tasawwuf* was the reconnection with the divine the human soul had previously experienced in a preexistent time. This did not mean that Suhrawardî Sufis could not lead a practical life; rather, they were encouraged to enjoy the benefits of this world and to not reject the world. Shaykh al-Suhrawardî preached a balanced code for Sufi living, for which the Prophet Muhammad set an example. For him, there were only a few advanced devotees who were able to pray all night and work all day. The majority of believers, according to Shaykh al-Suhrawardî, had to maintain prayers and specific Sufi practices, such as meditational spiritual exercises (*dhikr*), as part of their daily routine. On the controversial issue of whether Sufis should maintain celibacy, he felt that only Sufi masters were qualified to judge whether their disciples were spiritually equipped to take on that challenge. But he obstinately opposed anyone defending or advocating the life of the antinomian, nomadic, begging Qalandars. The Qalandars were extremely controversial at this time because of their antisocial characteristics, for not practicing the basic articles of the faith, and for their outward disrespect for the *shari'â*.

Shaykh al-Suhrawardî's overwhelming stress on proper moral conduct (*adab*) was mainly connected with his concern that Sufis develop an internal and external discipline that mirrored the Prophet's life. To him, the physical world was very much related to the spiritual world, and in order for Sufis to perfect their spirituality, their physical customs had to reflect their internal condition. Shaykh al-Suhrawardî's ideas on *adab* stemmed from the belief that it is necessary to obey the law completely because it is a manifestation of divine order. Some have suggested that his efforts in creating a perfect harmonious society required an intensely structured model (Cahen 1977; Mason). *Adab* was a critical element in his ideal world because all the minute details of an individual's behavior could be controlled. For Shaykh al-Suhrawardî, Sufis were practicing more than spiritual purity, for in the larger scheme Suhrawardî Sufis were attempting to reunite with the divine, and this required them to uphold the *shari'â*. According to al-Suhrawardî, one needed to be prepared to carry out this extraordinary responsibility by having one's thoughts and actions planned for every moment, at every place.



## THE OUTER AND INNER WORLDS: THE ADAB OF SUFISM

Shaykh al-Suhrawardî's texts contain a great deal of elaboration on theories and practices of proper moral Sufi conduct. His main concern was to ensure that Suhrawardîs, and any other Sufi group, would not be neglectful of obeying *sharî'â* and the guidance of the mediating shaykh. Some current theories on *adab* practice suggest that the knowledge learned from a senior Sufi shaykh (*al-'ilm as-sahîh as-samâ'î*) needed to have established boundaries in order to ensure that the master–disciple relationship would not be threatened and that disciples would not transgress their limitations with the authority of the shaykh (Digby; Radtke and O'Kane). Although it is not completely convincing that this *adab* theory is applicable to Sufi hierarchies or to other structures in Islam, it is known that Sufi masters felt that it was important that disciples understand that their *tasawwuf* training entailed both the inner and outer realms. If any aspect of *'ilm* was disrespected by improper *adab*, then the resulting disequilibrium of law and *tasawwuf* would cause an imbalance in the goal of reuniting with God (Netton: 457–482).

For al-Suhrawardî and other legal-minded Sufi scholars, the Sufi tradition required disciples to adhere to the *adab* prescribed by the guiding shaykh and to the regulations of the Sufi order. Hierarchies and rankings of Sufi disciples and shaykhs mattered in many ways; aside from the realities of set roles in the Sufi order, these distinctions marked the level of mystical knowledge attained, the in-depth understanding of *irfân* (gnosis), and, more important, the mystical comprehension (*dhawq*) of the Qur'ân and God's presence (*hulûl*). Shaykh al-Suhrawardî stated:

The Prophet [sas] stated that God had taught him good etiquette. *Zâhir* (outer) and *bâtin* (inner) etiquette is needed for a civilized world. If people embrace *zâhir*, then they will learn to be a sufi with etiquette, *adab*. But, there are several things that are difficult for a person to completely achieve. Until the untrained persons fully immerse themselves in proper manners (the manners that are rooted with the Prophet's [sas] tradition), then they will remain ill-mannered. If people's appearances are like those people who indulge in the world, then their manners will reflect that. For example, when people do not change their manners, they also do not change, then their manners are copied from elsewhere. Let us remember what the *Qur'ân* tell us: In God's creation there can be no changes. (250)

