THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE PROPHET IN SUHRAWARDĪ'S *AWĀRIF AL-MA'ĀRIF*

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It is said that *taṣawwuf* is about *ādāb*, therefore, for every level of *taṣawwuf* there is a particular form of *ādāb* for it. For the person who adheres to *ādāb*, [he] will learn the path of excellence. For those who do not practice *ādāb*, [they] are far away from achieving a high level of *taṣawwuf*.[1]

INTRODUCTION

Karl Mannheim has argued that presenting one's ideas is a way of connecting to past thinkers, of seeking (what he refers to as) a common location in the social and historical process of creating a particular world-view or mentality.[2] For Sufi shaykhs, like Shaykh Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar al-Suhrawardī (d. 1234), testing his ideas against past figures was a process of locating himself within the Islamic tradition and with what was known or understood at that time. This paper examines his Sufi beliefs and how they were associated with a specific social group, in this case the Suhrawardiyya Sufi order, and with the Prophet.

Shaykh 'Umar al-Suhrawardī, like many other distinguished Sufi thinkers, tried to bring about a deeper theological understanding in the *taṣawwuf* tradition by analyzing the Qur'ān, the *ḥadīth*s of the Prophetic tradition, and the texts of past Sufi shaykhs. This paper studies the intellectual aspects of the Suhrawardiyya *ṭarīqa*, focusing on how al-Suhrawardī's ideas enable us to understand the attitudes, hierarchies, psychology, culture, and religious values of the members, and in particular how his understanding of the Prophet defined the *ṭarīqa*. His Sufi manual was a major source of spiritual discipline for successive disciples who moved eastward from Iraq, such as Bahā al-Dīn Zakariyya, Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrīzī, and

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[1] *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif*, 254.
[2] Karl Mannheim, 'The Problem of Generation' in *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* (London, 1952), 276–85.

Qāḍī Ḥamīd al-Dīn Nagawrī. The text is not a static theological cement that holds the ṭarīqa together at a certain place and time; it is, rather, a mix of what Mannheim referred to as 'total' and 'particular' concepts which serve to support and sustain a social order and its institutions.[3]

Shaykh al-Suhrawardī's 'Awārif al-Ma'ārif (The Benefits of the Spiritually Learned)[4] is a thirteenth-century Sufi treatise for adherents to read, memorize, study, and practise taṣawwuf on a regular daily basis.[5] It does not displace the primacy of the Qur'ān and the literature surrounding the Prophet, but acts as spiritual interpreter of the primary texts.[6] Its function is to aid in the daily spiritual exercises of taṣawwuf and in the intellectual growth of the Suhrawardiyya members.[7] The subject-matter ranges from Qur'ānic hermeneutics, ḥadīth tafsīr, rational arguments on epistemology, understanding the different levels of spirituality, proper manners, and negative criticism of Sufi orders and their various interpretations of taṣawwuf. In many of these areas, al-Suhrawardī's authority to write such a work rests upon his knowledge of the Prophet and Prophetic ḥadīths. His intensive use of the ḥadīths is a significant device to enable remembrance and re-enactment so that members of the ṭarīqa could move from mere imagining to embodying the Prophet's spirituality.[8] While the Qur'ān is repeated and properly memorized for

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[3] Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (London, 1936), 25–30.

[4] The title has been variously rendered as 'Knowledge of the Gnostics' or 'Manual of the Dervishes' or 'The Gifts of the Spiritual Perceptions', but I consider these translations to be confusing and unhelpful in appreciating the intellectual dimensions of Shaykh al-Suhrawardī's taṣawwuf.

[5] The 'Awārif al-Ma'ārif remains a popular manual found in many Sufi bookstores in the Middle East and South Asia.

[6] On texts, see Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion: A New Approach to the Religious Traditions of Mankind* (New York: Macmillan, 1962); Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty (ed.) *The Critical Study of Sacred Texts* (Berkeley: Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley Religious Studies Series, 1979); and Harry Buck, 'Saving Story and Sacred Book: Some Aspects of the Phenomenon of Religious Literature' in *Search the Scriptures: New Testament Studies in Honor of Raymond T. Stamm*, ed. J. M. Myers, O. Reimherr, and H. N. Bream (Gettysburg Theological Studies, no. 3; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1969), 79–94.

[7] Seyyid Mahjub Hasan Wasti, 'Hazrat Shaykh-ul Shayūkh wa 'Awārif al-Ma'ārif', in *Suhrawardī Silsila Risāla* 3 (1989), 5–22, (ed. Shah Owais Sohrawardī; Lahore: Sohrawardi Foundation).

[8] For further studies see Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad is his Messenger* (Columbia: University of South Carolina University Press, 1985); Jeffrey Arthur, 'The Quest for the Historical Mohammed' *Muslim World* 16 (1926), 327–48; Muhammad Hamidullah, *Le Prophète de l'Islām*, 2 vols (Paris: Vrin Press, 1959); Martin Lings, *Muhammad* (London: Islamic Texts Society, 1983); Ghulam Dastgir Rasheed, 'The Development of na'tia Poetry in Persian Literature' *Islamic Culture*

the ritual prayers, ḥadīths are committed to memory in order to cultivate closer kinship to the Prophet and maintain his sacred presence at every moment.[9]

SHAYKH ABŪ ḤAFṢ ʿUMAR AL-SUHRAWARDĪ

Shaykh Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī was born in Rajab, 523 AH, or January 1145. He studied theology with Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī and was initiated into the *taṣawwuf* tradition by his uncle, Shaykh Abū l-Najīb al-Suhrawardī. Shaykh Abū l-Najīb, born in 1097 in the town of Suhraward (located west of Sultaniyya in the province of al-Jibāl), was the original thinker and founder of the Suhrawardī *ṭarīqa*. On the banks of the Tigris river Abū l-Najīb, a disciple of Shaykh Aḥmad al-Ghazālī, built a *khānaqāh* and wrote the popular *Ādāb al-Murīdīn*, a Sufi manual that described the importance of disciplined behaviour.[10] Aḥmad al-Ghazālī Abū l-Najīb and their contemporary ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, all belonged to the Junaydī school of *taṣawwuf*. But contrary to Junayd's *taṣawwuf* tradition of sobriety, *ṣaḥw*, they were all more inclined toward mystical intoxication or *sukr*.[11] The preaching and writings by ʿAyn al-Quḍāt alarmed the *sharīʿa*-minded and he was imprisoned in Baghdad. His short treatise argued that his doctrine of *fanāʾ* was neither pantheistic nor introduced contingent being into God's Being.[12] He was

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39 (1965), 53–69; ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-Sharqāwī, *Muḥammad rasūl al-ḥurriya* (Cairo: ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 1962), and Ali Asani and Kamal Abdel Malek, *Celebrating Muhammad: Images of the Prophet in Popular Muslim Poetry* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995).

