XI.

A HISTORICAL ENQUIRY CONCERNING THE ORIGIN
AND DEVELOPMENT OF SUFIISM,WITH A LIST OF DEFINITIONS OF THE TERMS 'ŞÚFÍ' AND
'TAŞAWWUF,' ARRANGED CHRONOLOGICALLY.

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I.

THE nucleus of the present article was meant in the first instance to be added as a note to a chronological list of definitions of the terms 'Şúfí' and 'Taşawwuf' chiefly compiled from the *Risála* of Qushayrî (Cairo, 1287 A.H.), the *Tadhkiratu'l-Awliyá* of Faridu'ddín 'Aṭṭár (cited as T.A.),¹ and the *Nafahátu'l-Uns* of Jámí (Calcutta, 1859). These works contain about a hundred definitions of 'Şúfí' and 'Taşawwuf,' none of which exceeds a few lines in length. I thought that it might be interesting, and possibly instructive, to arrange the most important in their chronological sequence, so far as that can be determined, since only in this way are they capable of throwing any light upon the historical development of Şúfism. The result, however, was somewhat meagre. Taken as a whole, those brief sentences which often represent merely a single aspect of the thing defined, a characteristic point of view, or perhaps a momentarily dominant mood, do undoubtedly exhibit the gradual progress of mystical thought in Islam from the beginning of the third to the end of the fourth century after the Hijra, but the evidence which they supply

¹ The references are to my edition, of which pt. i was recently published as the third volume of Professor Browne's Persian Historical Texts.

is limited to a vague outline. Accordingly, I resolved to undertake a chronological examination of the doctrine taught by the authors of these definitions and by other distinguished Šúfis, and I have here set down the conclusions to which I have come. I do not claim to have exhausted all the available material. There are two works of great importance which I have not yet found an opportunity to examine at leisure, namely, the *Hilyatu'l-Awliyá* of Abú Nu'aym al-Išfahání († 430 A.H.) and the *Kashfu'l-Mahjúb* by 'Alí b. 'Uthmán al-Jullábí al-Hujvírí, who wrote in the latter half of the fifth century. Nevertheless, the evidence at my disposal seemed to me sufficient to form the basis of a preliminary investigation such as I have attempted. The subject is too large to be treated adequately in a few pages, and too obscure to admit of a complete and final solution at present, so that the following sketch must be regarded as more or less tentative, although I venture to think that its main features, at any rate, will be confirmed by future research. I shall not discuss the principles of Šúfism, which are well known, but rather try to show whence they were derived and how they grew into a system.

The seeds of Šúfism are to be found in the powerful and widely-spread ascetic tendencies which arose within Islam during the first century A.H. As Goldziher has remarked, the chief factors in this early asceticism are (1) an exaggerated consciousness of sin, and (2) an overwhelming dread of divine retribution.¹ The movement proceeded on orthodox lines, but it was inevitable that the extraordinary value attached to certain points in Muḥammad's teaching and practice² should produce a corresponding neglect of other matters which good Moslems might think equally essential. Asceticism easily passes into mysticism. Ḥasan of Baṣra, the most famous representative of the ascetic movement, is reckoned by the Šúfis as one of themselves,

¹ *Materialien zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des Šúfismus* (Vienna Oriental Journal, vol. xiii, No. 1, p. 35 sqq.).

² E.g. ذكر and توكل

and with justice in so far as he strove for spiritual righteousness and was not satisfied with formal acts of devotion. "A grain of genuine piety," he declared, "is better than a thousandfold weight of fasting and prayer."¹ "Cleanse ye these hearts (by meditation and remembrance of God), for they are quick to rust; and restrain ye these souls, for they desire eagerly, and if ye restrain them not they will drag you to an evil end."² Still, these ascetics were only the forerunners of Šúfiism. According to Qushayrî, the term 'Šúfi' came into common use before the end of the second century A.H.=815 A.D. It is probable enough that this epithet, which refers to the woollen garment adopted (as Ibn Khaldún says) by Muḥammadan ascetics in order to distinguish themselves from those who affected a more luxurious fashion of dress, really marks a definite rift between asceticism and orthodoxy, and that it was first applied to Abú Hášim of Kúfa († 150 A.H.), of whom Jámî says (*Nafahát*, 34, 11):—"Before him there were men eminent for asceticism and piety and well-doing in the path of trust (توکل) and in the path of love, but he was the first that was called Šúfi." Perhaps we may also connect with this Abú Hášim the fact mentioned by Jámî immediately after the passage which I have just quoted, that the first convent (*khánaqáh*) for Šúfis was founded at Ramla in Palestine by a Christian Amír. While recognising, however, that Christian influence had some part in shaping the early development of Šúfiism, I am inclined to believe that Šúfiism of the ascetic and quietistic type, such as we find, e.g., in the sayings of Ibráhîm b. Adham († 161 A.H.), Dá'úd al-Ṭá'î († 165 A.H.), Fuḍayl b. 'Iyád († 187 A.H.), and Šhaqîq of Balkh († 194 A.H.), owes comparatively little either to Christianity or to any foreign source. In other words, it seems to me that this type of mysticism was—or at least might have been—the native product of Islam itself, and that it was an almost necessary consequence of