The issue for al-Suhrawardî is to demonstrate that the continuity of proper moral conduct comes from God and was transmitted to the prophets. For him, the *adab* tradition is rooted in the time when God

taught the prophets proper guidance in order that they might redirect their complete attention toward God. In the Sufi tradition Prophet Muhammad is the figure par excellence who embodies the perfect way of directing oneself toward God and concentrating on becoming closer to the divine (Hirtenstein).<sup>5</sup> The Qur'ân calls the Prophet the "seal of prophets" (*khatam al-anbiyâ*), and just as God taught proper *adab* to Prophet Muhammad, the Prophet used the same methods to teach his companions the same *adab*.<sup>6</sup> Al-Suhrawardî's Sufi theology situated *adab* at the center of Sufi thought and practice in order to ensure that his Sufi disciples fully comprehended *adab* as a transformative medium between the inner and outer worlds. For Suhrawardîs, and other Sufis, *adab* theology is less about the physical, psychological, and temporal dimensions of moral conduct; rather, *adab* is more concerned with accentuating the constant opening of the heart that inspires a real journey toward encountering God.<sup>7</sup>

### THE ADAB OF THE PROPHET

For Shaykh al-Suhrawardî, *adab* represented many aspects of the law and order for Sufi disciples to follow in society; it was the real reenactment of the Prophet's life in this world. The Prophet in every way represented the "perfect human being" (*insân al-kamil*): he mastered social relationships, political challenges, tribal conflicts, financial stresses, and religious tolerance; was divinely chosen as the last Prophet; was the only Prophet to ascend to heaven to dialogue with God; and brought God's final book of guidance to humanity. In every moment of the Prophet's existence he was being taught by Allâh the proper conduct of behavior as well as being spiritually trained by God. Each aspect of the Prophet, from his speech (*kalâm*), to his worship (*'ibâda*), to his daily actions (*a'mâl*), is derived from him witnessing the divine face (*mushâhadat al-wajh*) and of God's essence being manifested (*tajallî ad-dhât*) to him. As that of a servant (*'abd*) to Allâh, the Prophet's *adab* is fundamental to al-Suhrawardî's theology because it is connected directly to obeying divine order in this world. For example, the shaykh quotes a well-known saying of the Prophet that speaks clearly to followers about how important *adab* is to God:

<sup>5</sup> This concept of being taught *adab* is in line with God teaching the beautiful names of God to Adam. The beautiful names of God are reverential attributes of the divine and a source for contemplation and cleansing during spiritual exercises.

<sup>6</sup> Qur'ân 33:40 states: "Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but a messenger of God, and the seal of the prophets. God has knowledge of everything."

<sup>7</sup> Remaining open at all times to God's invitation and presence is at the core of many prominent Sufi scholars like Ibn al-'Arabi and al-Suhrawardî.

And an even better point is that people are against changes to manners and proper etiquette, and this is why the Prophet [sas] said to make friends with one's *adab*. This is why God created human beings and gave them their ability to correct themselves when it is needed. And in this it is virtuous. God has shown His majesty to humankind through these virtues (*adab*). These virtues are from personal training, to light the flints to set a fire to a pure and virtuous life. In this way, human beings will become strong in their values, and strength is a character instilled into human beings by the will of God. (250)

For the disciples *adab* is not to be treated as an object inherited as a member in the Sufi order; nor is it to be viewed as a mysterious practice learned from elder Sufi shaykhs. Instead, Shaykh al-Suhrawardî's reference to the Prophet's statement "to make friends with one's *adab*" is intentionally situated here to prove two points. First, the emphasis on *adab* in the Suhrawardî *tasawwuf* is not without basis but, rather, is strongly rooted in the customs (*sunnâ*) of the Prophet. *Adab*, then, is critically significant for Suhrawardîs because they are reenacting the customs of the Prophet as a conduit to meet God (Huda 2001). Second, the Prophet's statement illustrates how the power of *adab* can work either against you or for you; it is best to accept it as a friend. *Adab* acting as a friend means that the Sufi disciple needs to depend on it at various moments of life. To portray *adab* as a friend allows the disciple not to view *adab* as another religious obligation in the Sufi path but, instead, to view it as a sympathetic colleague who is supportive on the path.