[9] See William Greene, 'The Spoken and the Written Word', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 60 (1951), 23–59; William Graham, *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); especially Graham's 'Qurʾān as Spoken Word: An Islamic Contribution to the Understanding of Scripture' in *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*, ed. Richard C. Martin (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1985), 23–40; André Louf, 'The Word Beyond Liturgy', *Cistercian Studies* 6 (1971), 353–68; and Frederick Denny, 'The Ādāb of Qurʾān Recitation: Text and Context' in *International Congress for the Study of the Qurʾān*, ed. Anthony Johns (Canberra: Australian National University, 1981), 143–60.

[10] M. Milson, *A Ṣūfī Rule for Novices: Kitāb Ādāb al-Murīdīn of Abū-Najīb al-Suhrawardī* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973).

[11] For further information on the Junaydī school of 'sobriety', see Ali Hassan Abdel-Kader, *The Life, Personality and Writings of al-Junayd* (London, 1962), and David Martin, 'al-Fanā' and al-Baqā' of Abū al-Qāsim al-Junayd al-Baghdādī' (Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA, 1984).

[12] For a translation of ʿAyn al-Quḍāt's work, see 'Apologia' in A. J. Arberry's *A Ṣūfī Martyr* (London, 1969).

murdered at the age of thirty-three, an event bound to influence Abū
Ḥafṣ al-Suhrawardī's interpretation and practice of a more pragmatic
and rational *taṣawwuf*.

In his adolescent years, Shaykh al-Suhrawardī encountered vigor-
ous opposition from the greatest Ḥanbalī theologian in Baghdad,
'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Jawzī (1126–1200), a renowned *muḥaddith*
and interpreter of *fiqh*.[13] As a prolific author, preacher, and the
Shaykh al-Islām for the 'Abbasid administration, Ibn al-Jawzī
accused al-Suhrawardī of furthering the cause of philosophy and
heresy. In his works *Naqd al-'Ilm waī-l-'ulamā'* and *Talbīs Iblīs*, Ibn
al-Jawzī condemned non-Sunnī sects and even criticized a large
number of Sunnī jurisconsults including *sharī'a*-minded scholars
and Sufis like Abū Ṭālib al-Mālikī Qushayrī and Abū Ḥāmid
al-Ghazālī.[14] After several theological clashes and political battles
with Ibn al-Jawzī the caliph al-Nāṣir (1179–1225) withdrew uncondi-
tional support of him and then instituted a more middle-of-the-road
policy outlined by Shaykh 'Umar al-Suhrawardī. Like his predecessor
Ibn al-Jawzī, Shaykh al-Suhrawardī served as political–religious
adviser in the capacity of Shaykh al-Islām and became one of the most
important Sufi figures to play a role in global Islamic politics.

Shaykh al-Suhrawardī's *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif* achieved great
popularity in his own lifetime and has retained its high reputation
ever since. One of the reasons for its success must be its effort to
reconcile the practice of *taṣawwuf* with observances commanded
by the *sharī'a*. For later generations of Sufis and a wide cross-section
of Sufi *ṭarīqa*s the book became one of the most closely studied and
memorized texts on *taṣawwuf*.[15] Even a century after the Shaykh's
death, an important Persian commentary on *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif,*
written by 'Izz al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Alī of Kashan (d. 1352/53) and
entitled *Miṣbāḥ al-Hidāya wa-Miftaḥ al-Kifāya*, praised the Shaykh's
interpretation of *taṣawwuf* even while offering his own views on
taṣawwuf.

[13] For information on Ibn al-Jawzī's works see 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-'Alūjī's
Mu'allafāt ibn al-Jawzī (Baghdad, 1965), and Carl Brockelmann's *Geschichte der
Arabischen Literatur* (Leiden, 1943).

[14] For translations of Ibn al-Jawzī *Naqd al-'Ilm wa l-'ulamā'* and *Talbīs Iblīs*, see
D. S. Margoliouth 'The Devil's Delusion by Ibn al-Jauzi', *Islamic Culture*, vols 9–12,
19–22, Hyderabad, 1935–48.

[15] For some discussion on Shaykh al-Suhrawardī's contribution see Abū Bakr
Muḥammad al-Kalābādhī *Kitāb al-Ta'arruf li-Madhhab Ahl al-Taṣawwuf* (Cairo:
Maktabat al-Khanjī 1934); Muḥammad Māndawī Ghawth,, *Gulzār-i Abrār*. Urdu
translation by Faḍl Aḥmad Jaywarī *Adhkār-i Abrār, Urdū tarjuma-yi Gulzār-i Abrār*
[1808], reprinted (Lahore: Islamic Book Foundation, 1975); Abū Naṣr Ṭāhir
Khānaqāhi, *Guzida dār taṣawwuf wa akhlāq*, ed. Iraj Afsar (Tehran, 1968).

SPIRITUALITY AND SHAYKH AL-SUHRAWARDĪ'S
TAṢAWWUF

One of many areas of concern for al-Suhrawardī was the concept and origin of the word *ṣūfī*. In *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif* he comments on how an early and influential Sufi thinker, Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, understood the usage of *ṣūfī* in pre-Islamic Arabic.[16] According to al-Suhrawardī the word Ṣūfī was the product of a period of political change and unrest. For scholars like al-Sarrāj, *ṣaffā* (pure) was the root of *ṣūfī* and they traced *ṣaffā* to many incidents of the Sunna which, to them at least, made *taṣawwuf* an integral part of the Prophet's tradition. For al-Suhrawardī there were many aspects of *taṣawwuf* in the Prophet's message and he accepted the fact that the life of the Prophet's Companions at the Madina mosque, 'the People of the Verandah' (*ahl al-ṣaffa*), resembled those of later Sufi Shaykhs, but this did not explain the original meaning of Sufi. He rejected the derivation from *ṣaffa* and argued that the word *ṣūfī* came from *ṣūf* (wool), meaning those who wore woollen garments to imitate the clothing of the Prophet. Using Qur'ānic verses to support this theory, al-Suhrawardī argued that knowledge, particularly spiritual esoteric knowledge, was the main basis for *taṣawwuf*. He quoted the Qur'ānic phrase of *al-rāsikhūn fī l-'ilm* ('Those firmly rooted in knowledge' Qur'ān, 3.7, 4.162) as describing those people who tell the truth and are insightful Sufis.[17]

Al-Suhrawardī believed that complete knowledge could be obtained if a formal *madrasa* education were combined with *taṣawwuf* training from Sufi shaykhs. He stated that certain knowledge could not be learned in school because the Prophets left a legacy and one needed to acquire this legacy through the Sufi shaykhs.[18] He did not criticize the value of a *madrasa* education but was more interested in balancing its institutional training with the alternative shaykh-*murīd* Sufi discipline. According to al-Suhrawardī the understanding of true knowledge separated Sufis into two

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[16] For more on al-Sarrāj's use of *ṣūfī* see *The Kitāb al-Luma' fī l-Taṣawwuf*, ed. Reynold Nicholson (London: Luzac and Company, 1914), 21–22.