¹ Qushayrî, 63, last line.

² *Kámil* of al-Mubarrad, 120, 4.

the Muḥammadan conception of Allah, a conception which could not possibly satisfy the spiritually-minded Moslem. Although the Ṣūfīs mentioned above carried asceticism and quietism to extreme lengths, their mysticism was very moderate. The raptures and transports of later Ṣūfism were as unknown to them as were its daring speculations.¹ They loved God, but they feared Him more, and the end of their love was apathetic submission to His will, not perfect knowledge of His being. They stand midway between asceticism (*zuhd*) and theosophy or gnosis (*maʿrifat*). The word that best describes their attitude is quietism (*riḍā*).

In the third century Ṣūfism assumes an entirely new character, which cannot be explained as the further development of spiritual forces within Islam. It is significant that the earliest definition of Ṣūfism occurs in the sayings of Maʿrūf al-Karkhī († 200 A.H.), whose parents were Christians or Mandæans in religion and, to judge by the name of his father, Fīrūz or Fīrūzān, of Persian nationality.² Maʿrūf, it is said, was a client (*marvlā*) of the Imām ʿAlī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā, and accepted Islam at his hands. He lived in Baghdād—no doubt in the Karkh quarter, whence he is generally called Maʿrūf of Karkh—during the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd, and his tomb, which still exists in that city, has always been an object of profound veneration. He associated with Dāʿūd al-Ṭāʾī († 165 A.H.), but we learn from the *Fihrist* (183, 16) that his master in Ṣūfism was a certain Farqad al-Sanjī,³ who derived from Ḥasan of Baṣra, who derived from Mālik b. Anas. Such *isnāds* designed to show the orthodoxy of Ṣūfism are of small account. Maʿrūf is described in the *Tadhkiratuʾl-Awliyā* as a man filled with longing for God. His pupil, the celebrated Sarī al-Saqatī, relates as follows:—

¹ There is one conspicuous exception, namely, Rābiʿa al-ʿAdawiyya († 135, 180, or 185, according to different authorities). In her sayings the doctrine of mystical love appears almost fully developed, but it is probable that many of them are spurious.

² Maʿrūf belonged to the district of Wāsiṭ (see *infra*).

³ The vocalisation of this word is uncertain. It may refer to any one of several places named Sanj, Sinj, or Sunj.

“I dreamed that I saw Ma'rúf al-Karkhí beneath the throne of God, and God was saying to His angels, ‘Who is this?’ They answered, ‘Thou knowest best, O Lord.’ Then God said, ‘This is Ma'rúf al-Karkhí, who was intoxicated with love of Me, and will not recover his senses except by meeting Me face to face.’”¹ In the sayings of Ma'rúf we discern for the first time unmistakable traces of those new ideas which remain to this day the essential and most characteristic element in Sufism. Here are some examples:—

“Love is not to be learned from men: it is one of God's gifts and comes of His grace.”²

“The saints of God are known by three signs: their thought is of God, their dwelling is with God, and their business is in God.³ If the gnostic (*ʿarif*) has no bliss, he himself is in every bliss.”⁴

One day Ma'rúf said to his pupil, Sarí al-Saqatí: “When you desire anything of God, swear to Him by me”
(فَأَقْسِمَ عَلَيْهِ بِي).⁵

Anyone who has perused the sayings of Ibráhím b. Adham and the group of Sufís mentioned above in connection with him will readily perceive that these utterances of Ma'rúf al-Karkhí belong to a quite different order of ideas. Their Taṣawwuf had a practical end, the attainment of salvation, but his was primarily a theosophy; it consisted, as we see from his definition, in “the apprehension of Divine realities” (الْأَخْذُ بِالْحَقَائِقِ). Before considering the origin of this conception, let us follow its historical development a little further.

¹ Qushayrī, 11, 7 sqq.

² T.A. i, 272, 12.