Al-Suhrawardî provides his own understanding of why God gave human beings *adab* in the statement, "God created *adab* to give human beings the ability to correct themselves when needed and God reveals Himself to humankind through *adab*." Once again Shaykh al-Suhrawardî is proving that *adab* was created by God, and all created things were meant to witness His manifestation (*mushâhada*)—one of the primary goals of a Sufi. *Adab* is part of God's creation, and Sufis must cultivate a love for practicing *adab*. A person needs to understand not only both morality and immorality but also the art of distinguishing one from the other. To meet God, the heart must be as pure as possible, and it needs to use reasoning to stay virtuous. Shaykh al-Suhrawardî stated very eloquently,

Become friends to one's inner and outer realities, which will assist you in moral understanding and learning proper etiquette. Proper *adab* creates proper behavior and right actions for the individual. Human beings were originally pure, and it should be their goal to return to that pure state. It is God's will to have human beings strive toward a strong morality

and not fall into an immoral state of affairs. It is God's intention to remove human beings from the fire of misdoing and have them develop *adab* to keep them virtuous. (251)

Al-Suhrawardī centers *adab* as the main instrument in returning to a pure and uncorrupted state because it is in this state that the disciple can then begin to smell the scent of the divine's presence.

### THE ETIQUETTE WITH ONE'S SHAYKH

Al-Suhrawardī explicitly explained the range of conditions under which a disciple was permitted to speak while present at a teacher's guidance forum, *majlis*. He compares the *adab* at a Sufi shaykh's forum to a blessing that is as deep as an ocean. If one does not follow the proper *adab* that is required, then the Sufi could lose the daily allowance of blessings from the shaykh, and the disciple would not comprehend real Sufi knowledge. For some contemporary scholars, established hierarchies were reinforced by *adab*, and it served as a mechanism for disciples to recognize the full and complete authority of the Sufi shaykh and their place in relation to the shaykh, sometimes called the shaykh–*murīd* relationship.<sup>8</sup> The shaykh–*murīd* hierarchy related to other hierarchies of the Sufi lodge and within the larger Sufi order and was a model of mobility and not of fixed, certain realities (Buehler: 52–75). Through *adab* practices Sufi disciples understood these hierarchies as real and practical training for their ultimate presence in front of the divine (Cornell: 105–120). A real understanding of *adab* meant to view it in light of other types of hierarchies that, in turn, prepared the Sufi disciple for the encounter with God. Viewed from this perspective, the intense adherence to *adab* was essentially a means through which disciples remained on the path of God while simultaneously embodying the proper moral conduct for their ultimate return to the divine (Eaton: 263–283).

Specific *adab* instructions were critical to the educational training of the Sufi disciple, for example, not looking face to face at the shaykh or sitting at a considerable distance reflected basic respect for the Sufi teacher. Even these *adab* instructions were circumstantial—that is, the guidelines for not looking face to face at the Sufi master were not meant to be taken literally all the time but, rather, inculcated the idea and practice of sincere respect and supreme reverence in the disciples for the master

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<sup>8</sup> The complexity of the shaykh–*murīd* relationship has recently been examined through a variety of lenses illustrating the ways in which disciples were trained, held rank in the Sufi order, were educated within the Sufi context, maintained spiritual authority, and continued the legacy of the master teacher and the ways this relationship allowed for social, religious, and political authority in the community.

shaykh. On the one hand, the minutiae of these regulations are important to al-Suhrawardî's central concern of maintaining a strict, hierarchical, and disciplined Sufi order; however, on the other hand, these instructions on *adab* were intended for disciples to follow and to comprehend the reasons behind the established hierarchies.

For instance, the shaykh observes:

In the same manner, during a *majlis*, the disciple should show proper *adab*. When sitting in front of the shaykh, the disciple should not speak a word even if it is nice greetings, until proper permission is given by the shaykh. The presence of a shaykh to his disciple is like someone who is sitting along the shore on a beach waiting for one's daily spiritual allowance from God. The shaykh's wisdom is the path for spiritual allowance. In this way, the level of the disciple's faith and his search for truth is elevated through the shaykh. If the disciple decides on his own to speak from emotions, he reverses a level of understanding and then the disciple knows that he made a mistake. (365)