[17] In *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif* (77–82), Shaykh al-Suhrawardī refers to a group of Khurasani Sufis who lived in caves and were called *shikaftiyyah* (from the word *shikaft*, cave) who possibly contributed to the development of the word *ṣūfī*. His description implies that there was already a particular mode of life which Sufis then adopted and was close to the lives of Buddhist monks. He did not explicitly state that the Sufi tradition derived from Buddhists, but his acknowledgement of other groups in the region who lived according to esoteric principles is indicative that the Sufis may have learned from them.

[18] Ibid. 89.

categories: the first were those whose mystical insight was framed
around their spiritual perception; the second were those whose
supernatural enlightenment was the result of their own self-
mortification.[19] He quoted Shaykh al-Junayd al-Baghdādī as saying
that what leads to *taṣawwuf* is not reason and intellectual debates,
but putting the body through hunger, renouncing the world, and
abstention from even that which is lawful (AM, 69).[20]

'Awārif al-Ma'ārif is filled with numerous layers of
al-Suhrawardī's understanding of the material and spiritual world-
view. The text is organized thematically with separate subheadings;
in each section the Shaykh gives both relevant detailed information
and connecting ideas to larger pertinent issues. According to
al-Suhrawardī one needs to be prepared at all times for the
moment of divine union,[21] and this means that one must adhere to
strict internal and external discipline. The application of reason (*'aql*)
to *taṣawwuf* is as important as obeying the *Sharī'a* because
al-Suhrawardī believed that one needs to structure one's life with
the entirety of the whole system. Whether it be al-Suhrawardī's
opinions on prayers, or on the understanding of the soul, or his
ideas on patience and poverty, each area is an element of *taṣawwuf*
that manifests the truth by its connection with maintaining the
Sunna of the Prophet and preserving his example.

In understanding al-Suhrawardī's ideas in *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif* it is
important to recall that he was part of a Baghdādī Ḥanbalī tradi-
tion, trained in *fiqh*, *sharī'a*, and *falsafa*, and a prominent member of
muḥaddithūn circles. His background in the Islamic sciences situated
him within the intellectual elite of the *'ulamā'* group, and his family
heritage as a Suhrawardī qualified him as a spiritual leader within Sufi
circles. As a Ḥanbalī jurist, al-Suhrawardī followed the tradition
of incorporating passages of the Qur'ān, and *ḥadīth*s from the six
major Sunni sources namely al-Bukhārī (d. 870), Muslim (d. 875),
Abū Dāwūd (d. 889), al-Tirmidhī (d. 892), al-Nasa'ī (d. 915), and Ibn
Māja (d. 887), and sayings from past eminent Sufi shaykhs.[22] Every

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[19] 'Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar al-Suhrawardī *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif* (Cairo: Maktabat
al-Qāhira, 1973), 202–68, hereafter cited as AM.

[20] And Syed Athar Abbas Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India* (Delhi: Manoharlal
Publishers, 1978), 89.

[21] In most cases al-Suhrawardī refers to divine union in the spiritual sense of
reuniting with God's presence; however, in numerous places he means by it physical
death.

[22] When al-Suhrawardī quotes from the Qur'ān he usually takes sections of a verse
to support his point and provides the reference. At every reference to the Prophet he
follows the Sunna by offering the proper benediction of *ṣalla l-lābu 'alayhi wa sallam*,
and with Companions of the Prophet, members of the Prophet's family, Shī'ī Imāms,

ḥadīth given in the text has a chain of transmission or *isnād*, but al-Suhrawardī does not expressly state whether it came from the main *ḥadīth* collections of al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasā'ī or Ibn Māja unless he referred to one of these individuals in the discussion. His training as a *muḥaddith* is indicated by his heavy reliance on *ḥadīth*s as the main form of legitimacy. His three sources, the Qur'ān, *ḥadīth*, and the sayings of earlier Sufi shaykhs, are used in connection with almost every topic discussed but obviously not always in that order. There are few areas in which only one source is used and the two others neglected.

Shaykh al-Suhrawardī's text was primarily written for a diverse audience of educated Sufis and religious scholars who would understand the contemporary and historical theological problems of *taṣawwuf*.[23] He generally starts a topic by quoting a *ḥadīth* from the Prophet or another significant figure, and reserves quoting from the Qur'ān for the heart of his argument. The most important aspect of the organization of the text is not its external arrangement, but the unifying mental structure which provides inter-connecting themes so that the reader feels that each topic is related to the larger whole. The treatise consists of more than al-Suhrawardī's own personal legal opinions and *taṣawwuf* principles; for his disciples it was a source for them to interpret *taṣawwuf* in a way that would structure their lives and ultimately bring them closer to divine union.

Under the heading 'The Real Truth of *Taṣawwuf*' al-Suhrawardī begins with a relevant *ḥadīth* that provides important authority for his point that past Sufi shaykhs had already established that *taṣawwuf* is connected to taking care of the underprivileged and this is a way to God. There are two elements: one of social responsibility and another of finding one's place with God. In the end both elements are intertwined, and by using the authority of the Prophet the *ḥadīth* functions as the supreme model. For example: 'Shaykh Abū Zuhr 'Aṭṭār ibn Abī Faḍl (*radī Allāhu 'anhu*) told Shaykh al-Suhrawardī a *ḥadīth* from 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar (r) that the Prophet Muhammad (ṣ) said that everything has a key to it, and in this respect the key to heaven is having love and patience toward

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and eminent Sufi shaykhs, '*raḥmat Allāh 'alayhi*'. Hereafter I have used the letters 'ṣ' and 'r' respectively, in parentheses to indicate al-Suhrawardī's benedictions.

[23] This issue as to which audience al-Suhrawardī intended his treatise for is not discussed in any primary or secondary source. Shaykh al-Suhrawardī does not identify by name any one group or organization, but in '*Awarif al-Ma'ārif*' it is clear from his social, religious, and political commentaries that it was meant for anyone interested in his ideas on *taṣawwuf* and other subjects.

your loved ones and the Sufis (*faqīr*s), [then] on the day of judgement
Allāh will have mercy on us' (AM, 54).

The Shaykh continues his explanation: 'In this way, *faqīr*s are
the real truth of *taṣawwuf*, and the basic necessity is assisting them,
as Rūmī (r) said that "*taṣawwuf* had three exclusive foundations:
(1) to adopt the poor, (2) to be generous, and (3) to adopt the
abandoned". When al-Junayd al-Baghdādī (r) was asked about
taṣawwuf, he stated that "*taṣawwuf* is when you are with Allāh
and you can not live otherwise". Also, Ma'rūf al-Karkhī (r) stated
that "truths of *taṣawwuf* are to adopt the poor and making the
unfortunate feel fortunate"' (AM, 54–5).