³ T.A. i, 271, 18.

⁴ T.A. i, 272, 13. Compare this with Ibráhím b. Adham's definition (T.A. i, 93, 24): “This is the sign of the gnostic, that his thoughts are mostly engaged in meditation, and his words are mostly praise and glorification of God, and his deeds are mostly devotion, and his eye is mostly fixed on the subtleties of Divine action and power.”

⁵ Qushayrī, 11, 1.

Abú Sulaymán al-Dárání († 215 A.H.), a native of Wásit, emigrated to Syria and settled in the village of Dárayá, west of Damascus. Many of his sayings are purely mystical in spirit and expression, thus :—

“None refrains from the lusts of this world save him in whose heart there is a light that keeps him always busied with the next world.”¹

“It may be that while the gnostic sleeps on his bed, God will reveal to him the mystery and will make luminous that which He never will reveal to one standing in prayer.² When the gnostic’s spiritual eye is opened, his bodily eye is shut : they see nothing but Him.”³

“If Gnosis (معرفت) were to take visible form, all that looked thereon would die at the sight of its beauty and loveliness and goodness and grace, and every brightness would become dark beside the splendour thereof.”⁴

“Gnosis is nearer to silence than to speech.”⁵

“When the heart weeps because it has lost, the spirit laughs because it has found.”⁶

The following passage may be quoted in full, inasmuch as it is one of the earliest specimens of the erotic symbolism which afterwards became so prominent in the religious language of the Šúfís :—

Aḥmad b. Abi’l-Ḥawárí⁷ said : One day I came to Abú Sulaymán (al-Dárání) and found him weeping. I said, “What makes you weep?” He answered : “O Aḥmad, why should I not weep? for, when night falls, and eyes are closed in slumber, and every lover is alone with his beloved, and the people of love keep vigil,⁸ and tears stream

¹ T.A. i, 232, 12.

² T.A. i, 234, 21.

³ T.A. i, 234, 23.

⁴ T.A. i, 235, 3.

⁵ T.A. i, 235, 5.

⁶ *Nafahātu’l-Uns*, 44, 3.

⁷ T.A. i, 286 sqq.

⁸ Literally, “make their feet a bed, rest on their feet” (افترش اهل).
(المحبة أقدامهم).

over their cheeks and bedew their oratories, then God Almighty looks from on high and cries aloud—‘O Gabriel, dear in my sight are they who take pleasure in My Word and find peace in praising My name. Verily, I am regarding them in their loneliness, I hear their lamentation and I see their weeping. Wherefore, O Gabriel, dost thou not cry aloud amongst them—“What is this weeping?” Did ye ever see a beloved that chastised his lovers? Or how would it beseem Me to punish folk who, when night covers them, manifest fond affection towards Me (تملقوا لي)? By Myself I swear that when they shall come down to the Resurrection I will surely unveil to them My glorious face, in order that they may behold Me and I may behold them.’”¹

Passing over Bishru'l-Háfí (the barefooted), who died in 227 A.H., and who described the gnostics (*‘arifán*) as the peculiar favourites of God,² we come to Dhu'l-Nún al-Miṣrî († 245 A.H.),³ the man who, more than any other, deserves to be entitled the founder of theosophical Ṣúfism. His right to this honour is acknowledged by Oriental biographers and historians. Jámí says (*Nafahát*, 36, 2 sqq.):—“He is the head of this sect; they all descend from, and are related to, him. There were Shaykhs before him, but he was the first that explained the Ṣúfî symbolism (اشارات با عبارت آورد) and spoke concerning this ‘path.’” According to Abu'l-Mahásin (i, 753), Dhu'l-Nún “was the first that spoke in Egypt concerning the system of ‘states’ (الاحوال) and ‘stages of the saints’ (مقامات اهل الولاية). These assertions, though not literally exact, are amply borne out, on the whole, by the sayings of Dhu'l-Nún which are preserved in the *Tadhkiratu'l-Awliyá* and in other works. Space does not permit me to analyse the copious and interesting collection of mystical doctrines attached to his

¹ Qushayrî, 18, 5 sqq.

² T.A. i, 112, 13.