Al-Suhrawardî wanted his disciples to know that the shaykh's *majlis* is more than an educational and spiritual forum for Sufi students to learn from an enlightened teacher. It is not a space used for debating issues like that of an institutional college, where students are encouraged to challenge ideas taught by the instructor; nor is being in front of a Sufi teacher a space of rote memorization and the mindless regurgitation of ideas. Rather, the space of the shaykh's *majlis* is about enlightened gnostic knowledge (*irfân*) gained from absolute real experiences and real dialogues between the shaykh and God. In order for Sufi students to assimilate this knowledge completely, they must learn another set of values attributed to *irfân*. To be present at the shaykh's *majlis* is to view the teachings as practical instructional Sufi knowledge for *tasawwuf* living. First, the *majlis* is a classroom for Sufi students to comprehend mentally the conceptual model of *tasawwuf* knowledge, and, second, it is an attempt to capture the spiritual perfection needed to annihilate oneself with God. According to al-Suhrawardî, the teachings of the shaykh at his *majlis* required a strict *adab* of listening and of incorporating the Sufi exercises. Al-Suhrawardî viewed *adab* multidimensionally: It was a type of practice integral to the tradition, a practice that taught disciples respect for hierarchies, a practice that enhanced their spiritual awareness, and most important, a skill that was acquired in preparation for reunion with the divine.

In order for the disciple to learn about his own state of spirituality, it is mandatory for the shaykh to establish proper guidelines for the disciple to take questions from the teacher (Ernst). According to al-Suhrawardî, it is not necessary for the shaykh to ask questions of the disciples face to

face; rather, whatever method the master decides on is understood to be the most appropriate and learned method. The shaykh adds to the *zâhir* and the correct conversations that are needed for this process. Al-Suhrawardî observes in this regard:

Instead of speaking face to face, he takes particular persons from his heart and directs them to the attention of God. And for them, he asks for mercy and offers special prayers. At this time, the disciple's heart and tongue are engaged in a conversation with truth. The needy then receives grace. Through the shaykh's actions he designates and correctly evaluates the disciple who is seeking truth, because action is one type of seed to assist the disciple. It is the duty of the shaykh to plant seeds so the soul desires a mixture of purity and guidance, and to entrust the disciple to God. After this, any conversations for truth will be with God, and a model is then completed. (365–366)

The *adab* instructions regarding the Sufi disciple's interaction with the master at a *majlis* reflects al-Suhrawardî's commitment to ensuring that the relationship between shaykh and disciple is structured at all times. He is interested in confirming that the Sufi disciple understands his position as a novice in the transcendental journey toward the divine and that the engagement between the shaykh and the disciple is a sacred event paralleling the eventual encounter with the divine (Gross: 159–172). It is not a time to contest the shaykh's knowledge or to speak from emotion. Instead, the disciple's duty is to be attentive and focus on the Sufi practices to be observed.

### THE ADAB IN THE SUFI QUEST

Shaykh al-Suhrawardî's discussion of "*adab* of the shaykh" is significant in highlighting the equal importance of the master's spiritual wisdom and his physical presence. He remembers a time when he was given a handkerchief by his shaykh and how he cherished it because it had the physical blessings of his shaykh. Al-Suhrawardî's stress on the physical touching of objects by Sufi shaykhs reflects a common view that objects become sacralized by the touch of a Sufi shaykh. That is, because the Sufi teacher is directly connected to God's grace (*rabita*), he has the ability to heal disciples with his touch, and simultaneously the objects that are touched by him—clothes, utensils, prayer rugs, books, rosary beads, and so on—are viewed as holy objects that are above all treasured. Al-Suhrawardî stated,

It is often that a disciple is overwhelmed by the intense inspiration of his shaykh, and this sometimes causes difficulty in looking at the sufi master. This happened to me when I was in Buhkara and my uncle Shaykh 'Abû

Najim Suhrawardî [r] entered the house. My entire upper body started to perspire. At the time, I wanted to control my perspiration, but I could not with the entrance of the honorable Shaykh. I was later cured by the blessings of my uncle. (366)

Anecdotes like this reflect the variety of narratives shared with disciples for the purpose of providing a moral lesson as well as sharing personal experiences that would connect with the lives of his disciples. The lesson he wished to impart to his disciples was to view objects touched by the Sufi master not as ordinary profane objects in the world; when the Sufi master graces an object with his touch, then the object itself is transformed into a sacred object that should be revered for the rest of one's life.