After establishing the truth of *taṣawwuf*, al-Suhrawardī continues
to build his case further by using other *ḥadīth*s of the Prophet, sayings
of the Companions and past Sufi Shaykhs to authenticate their
taṣawwuf characteristics. His ability to associate himself with these
figures, and the way he affirms his authority by knowing intric-
ate details about these influential persons, is another device for
strengthening the bonds of the *ṭarīqa* with the spiritual heritage of
these figures. For instance, on the theme of 'praising Sufis', he
mentions renowned figures whose very names command great respect:

Shaykh Shiblī (r) stated that the real truth regarding the *faqīr* is that *faqīr*s
are concerned with truth and nothing else matters. Also, Shaykh Abū Ḥasan
Nūrī (r) stated in praise of the Sufi that a *faqīr* is comfortable when he is
penniless and in time of having money he is generous with it. Another Sufi
elder stated that a good mystic is one that is not attached to the world. And
if worldly things would come to a *faqīr*, he would not be spoiled by it,
and this is why worldly persons are drawn near to Sufis because they ask
that [their] riches not spoil them. (AM, 55)

Here, Sufis embody a spiritual quality superior to others because
they do not have worldly objectives, and are solely interested in
advancing themselves in spiritual purity. This is not true absolutely of
al-Suhrawardī's *taṣawwuf* since he favoured greater involvement in
public service, even government. Since his *ṭarīqa* was supported by
the caliph al-Nāṣir, Shaykh al-Suhrawardī's deepest fear was that
Suhrawardiyya Sufis might be drawn to abuse the patronage of
the state or, worse, such patronage might corrupt the discipline
of their *taṣawwuf*. While he advocated a balanced approach between
taṣawwuf and obeying the *Sharī'a*, everyone was individually
responsible for developing their own spiritual ecstasy for reunion.

From the treatise it is obvious that al-Suhrawardī was conscious
of *taṣawwuf*'s precarious ancestry in Sufi shaykhs' claims of being
divine manifestations. He also took exception to contemporary

trends in *taṣawwuf* which were clear violations of the *Sharī'a* and the example of the Prophet. In al-Suhrawardī's writing there is a pattern of addressing issues by identifying the obviously correct way that is based on Prophetic tradition and sanctioned by God. While these matters were probably controversial, even confrontational, during his period, he constantly applies the 'unquestionable truths' to his main argument. For instance, under that heading, al-Suhrawardī again illustrates *taṣawwuf*'s basic element of assisting the poor, and he argues that those Sufis who do not express this in their religious teaching or works are not really practising the authentic Prophetic tradition. He writes:

Basically the issue is that the Sufi needs to take care of the poor and there is much wisdom in it. And this is why being in the world is preferred, because they ask for mercy from God. Just like the Prophet (ṣ) stated: 'Amongst my followers, the poor will enter heaven a half day before the worldly-minded followers. And there, for those present during the half day it will seem like five hundred years.' (AM, 56)

In using this *ḥadīth* al-Suhrawardī is showing that his *taṣawwuf* is fulfilling a covenant with the Prophet of being caretakers of the poor. It centres the Prophet in al-Suhrawardī's practice of *taṣawwuf* and reminds his disciples that the Prophet is present in their social work. While he does not explicitly state that those Sufis who do not concentrate on social welfare as a high priority in their *taṣawwuf* will encounter problems in the hereafter, he is implicitly stating that his practice of *taṣawwuf* keeps this *ḥadīth* to the fore. The Prophet's *ḥadīth* on social justice is emphasized in al-Suhrawardī's *taṣawwuf* in order to demonstrate that the Suhrawardiyya Sufis are both heirs and custodians to the poor. The Prophet's words give life and meaning to the teaching: the Shaykh wishes his disciples to remember and live out the Prophet's words in each action and in each thought. In general, al-Suhrawardī's use of socially responsible *ḥadīth*s projects and reinforces the Suhrawardiyya Sufi *ṭarīqa* as mirroring and re-enacting the Prophet's tradition in caring for the poor and underprivileged.

ON SPIRITUALITY AND LOVE

Shaykh al-Suhrawardī discussed the different types of love that Sufis can develop from their *taṣawwuf*. According to him, love for oneself is self-destructive and leads the Sufi away from proper observance of *taṣawwuf*. The highest type of love is the one that is not for the

individual self, but only for the divine. When a Sufi completely surrenders his love to the divine, then he is able to access all things associated with the divine. He stated that 'The love for oneself is like fire because one's observations become slanted.' In addition to this he stated, 'When people direct their special love in the proper ways, then they become interested in the things that are associated with the divine things. This is because love is charitable and the lover and Beloved become attached to each other' (AM, 455).

In the treatise al-Suhrawardī repeats the need for Sufi disciples of his order to observe and strive toward pure love at all times. For him, the words of the Sufi shaykh were a type of pure love that is practised toward God, and obeying the words of the Sufi shaykh can bring about blessings upon all of humankind.

Pure love is when everything you want is for the purpose of being with God. Every type of human love is included in pure love: spiritual love, love from the heart, love from the soul, and love from reasoning. This is why the Prophet (ṣ) said: 'O Lord, I have more love for You than my life, belongings, family and friends, the power to hear, and cold water. (AM, 454)

Al-Suhrawardī stressed the importance of listening to and obeying the shaykh's wise guidance and training. To him, the words actually spoken had travelled a great distance and deserved to be treated as a sacred vocabulary. He refers to Rūmī: 'Shaykh Rūmī (r) stated that *taṣawwuf* is about having the soul in the hands of almighty God, and having intentions is only a part of it. It is said that *taṣawwuf* is performing *dhikr* with the community of Sufis, and taking part in *samāʿ* with actions' (AM, 57–8).

There are mixed blessings of *faqīr*s and *taṣawwuf*. The blessing of the *faqīr*s is reflected in the practice of *taṣawwuf*. In this way, the Sufi has the means of reaching a closer spirituality. The beloved Prophet (ṣ) is reported to have said that 'those people who perform *dhikr* with intense pleasure are absorbed by it, and with this *dhikr* they will live easily on the Day of Judgement.' This *ḥadīth* tells us the state in which the Sufi can stay, and the shade of *taṣawwuf* and various degrees that are in it. The Sufi needs to have correct visions and it must be according to God's wishes. If a Sufi reaches a certain spiritual level where he becomes a *murshid*, and his mystical level touches his heart, then his soul reflects this new level of understanding and he becomes a *mujāhid* and a *muḥāsib*. (AM, 62)

The *'Awārif al-Maʿārif* contains an elaboration that all anti-*Sharīʿa* immoral activities emanated from the lower self (*nafs*) and that only reason and patience controlled its natural impulses such as rage and lust.[24] The desire for evil (*ammār*), repentance (*tawba*) and

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[24] Rizvi, *History*, 92–93.

satisfaction (*muṭma'inn*) represented three different stages in the natural development and gradual purification of the *nafs*. To Shaykh al-Suhrawardī the heart (*qalb*), while a part of the body, essentially went beyond basic anatomical functions. For him the heart of a true believer (*mu'min*) was analogous to a pure soul, being illuminated by a shining light; but the heart of the unbeliever was dark and made of a lowly substance. The heart of the hypocrite was shrouded in a veil, and a many-faceted heart was one which was inclined towards both good and evil (AM, 266–9).