The practice of *adab* goes beyond adhering to proper conduct in the presence of the shaykh, within the confines of a Sufi lodge (*khânaqâh*), or in daily dealings with people. Al-Suhrawardî was interested in the intellectual aspects of understanding the related disciplines of *adab*, such as ethics, Sufi rituals, and *tasawwuf* theosophy. To him, there is an *adab* theology for Suhrawardî Sufis to study and examine so that they may intellectually understand the outer (*zâhir*) and inner (*bâtin*) of ethics, liturgy, and *tasawwuf*. Critically examining *adab* theology and rationally arguing all of its complex components force Sufis to engage with the intellectual dimensions of moral philosophy. This trains the disciple to comprehend the interconnectedness of *adab* with other features in Suhrawardî Sufism, legal theology, ethics, and Qur'anic studies. Sufi disciples are expected not just to practice *adab* without understanding the multifaceted aspects of its significance to the tradition. Al-Suhrawardî's methodology of arguing for the historical, theological, legal, Qur'anic, philosophical, ethical, and esoteric roots of *adab* in *tasawwuf* is the model by which he desired Suhrawardî Sufis to be fully engaged in seeking more relevant knowledge related to their quest. This is in agreement with al-Suhrawardî's perspective on *tasawwuf*, which requires the Sufi to use reason (*'aql*), intellectual inquiry, and the exchange of ideas in accordance with the grander spiritual journey of *tasawwuf*.

## THE EXCELLENCE OF ADAB

Shaykh al-Suhrawardî's arguments for *adab* aim at first to prove to his audience that *adab* is historically, religiously, legally, philosophically, and theologically grounded in the Islamic tradition. After the section "Adab in Sufism," he explains that practicing one type of *adab* opens the heart to adhering to other types of Sufi *adab*. This pleases God and brings the spiritual seeker closer to the divine. It demonstrates that *adab* is not

an incidental feature to *tasawwuf*; rather, “sufi Shaykhs have learned their wisdom from God and the systematic transfer of this knowledge of *adab* to disciples is a continuity of contract, blessings, and the primary purpose of the ultimate return to God” (al-Suhrawardî: 249). This is not a minor point to be overlooked in al-Suhrawardî’s thought. He is interested in reinforcing the concept of *adab* theology as an important instructional tool for the Sufi shaykh–disciple relationship, and to ignore this point is to miss the heart of Suhrawardî Sufism.

In the section entitled “The Excellence of *Adab*” al-Suhrawardî argues that if the disciple’s ultimate quest is to return to the divine and this spiritual quest is moderated by the teachings of his master shaykh, then their relationship is critical in cultivating a compassionate, loving, and open-minded seeker. This relationship, though built on the acceptance of hierarchical positions and an imbalance of spiritual awareness, is the one area in the *tasawwuf* path where the complete dependence on the master implies a dual *adab*: the *adab* of the master shaykh in fulfilling his duty to bring the disciple closer to divine awareness and the *adab* of the disciple to conform absolutely to the rules set by the master. The *adab* requirements for both the shaykh and the Sufi disciple compel each to depend on the other—whether that be spiritually, socially, economically, or as individuals belonging to the same Sufi order. It is this dependence on another within the shaykh–*murid* relationship that allows *adab* to have a life of its own and to breathe in new life as both teacher and seeker are brought to new horizons of enlightenment. For example, al-Suhrawardî comments on the excellence of *adab* in the following statement:

Almighty God gave respected sufi shaykhs of the past good habits so that they might have virtues in their *bâtin* (inner dimensions). They were fortunate to have good training so as to have their souls protected by *adab*. As individuals endowed with *adab* by God, they were able to enrich and train their disciples. For some individuals it is not in their nature to easily grasp *adab* and it takes them a long time to achieve it. Just as disciples learn from their shaykhs and build a loving bond for their shaykhs, so, too, it is in this way that one needs to develop a firm training that reflects strong actions. (250)

Shaykh al-Suhrawardî explains the meaning of this by applying an anecdote from another Sufi shaykh, ‘Abbâs: “Shaykh ‘Abbâs [r] reported that you were taught your religion and its *adab*. Shaykh al-Suhrawardî returns to the authority of the Prophet’s sayings and quotes a *hadîth*: The Prophet [sas] reported that my merciful God taught me good *adab*. Then He taught me wisdom in morality. Follow in the good *adab* and give wise virtuous advice” (252). This analysis references *hadîths*, which give legitimacy



to al-Suhrawardî's argument that *adab* was theologically approved by the Prophet. The heart of Suhrawardî Sufi thought is centered around the idea that *adab* is a sacred axis that connects the disciple to the Prophet. *Adab* has the multipurpose function of sharing love for the Prophet and visualizing oneself in his company. When one perfects one's *adab*, then it can connect the Sufi disciple with the Prophet in spirit and in the realm of visual communication.

The practice of *adab* for Sufis was a method to bridge knowledge of the inner way with the practice of Sufism in order to directly access mystical knowledge (*ma'rifa*). The theology of *adab* brings together the wisdom of *tasawwuf* with the real daily actions of the Sufi seeker. For Shaykh al-Suhrawardî, although wisdom comes in many ways to the Sufi seeker of God, one clear aspect of *adab* is understanding how human actions and inner wisdom relate to encountering the divine. For instance, al-Suhrawardî states the following to support the connection between wisdom and *adab*: "It is reported by Shaykh Yûsuf ibn Hûssein [r] that *adab* comes from understanding knowledge. Knowledge is the means of learning proper actions (*'amal*, pl. *a'mâl*). And *'amal* is the means of learning wisdom. Wisdom is the advanced learning where one finds pleasure in making a place on the day of judgment and also, in this pleasure one meets the heart of God" (251).

In addition to confirming the idea that *adab* was practiced and preached by the Prophet and then followed by members of his household and by his companions, Shaykh al-Suhrawardî stresses that the Prophet's *adab* was not left for only a select few to understand but, rather, was a model for the entire community to act on. Al-Suhrawardî's *adab* theology emphasizes the integral importance of *adab* to spiritual enlightenment and its place in worship. The Sufi shaykh states, "It is recorded by Ayesha [r] (the wife of the Prophet) that it is the right of children to receive good names from their parents, so that children can follow proper *adab* and training" (252). Al-Suhrawardî repeats the point that *adab* must be understood in all of its different forms, inner and outer, in order for Sufis to appreciate the theology of *adab* as an intellectual spiritual pursuit that unites the Sufi disciple with real knowledge of Sufism. The theology of *adab* was the cornerstone of al-Suhrawardî's Sufism in order for his disciples to reenact, remember, reconnect with, and relive the spiritual life of the Prophet. The intense focus on the Prophet's *adab* went beyond mere imitation to embodying his spiritual achievements.

One of Shaykh al-Suhrawardî's crucial points on *adab* concerns its connection with law (*shari'â*), faith (*imân*), and the basic Islamic doctrine of affirming the unity of God, *tawhîd*. The doctrine of *tawhîd* affirms the oneness of God and is the single major theological feature of

professing divine unity. For Muslims, every moment and every level of existence require the believer to assert *tawhîd* in Islamic spiritual life. Through all of the prayers, fasting, charity, social work, pilgrimage, daily relationships, and other faith-related practices, believers must continue to struggle to submit themselves to God's supremacy at every conceivable level, that is, in the mind, heart, and soul. The Qur'ân commands its believers to work toward establishing a life of *tawhîd* and describes such effort as a human struggle.<sup>9</sup> For Shaykh al-Suhrawardî, *adab* is an essential factor in constructing a reality based on law and its principle foundation, *tawhîd*. For him, such a reality is attainable because Suhrawardî *tasawwuf* unites all of the elements to make it possible. He commented on *tawhîd* and *adab* in the following statement: "Shaykh Jalâl al-Basrî [r] reported that it is necessary to affirm divine unity (*tawhîd*) and faith (*imân*). For those who do not have faith, they do not have *tawhîd* either. It is necessary to have *imân* in accordance with the law and where the law does not exist, faith and *tawhîd* do not exist. The law requires *adab*, and this is why, where *adab* is not found, there is no *shari'â*, no faith, and no *tawhîd*" (252).

The importance of *adab* to al-Suhrawardî cannot be underestimated in his *tasawwuf* teachings because it is the critical layer that joins law, faith, Qur'anic knowledge, the reenactment of the Prophet's customs, and the practice of Sufism. Sufis who neglect any single aspect of *adab* will not receive the benefits of God's blessings, and, specifically, the invitational blessings of encounter from God are prohibited to the Sufi seeker. In the shaykh's words, "Shaykh 'Abdallâh ibn Mubarak [r] stated that those who are lazy with their *adab* are punished by being deprived of following the customs (*sunnâ*) of the Prophet [sas], and that those who are careless of the *sunnâ*, are punished by being deprived of knowledge of God" (253).