Al-Suhrawardī viewed reason as an innate human talent which prompts man to seek different kinds of knowledge. It is supplemented and supported by *Sharī'a*. Spiritual perception helps man to adopt a middle path and obtain knowledge of the heavenly spheres (*malakūt*). Thus one can acquire an understanding of the world of matter and space, as well as of the earthly world and the Unseen. If reason is not supported and supplemented by the light of Islamic *Sharī'a,* human beings may prosper in the world, but not obtain blessings from the spiritual world.

Only true Sufis are able to discriminate between experiences emanating from the lower self, from God, from Satan, and from the angels. One dependent on an impure source for existence is always a victim of evil influences; it is, therefore, a Sufi's duty to foster a balanced detachment from the material world and to adhere constantly to *ādāb* in order to fulfil the requirements of the Suhrawardiyya *taṣawwuf*.

SHAYKH AL-SUHRAWARDĪ ON PRAYERS

As a leading *muḥaddith* and Shaykh al-Islām of the 'Abbasid empire, al-Suhrawardī took a firm position on not missing any of the daily ritual prayers. He was adamant about following the Sunna as strictly as possible and not being negligent about prayers like other Sufi orders. He points to a Prophetic *ḥadīth* that refers to God calling prayers the 'pillars of the religion' (AM, 274). He was concerned that the behaviour of Sufis should reflect complete adherence to the example of the Prophet. He writes:

God has prescribed five obligatory prayers and the holy Prophet (ṣ) stated that God claimed that prayers are the pillars of the religion, whoever neglects prayers becomes part of the unbelievers. With prayer, one encounters a binding testimony. One of the parts to prayer is that testimony comes with prayer … A *ḥadīth* reports that when a seeker of truth prepares to do

prayers, then almighty God places a *ḥijāb* over the seeker, and with personal greetings God places angels on the shoulders who also simultaneously pray with the believer. (AM, 275)

For al-Suhrawardī prayers are an important dimension for a spiritual seeker who wishes to see and experience God's disclosure. The *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif* contains commentary under the sub-headings 'The Excellence of Prayers' and 'The Humility of Prayers', which illustrates the Shaykh's interest in ensuring that prayers are not seen as just ritual performances ordered by the *Sharī'a* but as an integral component of *taṣawwuf* discipline. Under 'The Excellence of Prayers', the Shaykh uses a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet that refers to the power of prayer to open the heart to experience a type of humility that is tied to experiences of heaven. In the following, he links spiritual experience and prayer as interdependent entities:

It is the tradition of Shaykh 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās (r) that the Prophet (ṣ) reported that almighty God created heaven and there are unique things that exist in it. It is a place where the eyes have not seen things, and the ears have not heard things, and nor has any person's heart ever experienced [them]. And God tells us in the holy Qur'ān 'The believers that will succeed are those who are humble in their prayers'. (AM, 64)

One of the most important virtues of prayer is its enabling the Sufi heart to grow in humility so that the disciple realizes the transformations that are being experienced. *Ḥadīth*s used in *taṣawwuf* texts aim to highlight transcendental experience in prayer and to undergo spiritual awakenings similar to the Prophet's spiritual experience. Al-Suhrawardī's use of *ḥadīth*s connect prayer with the Prophet's spiritual journey and, through remembrance and celebration of relationship with the Prophet, enable the Sufi ultimately to come to the divine. He writes:

Prayers are a means of establishing a relationship between the divine and the believers. Therefore it is necessary for the believer to practice the utmost humility in prayer and whenever God hears you pray, it is the humblest prayers that appeal to Him. Praying with humility will lead to victory. (AM, 273)

PRAYERS WITH *SŪRAT AL-FĀTIḤA*

Shaykh al-Suhrawardī's discussion of particular *sūra*s from the Qur'ān is continuous with traditional Sufi thought that certain chapters and verses of the Qur'ān have more 'spiritual power' than

others.[25] His exegesis begins with *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa*, after he cites the well-known saying of the Prophet that it was his favourite *sūra* in the Qur'ān. Even in this area of Qur'ānic hermeneutics, he draws on the *ḥadīth*s of the Prophet to orient and ennoble the teaching. While it reinforces his scholarly authority in the *taṣawwuf* and *'ulamā'* tradition, more importantly, the Shaykh is presenting the Qur'ānic revelation conveyed by the Prophet as a part of the *taṣawwuf* spiritual experience. Shaykh al-Suhrawardī's interpretation of *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa* is the following:

God gave believers a special favour with the revelation of *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa*. With this sūra one's prayers are acted upon by God as quickly as possible and God has taught His believers the way to pray. *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa* is recited from morning to night because it is so important that it was revealed to the holy Prophet (ṣ) on two separate occasions. One time it was revealed in Makka and another time it was revealed in the holy city of Madina. If this sūra is recited at different times, only then can you begin to understand its deeper meanings. If you were to repeatedly recite *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa* a thousand times, still you would learn a new meaning each time. (AM, 272)

Al-Suhrawardī refers to the explanation of Shaykh Abū Hurayra, who believed that *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa* was an example of how God maintains a dialogue with His creation. By Abū Hurayra's account, the relationship between the Creator and the believer reaches a critical moment when the believer praises God and appeals humbly for guidance. Shaykh al-Suhrawardī's decision to cite Abū Hurayra's discussion of the recitation of *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa* again reinforces the rules of Sufi spiritual conduct and the need to follow the rules of the Suhrawardiyya order as closely as possible.

Shaykh Abū Hurayra's tradition [is] that the Prophet (ṣ) reported that prayer divides the believer in between two parts. That is, when the believer recites '*bismi l-lāhi l-raḥmāni l-raḥīm*' then God replies 'My servant has called upon Me'. When the believer continues to recite '*al-ḥamdu li-l-lāhi rabbi l-'ālamīn*' then God responds by saying 'My believer has praised Me'. When the believer recites '*al-raḥmāni l-raḥīm*' then God says 'My believer has commended Me'. As the believer continues to recite '*māliki yawmi l-dīn*' then God replies and says 'My believer has placed the responsibilities

[25] See A. J. Wensinck, *Concordance et indices de la tradition musulmane* (8 vols, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1936–1971); Frederick Denny, 'Exegesis and Recitation: Their Development as Classical Forms of Qur'ānic Piety' in *Transitions and Transformations in the History of Religions. Essays in Honor of Joseph M. Kitagawa*, ed. Frank Reynolds and Theodore M. Ludwig (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980), 91–123; and Abū l-Qāsim 'Abd al-Karīm al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyyā fī 'ilm al-Taṣawwuf*, ed. 'Abd al-Halīm Maḥmūd and Maḥmud b. al-Sharīf (2 vols, Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Ḥasan, 1974).

of all work onto Me'. Then the believer recites '*iyyaka na'budu wa iyyaka nasta'īn*', then God says 'There is room in the believer for Me'. As the believer says '*ihdina l-sirāṭa l-mustaqīm, sirāṭa l-ladhīna an'amta 'alayhim ghayri l-maghdūbi 'alayhim wa-lā l-ḍālīn*', God says 'All of this is for My believer and whatever he desires it will be granted'. (AM, 272–3)

Al-Suhrawardī quotes this *ḥadīth* not only to point out to his readers that there is a constant dialogue between the divine and human beings but also that recitation of the Qur'ān brings about a real response from its Author. By using *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa* as the focus for this dialogue he creates a channel for the believers and links their personal prayers with divine communication. This is another example of al-Suhrawardī serving as an authoritative Sufi master; his method with disciples was guiding them toward God by remembering the Prophet.

KNOWLEDGE THROUGH REASONING

An important section in the treatise connected to the Shaykh's agenda of developing an internal and external structure urges his disciples to depend on their own intellectual faculties to comprehend their *taṣawwuf*. One possible reason for al-Suhrawardī's interest in having his disciples actively practise reasoning (*'aql*) in their *taṣawwuf* is that it was equally important to develop the mind alongside striving toward spiritual awareness. Under the heading 'The Excellence of Reasoning', he stresses the benefits of being politically engaged with the state, and it is clear that he desired his disciples to be intellectually competent for the challenges entailed. Another reason for stressing the importance of *'aql* in *taṣawwuf* was to distinguish his order from world-rejecting and antinomian Sufi orders. He writes on the subject of *'aql*:

Reasoning (*'aql*) is the function of language. The power to think is reflected in the following *ḥadīth*: First God made the human mind so that His creature could think. The ability to use *'aql* is related to worship, for another *ḥadīth* reports that 'with *'aql* you can know Me and also praise Me'. (AM, 411)

Al-Suhrawardī believed that reasoning was one of the most important elements for progress in *taṣawwuf* spirituality. His treatise contains several *ḥadīth*s on the subject which legitimize his own approach and connect reasoning with the Sunna of the Prophet. For example, he states: 'The holy Prophet (ṣ) once said the truth is that almighty God gave His servants *'aql* piece by piece. They [all] learn to increase their knowledge, practise pure prayers and try to do proper fasting,

but there is a great difference in their *'aql'* (AM, 412). Another *ḥadīth* cited to validate the important place of reasoning in *taṣawwuf* practice is the following:

'Ā'isha (r) once asked the Prophet (ṣ), What is the best way for people to evaluate themselves? The Prophet (ṣ) replied that *'aql* is the best means to evaluate oneself. She pursued further and asked, Are people not in control of their actions? The Prophet (ṣ) responded that obedience to almighty God involves *'aql*, and with more *'aql* involved, then people will apply more righteous actions. They will benefit as their righteous actions increase. (AM, 412)

Al-Suhrawardī's reference to *ḥadīth*s on reasoning is another example of using the highest authority in spirituality, namely the Prophet, and this process of linking Suhrawardiyya *taṣawwuf* with the Prophet's Sunna was intended to demonstrate the ways his Sufi order mirrored and celebrated the example of the Prophet.

PROPER MANNERS (*ĀDĀB*)

Shaykh al-Suhrawardī's overwhelming stress on proper manners (*ādāb*) is mainly connected with his concern that Sufis maintain both an internal spiritual and external worldly discipline. As the two worlds are closely related, it is important for Sufis to perfect their spirituality, and for their physical customs to reflect their internal condition. The Shaykh's ideas on *ādāb* stem from the conviction that it is necessary to submit oneself wholly to the *Sharī'a*, which is the manifestation of divine order. His efforts to create a perfect harmonious society required an intensely structured model.[26] *Ādāb* is a critical element in the treatise because all the minute details of individual behaviour can be improved to reflect the Prophet's Sunna. For al-Suhrawardī Sufis are practising more than spiritual purity; in the larger scheme of *taṣawwuf*, Suhrawardiyya Sufis are attempting to unite with the divine which requires them to uphold the *Sharī'a*. According to al-Suhrawardī, one needs to be prepared to carry out

[26] The word *ādāb* has a variety of meanings in Arabic, Persian and Urdu. For a good survey see F. Gabrieli, '*Ādāb*' in *Encyclopaedia of Islām*, 1:175–6; William Chittick, *The Sūfī Path of Knowledge: Ibn 'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989); S. A. Bonebakker, '*Ādāb* and the concept of belles-lettres' in Julia Ashtiany *et al.* (eds), *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: Abbasid Belles-Lettres* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). On specific Sufi rules of *ādāb*, see Bernd Radtke, *Ādāb al-mulūk. Ein Handbuch zur islamichen Mystik aus dem 4./10. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1991); and M. Milson, *A Sufi Rule for Novices: Kitāb Ādāb al-Murīdīn of Abū Najīb al-Suhrawardī* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973).

this extraordinary responsibility by controlling one's thoughts and actions in every moment, at every place. On this subject, the ādāb of taṣawwuf, he writes:

The Prophet (ṣ) stated that God had taught him good manners. Ẓāhir and bāṭin manners are needed for a civilized world. If people embrace the ẓāhir then they will learn to be a Sufi with manners, ādāb. But there are several things that are difficult for a person to completely achieve. Until the ill-mannered persons fully immerse themselves in proper manners and all their manners are good like those of the Prophet (ṣ), then they will remain ill-mannered. If people's appearances are like that of worldly people then their manners will reflect that. For example, when people do not change their manners, they themselves also do not change and then their manners are copied from elsewhere. [Citing the Qur'ān] 'In God's creation there can be no changes.' (AM, 250)

The Shaykh explains the meaning of this verse by reference to a statement of 'Abbās: 'Shaykh 'Abbās (r) reported that you have been taught your religion and it is ādāb.' He returns to the authority of the Prophetic sayings and quotes a ḥadīth: 'the holy Prophet (ṣ) reported that "my Lord taught me good ādāb. Then He taught me wisdom in morality. And follow in the good virtues and give wise virtuous advice"' (AM, 252). For al-Suhrawardī, remembering the Prophet's ḥadīths on ādāb is a crucial component in strengthening the relationship between the words of the Prophet and the actions of Sufis. Using ḥadīths on ādāb recreates the very same practices and movements that the Prophet had performed on this earth. He believed that practising the Sunna of the Prophet is not merely duplicating a human model; remembering all of his ḥadīths on ādāb re-establishes the Sufi, through the same physical movements, in the spiritual dimensions of the Prophet's life on earth. Shaykh al-Suhrawardī succinctly described ādāb as like a personal challenge, and quoted the following ḥadīth: 'And an even better point is that people are against changes to manners and proper etiquette, and this is why the Prophet (ṣ) commended making friends with one's ādāb.' (AM, 251) After this, al-Suhrawardī connects ādāb with knowledge:

It is reported by Shaykh Yūsuf ibn Ḥusayn (r) that ādāb come from understanding knowledge. Knowledge is the means of learning proper action ('amal). And 'amal is the means of learning wisdom. Wisdom is the means of learning advanced zuhd where one finds pleasure in making a place on the Day of Judgement and also, in this pleasure, one meets the heart of God. (AM, 251)[27]

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[27] For similar ādāb analysis see Gerhard Böwering's study 'The ādāb Literature of Classical Ṣūfism: Anṣārī's Code of Conduct,' in Barbara Metcalf's *Moral Conduct and Authority* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 62–87.