Any real understanding of *adab* mirrors the Prophet's *sunnâ* and essentially upholds the Qur'ân and the law. The faith of the Sufi deepens with *adab*, which in turn connects the Sufi seekers to the union with God. To abuse this aspect of faith and not give proper attention to *adab* is to break the chain of God's blessings of knowledge on the Sufi seeker. Shaykh al-Suhrawardî stated that *adab* is not fixed for certain places and times but that for each place and each level there is a particular *adab* for the spiritual seeker. One of his most famous statements on the importance of *adab* and Sufism, quoted by successor Sufi masters, is the following: "It is said that sufism is about *adab*, therefore, for every level of sufism there is

<sup>9</sup> The word *tawhîd* stems from *ahad* (oneness), which is found in Qur'anic verses 17:23, 18:38, 18:110, 72:2, 72:18, and 112:1–4. It is also related to *wâjid* (the One, attribute of the Divine) and is in the following verses: 2:163, 4:171, 5:73, 14:52, 22:34, 40:16, and 74:11.

a particular form of *adab* for it. For the person who adheres to *adab*, he will learn the path of excellence. Those who do not practice *adab* are far away from achieving an advanced level in the sufi path” (254). This statement is meant for his disciples to understand *adab* in more comprehensive terms and to discard any idea that proper moral conduct is meant only for public demonstration. Rather, al-Suhrawardî hammers home the point that *adab* is for each level on the Sufi path and for every moment of living.

The shaykh focused on *adab* as a reciprocal process of spiritual education for Sufi disciples. He based his views on the relationship between the Prophet and his companions who dedicated their lives to paying attention to the Prophet’s revelations, sayings, and customs. According to al-Suhrawardî, at each moment a companion spent with the Prophet, he was being taught proper *adab*. This *adab* was not based on the desires of the Prophet—a human product; rather, this *adab* came from Allâh, and this makes it a divine teaching. Al-Suhrawardî stated, “God had even taught the companions of the Prophet [sas] *adab* and were told to speak at the tone of the Prophet [sas] and not louder than the Prophet [sas]” (366).

### THE ADAB OF SPIRITUAL TRAINING

In the area of spiritual training for disciples and the practice of *adab*, Shaykh al-Suhrawardî focuses the discussion of *adab* practices on disciples, especially on those novice Sufis who contest the importance of observing *adab* with their shaykh. Again supplying Qur’ânic evidence for his case, the shaykh insisted that *adab* cannot be challenged or neglected because of the abundance of references made to it in the Qur’ân and in the literature dealing with the Prophet. For example, “another enlightening moment is when the Prophet [sas] was present in a congregation and someone asked him a question and also interrupting his answers, the Prophet [sas] told him that this behavior was improper” (al-Suhrawardî: 363). In addition to this example, al-Suhrawardî stated the following to support his evidence of the ways in which *adab* has roots in the Qur’ân and the customs of the Prophet: “Alongside of sufi shaykhs were disciples who strongly emphasized *adab*. Even the companions of the Prophet understood the significance of *adab*. God tells us in the holy Qur’ân: ‘Oh Believers, there is nothing greater than God and his Prophet; fear God because He is hearer and doer of all things’” (363).

These examples are indicative of proper *adab* being practiced during the time of the companions of the Prophet. Moreover, the narrative of the Prophet interrupting his companion’s comments demonstrates that observing proper *adab* in practicing one’s faith should not be viewed as an anomaly; rather, *adab* further strengthens the faith if understood in its

entirety. For al-Suhrawardî, this vividly supports the duty of Sufi shaykhs to instruct disciples in correct *adab* during *tasawwuf* education. When Sufi disciples learn *irfân* from their Sufi shaykhs, one cannot separate this model from the way the Prophet taught his companions. This idea is articulated by al-Suhrawardî: “Shaykh ‘Abû Nasr Sarrâj [r] reported that the qualities of the Prophet’s [sas] *adab* were pure. He was trustworthy and conscious of being on time. He was very thoughtful and concerned about everything. Wherever he was, he was concerned with *adab*” (259).