Shaykh al-Suhrawardī's use of *ḥadīth*s on *ādāb* is correlated to his belief that the Prophet was trained as the final Messenger by God and this training was handed down through the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*s. Learning *ādāb* is mandatory for each person to truly obtain knowledge of God. For example, he writes: 'God had even taught the Companions of the holy Prophet (ṣ) *ādāb* and they were told to speak with the tone of the Prophet (ṣ) and not louder than the holy Prophet (ṣ)' (AM, 366). At times in the treatise, al-Suhrawardī uses *ādāb* to mean more than the rules of good manners of the Suhrawardiyya order; sometimes he uses the term interchangeably with the word Sunna.[28] He believed that precise *ādāb* had to be followed at all times in order to develop and remodel the spirituality of the Prophet. Thus, through adherence to the Prophet's *ādāb*, the Shaykh was attempting to move from remembering the Prophet as a historical figure to embodying his spirituality and his legacy. In the following reference to Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, al-Suhrawardī demonstrates the comprehensiveness and permanence of commitment to *ādāb* of the Prophet: 'Shaykh Abū Naṣr Sarrāj (r) reported that the qualities of the Prophet's (ṣ) *ādāb* 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 *ādāb*' (AM, 258).

At one level, al-Suhrawardī's strong position on affirming the *ādāb* of the Prophet within the Suhrawardiyya *ṭarīqa* is concerned with maintaining a disciplined structure in his Sufi organization, but on another level the use of *ādāb ḥadīth*s places the Prophet's Sunna and spirituality at the heart of Suhrawardiyya *taṣawwuf*. On the surface, intense concentration on *ādāb* practices in the treatise could indicate control over its Sufi members, but the deeper intention is to remember and relive the Sunna of the Prophet. Remembrance in the discipline of *taṣawwuf* is not a mental exercise to keep the Prophet in mind; rather, it is, according to the treatise of al-Suhrawardī, mainly concerned to access and embrace the sacred spirituality of the Prophet because it is this that leads to the divine reunion (AM, 280–9). Shaykh al-Suhrawardī writes: 'Shaykh 'Abdullāh ibn Mubārak (r) stated that those who are lazy with their *ādāb* are punished by being deprived of following the Sunna of the Prophet (ṣ),

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[28] For further discussion on a variety of uses of the term *ādāb* see Ian Richard Netton, '*The Breath of Felicity: Ādāb, Aḥwāl, Maqāmāt* and Abū Najīb al-Suhrawardī' in Leonard Lewisohn (ed.), *The Heritage of Sufism* (London: Khaniqahi Nimatullahi Publications, 1993); and Javed Nurbakhsh, 'The Rules and Manners of the Khānaqāh' in *The Tavern of Ruin* (New York: Khaniqahi Nimatullahi Publications, 1975).

and that those who are careless of the Sunna are punished by being deprived of knowledge of God' (AM, 253).

Al-Suhrawardī's interpretation of *ādāb ḥadīth*s did also serve to maintain a strict, hierarchical, and disciplined Sufi order. The treatise states explicit guidelines for the conduct of Sufi disciples. His commentary on *ādāb* when in *majlis* with the Shaykh is very clear about when the disciple may speak and what he may say. It compares the *ādāb* before the Shaykh to the blessing from an ocean. If the disciple does not follow the proper *ādāb* required, he could lose the daily allowance of blessings from the Shaykh. Also, al-Suhrawardī discusses the importance of not looking the Shaykh straight in the face, which reinforces the subordinated position of the disciple in the *ṭarīqa* hierarchy. For example:

> In the same manner, during a *majlis*, the disciple should show proper *ādāb*. When sitting before 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 his daily spiritual allowance from God. The Shaykh's wisdom is the path to 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. (AM, 365)

According to the treatise, the *ādāb* required of the Sufi disciples are consistent with the discipline and training of the Prophet and his Companions. It is important for *taṣawwuf* to mirror the conduct, customs, and spirituality of the Prophet because that enables the disciples to enter transcendental time and space beyond an imagined historical Prophet, and to sense that they could embody the very essence of his being.[29] An example of the Prophet's *ḥadīth*s used for strict obedience in *ādāb* is: 'Another enlightening moment is when the Prophet (ṣ) was present in a congregation and someone was asking him a question and also interrupting his answers, the Prophet (ṣ) told him that this behaviour was improper' (AM, 364). Such *ḥadīth*s on

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[29] This idea of *fanā' fī-rasūl* is common in many *taṣawwuf* manuals For more see AM, 290–95; also Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣbahānī, *Dalāʾil al-Nubuwwa* (Hyderabad Deccan: Dairatul Maarif, 1950); al-Ḥallāj, *Kitāb al-Ṭawāsīn, texte arabe avec la version persane d'al-Baqli*, ed. and trans. Louis Massignon (Paris: Gauthier, 1913); Sayyid Baqīr ibn ʿUthmān Bukhārī, *Jawāthir al-Awliyāʾ*, ed. Ghulam Sarwar (Islamabad: Iran-Pakistan Institute of Persian Studies, 1976); Syed Naimuddin, 'Sayyid Bulaqanī's Mirājnāma', *Nagpur University Journal* 9 (1943), 101–5; and Annemarie Schimmel, 'The Veneration of the Prophet Muhammad, as Reflected in Sindhi Poetry' in *The Saviour God: Comparative Studies in the Concept of Salvation*, ed. S. Brandon (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1963), 129–43.

ādāb were used to give life to an ethical and theological order, reflecting the order of the Prophet and his Companions, and whose words became an integral part of the Suhrawardiyya spiritual training. These *ḥadīth*s both gave the disciples a place in the *ṭarīqa* structure and symbolically represented the voice of the Prophet in their everyday affairs. An example of al-Suhrawardī's statements is in the following:

The way the disciples used to submit to their Shaykhs was with uncompromising faith; all of their personal belongings and personal affairs depended on the wise advice of their Sufi Shaykhs. It is reported by Abū Ladurd (r) that he was walking ahead of Abū Bakr (r) when the Prophet (ṣ) asked him why he was walking ahead of him, 'Are you better than the world and the Day of Judgement?' [Qur'ān, 15.26] (AM, 363)

For Suhrawardiyya Sufis the sayings of the Prophet on *ādāb* are instructions for their *taṣawwuf* development and their journey in becoming closer to him. While Qur'ānic verses and *ḥadīth*s in the text prepare Sufis for the moment of divine presence, the *ḥadīth*s, in particular, celebrate the Prophet's spiritual legacy which is linked to the disciples' own spiritual maturity. An example of *ḥadīth*s touching on Sufi spiritual progress is the following: 'After obtaining the light of knowledge (*nūr-i ʿirfān*) it is one way of defending the soul (*nafs*) and it is well said in this *ḥadīth*: "Those who defend their souls also defend God." This light of knowledge (*nūr-i ʿirfān*) is the light of the soul that had been in ignorance. Knowledge is the means of building a fort of which *ādāb* is a part' (AM, 258–9).

PATIENCE AND POVERTY

Shaykh al-Suhrawardī's ideas on patience (*ṣabr*) are directly connected with *ādāb* because he wanted to illustrate how each aspect of *taṣawwuf* is integrally connected to patience. The ability to control one's thoughts and physical actions to meet the challenges of *ādāb* and progress in *taṣawwuf* is an important element in spiritual growth. On this subject, al-Suhrawardī writes:

Shaykh Sāhil (r) stated that patience is a vast part of the waiting. Giving to others is the best aspect of *ṣabr*. *Sūrat al-Baqara* verse 3 states that 'Those who are patient during times of fear, pain and fighting are virtuous and balanced'. (AM, 441)

It is said that everything has one distinct character. For human beings it is their *ʿaql*. And for reasoning it is *ṣabr*. From *ṣabr* there is the chastisement of the soul (*nafs*) and that is possible through becoming weak [in the body].

Ṣabr is able to penetrate like breathing, because to practice proper restric-
tions of *zāhir* and *bātin*, *ṣabr* is necessary. Moreover, knowledge works on
words and *ṣabr* brings them together. (AM, 442–3)

The 'Importance of *Ṣabr*' engaged the Shaykh's attention because it
is so closely related to the proper practice of *taṣawwuf* of his Sufi
order. For example, he writes: 'Shaykh Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (r)
reported that God gave His Prophet (ṣ) the wisdom of *ṣabr* and the
form of *ṣabr* was given to the holy Prophet (ṣ). This is due to the fact
that *ṣabr* is not a personal possession, but it is related with God and
godliness. One's *ṣabr* is with the divine' (AM, 444–5). He reinforces
the idea that one's knowledge of *ṣabr* is not a personal preference or
a willed option; rather, it is a divine lesson given to the Prophet and
to his community:

For those persons who protect their *zāhirī* and *bātinī* knowledge learn that
it is necessary to have *ṣabr*. *Bātinī* knowledge and *ṣabr* are complementary,
like a body and its spirit, and each cannot live without the other. They both
have light of reasoning and this is why they were created as one to be
united. (AM, 443)

The type of patience al-Suhrawardī emphasizes includes an esoteric
dimension where the Sufi disciple would be able to connect to God.
Under the heading 'Patience from Allah' he discusses the moment
when the Sufi seeker reaches a level with God and is permanently
humbled by the experience of grace:

It is my understanding that *ṣabr 'an Allāh* (patience from Allāh) is the most
difficult to reach. *Ṣabr 'an Allāh* requires reaching the level (*maqām*) with
the Prophet (ṣ) and it is an extremely special level. At this level, the seeker
for truth is inclined toward the majesty of God. The power of words by
God humbles the seeker as he is lost in them. This is the most intense stage
of *ṣabr* because it is for the sake of God, his spirituality is forever affected
by this experience. (AM, 445)

'Awārif al-Ma'ārif argues that Sufis need to be reminded that the Sufi
tarīqa is not identical to either *faqr* (poverty) or *zuhd* (asceticism),
although both of these practices could lead to *fanā'*. Al-Suhrawardī's
own engagement with the 'Abbasid government was a clear example
of being a public statesman at the same time as being a Sufi shaykh.
Ascetic arguments for withdrawal from society and rejection of the
world because of its corrupting nature were considered extreme and
irrational by al-Suhrawardī. To him, such withdrawal was a sort of
anti-social behaviour and against the Sunna of the Prophet. According
to the Shaykh, this attitude is derived from an obsessive opposition to
wealth, and in reality betrays a certain weakness. He believed that
those who fit the model were mainly preoccupied with an anticipation

of reward, whether in this lifetime or in the hereafter. He referred in particular to the wandering dervishes (*qalandar*s) whose renunciatory antinomianism commended practices like poverty, mendicancy, itinerancy, celibacy, self-mortification and other forms of social deviance.³⁰ Shaykh al-Suhrawardī draws a distinction between *qalandar*s and true practising Sufis, with the former 'only concerned with the tranquillity of their hearts to the point of destroying customs and throwing off the bonds of social intercourse.'³¹ The distinction implies al-Suhrawardī's annoyance with the way *qalandar*s neglected *Sharī'a* and showed scant respect for Islamic ethics, the Sunna of the Prophet, and with their general attitudes toward living on earth. For al-Suhrawardī, a true Sufi did not differentiate between poverty and wealth and was concerned with neither fear nor the need for recompense (AM, 356–59). Shaykh al-Suhrawardī and a host of other Shaykhs and scholars considered misguided those who believed that ascetic practices absolved them from the obligation or need to obey *Sharī'a* and worldly reality (*ḥaqīqāt*) which were interdependent. For the Shaykh, Sufis who spoke of submerging themselves in the ocean of Divine Unity were misdirected; precedence should be first given to fulfilling the divine as laid out by the Prophet and the Qur'ān.

CONCLUSION

Shaykh al-Suhrawardī's treatise '*Awārif al-Ma'ārif* uses the Prophet's *ḥadīth*s in almost every topic in order to bring the teaching to life. He is concerned to have his readers think about the Prophet in many ways; in particular to esteem and love him as more than a historical figure belonging to a place and epoch centuries past. Instead, the *ḥadīth*s in the '*Awārif al-Ma'ārif* are carefully selected to highlight his eternal spiritual existence in every moment. The spiritual training of Sufis in the Suhrawardiyya *ṭarīqa* consisted of thinking, acting, and experiencing the closeness of the Prophet in a different way from that of the scholars of the law or philosophers.

In sum, the *ḥadīth*s used by al-Suhrawardī in relation to a variety of topics in *taṣawwuf*—social justice, spirituality, the use of reason, prayers, *ādāb,* seeking knowledge—essentially illustrate a type of Sufi celebration of the Prophet. His treatise is a good example of how Sufi discipline included memorization of *ḥadīth*s in order to

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³⁰ See Ahmed Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), 13–24.

³¹ Ibid. 34.

internalize and incorporate them into the disciples' spiritual journey. In *'Awārif al-Maʿārif* in particular, the use of *ḥadīth*s points to a higher level of reverence for the Prophet that aims at spiritual encounter with him; but it goes beyond imitation to embodying his spiritual achievements. The *ḥadīth*s are a primary tool for al-Suhrawardī's disciples to remember, re-enact, reconnect with, and relive the spiritual life of the Prophet.