According to Shaykh al-Suhrawardî, there are two parts to *adab*, meaning that words and actions are both to be followed. The quality of *adab* mattered to the shaykh because he wanted to ensure that Sufi disciples understood that the sincerity of their *adab* made a difference in their knowledge and actions. He stated, “Any person who uses *adab* with their actions becomes closer to God by being a part of the love in His heart. Shaykh Ibn Mubarak [r] once said, ‘We are not in need of more knowledge but of more *adab*’” (258). He did not want Sufis occasionally adhering to *adab* as if it were perfectly fine to practice *adab* randomly or as a product to show others. The Sufi attention toward *adab* needed to be accompanied by full concentration, sincerity, and understanding of its related components. For example, knowledge of *tasawwuf* is impossible without complete adherence to *adab* theology. He observed: “Shaykh Nûrî stated that ‘Whoever did not spend their time with *adab*, their time will be considered a time of hate.’ Shaykh Dhûl Nûn Misrî [r] reported, ‘so much has been said about *adab*, I say that *adab* is about knowing oneself’” (259).

Shaykh al-Suhrawardî was ensuring that his disciples would have an insightful faith that asserted *tawhîd* as well as preparing them with the most upright moral conduct for God’s self-disclosure. He understood how the Sufi path could be misconstrued by teachers who themselves did not respect the intricacies of the law and *adab*. That is, the inner and outer development of *adab* would be neglected by Sufi teachers who concentrated on other areas of Sufi knowledge and experience. Al-Suhrawardî’s tenacious emphasis on *adab* for Sufi disciples demonstrated a theological concern for his disciples to integrate all forms of knowledge with *adab* practices. When he stated that “law requires *adab*, and this is why where *adab* is not found, there is no law, no faith and no *tawhîd*,” al-Suhrawardî was showing how *adab* was critical in cementing each part together to make the whole complete.

*Adab* is often treated in Sufi studies as specific instructions to improve one’s relationship with the teacher or other Sufis; however, Sufi manuals written by Sufi shaykhs such as al-Suhrawardî prove that *adab* is intrinsically connected to the path of accessing the divine. There has been much attention given to the specific moral instructions on eating meals, performing meditation, and what it means to be a member of a Sufi order.

For al-Suhrawardî, *adab* is not just the fiber that sustains the hierarchies; rather, more important, it trains a disciple to be the idealized faithful Sufi Muslim. The major point in these *adab* arguments in al-Suhrawardî's Sufi manuals is that *adab* is not an abstract object to be possessed and perfected; rather, it is rooted in the knowledge of God and practiced by the prophets. Suhrawardî Sufis believed that *adab* awakens the heart to seek God; those who master the practice earn the benefit of spiritually becoming closer to God. *Adab* was both the instrument and the channel through which Suhrawardî Sufis learned to perfect their spiritual exercises in preparation for enlightenment.

Al-Suhrawardî described *adab* very eloquently when he stated that "*adab* is about knowing oneself"—that is, it is the process of self reuniting with the divine. In addition, he states: "Obtaining the light of knowledge (*nûr-e'irfân*) is one way of defending the soul (*nafs*) and it is well said in the following *hadîth*: 'Those who defend their souls also defend God.' This light of knowledge (*nûr-e'irfân*) is the light of the soul that was in ignorance. Knowledge is the means of building a fort of which *adab* is a part of it" (258–260). *Adab* was a significant component of Sufi praxis aimed at enriching spiritual growth, elevating devotion, and intensifying love for God. For al-Suhrawardî and Suhrawardî Sufis, paying attention to their *adab* meant renewing their vows to the divine in anticipation of divine compassion toward them in return. For them, *adab* was not concerned about human boundaries that were constructed in Sufi orders and by the law; rather, it was an instrument aimed at transcending all boundaries, whether imagined or understood, so that the Sufi seeker would know when the moment of return was achieved.

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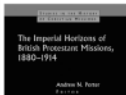
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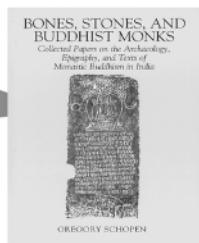
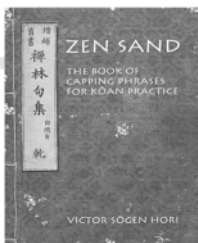
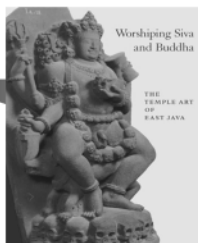
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