³ He was called Dhu'l-Nún (He of the Fish) on account of a miracle which is related in the T.A. i, 116, 18 sqq.

name. It may be remarked, however, that the definitions of 'gnostic' (*ʿarif*) and 'gnosis' (*maʿrifat*) alone occupy about two pages in my edition of the T.A. (see especially i, 126-128). Dhu'l-Nún distinguishes three kinds of knowledge, of which one is common to all Moslems, another is that of philosophers and divines, while the third sort, viz., the knowledge of the attributes of unity, is peculiar to the saints "who see God with their hearts" (T.A. i, 127, 3 sqq.). When Dhu'l-Nún was asked how he knew God he replied, "I know Him by Himself"¹; yet he confessed that the highest knowledge is bewilderment (أَعْرَفُ النَّاسِ بِاللَّهِ تَعَالَى أَشَدَّهُمْ تَحْيِيرًا فِيهِ).² Similarly, he taught that true praise of God involves absorption of the worshipper in the object of worship.³ He said: "One that veils himself from mankind by means of solitude is not as one that veils himself by means of God" (Qushayrī, 60, 1). His Deity is a Being that can be described only by negatives: "Whatever you imagine, God is the opposite of that."⁴ The idea that Ṣūfism is an esoteric religion for the elect finds frequent expression. Thus, تَوْبَةُ الْعَوَامِّ is a different thing from تَوْبَةُ الْخَوَاصِّ (Qushayrī, 10, 16), and Divine love is regarded as a mystery which must not be spoken about, lest it come to the ears of the profane (ibid., 172, 21). Dhu'l-Nún mentions "the cup of love" handed to the lover of God (T.A. i, 126, 13)—one of the earliest instances of the Bacchanalian symbolism in which Ṣūfī poets delight. He is the author of the first definitions of *wajd* and *samāʿ* (T.A. i, 129, 13; Qushayrī, 180, 8), and *tawhīd* (Qushayrī, 5, 8).

¹ عَرَفْتُ رَبِّي بِرَبِّي (Qushayrī, 167, 7).

² Ibid., 166, 23.

³ غَيْبَةُ الذَّاكِرِ عَنِ الذِّكْرِ (ibid., 120, 7; cf. 119, 2).

⁴ كُلُّ مَا تُصَوِّرُ فِي وَهْمِكَ فَالِلهِ بِخِلَافِ ذَلِكَ (ibid., 5, 10).

Enough, I think, has been said to show that it was unquestionably Dhu'l-Nún al-Miṣrī (and not, as Mr. Whinfield has suggested, Báyzíd al-Biṣṭāmī) "who above all others gave to Ṣúfí doctrine its permanent shape."¹ Let us now see whether the facts recorded by his biographers afford any clue as to the origin of this doctrine.

According to Ibn Khallikán (No. 128; De Slane's translation, vol. i, p. 291) and Jámí (*Nafahát*, p. 35) the name of Dhu'l-Nún was Abu'l-Fayḍ Thawbán b. Ibráhím, or al-Fayḍ b. Ibráhím. His father, a native of Nubia or of Ikhmím in Upper Egypt, was a slave enfranchised and adopted by the tribe of Quraysh. Dhu'l-Nún probably passed some time in the Ḥijáz, for it is said that he was a pupil of the Imám Málík b. Anas († 179 A.H.) and taught the *Muwatta'* from his dictation. His master in Ṣúfism was Shuqrán al-'Abid (Ibn Khallikán) or a Maghribite named Isráfil (Jámí). Ibn Khallikán tells us that Dhu'l-Nún was "the nonpareil of his age" for learning, devotion, communion with the divinity (*ḥál*), and acquaintance with literature (*adab*); also that he was a philosopher (*ḥakím*) and spoke Arabic with elegance. He was a Malámatí, i.e., he concealed his piety under a pretended contempt for the law, and most of the Egyptians regarded him as a *zindiq* (freethinker), but after his death he was canonised (T.A. i, 114, 15 sqq.). Several anecdotes in the *Tadhkiratu'l-Awliyá* represent Dhu'l-Nún as turning pebbles and the like into precious stones, and in the *Fihrist* (353, 28) his name occurs among "the philosophers who discoursed on alchemy," while a few pages further on we find him mentioned as the author of two alchemical works (*ibid.*, 358, 3).² His true character appears distinctly in the account given by Ibnu'l-Qiftí in the

¹ *Masnavi-i Ma'navi*, translated and abridged by E. H. Whinfield (2nd edition), p. xvii of the Introduction. It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. Whinfield, whose writings have done so much to promote the study of Ṣúfism, and I am glad to find myself in general agreement with his views as to the origin of the doctrine.

² He also dabbled in medicine. See Wuestenfeld, *Gesch. der Arab. Aerzte*, p. 24. Three works attributed to him are extant (Brockelmann, *Gesch. der Arab. Litt.*, i, 199).

Tārīkhul-Ḥukamā (ed. by Lippert, p. 185):—"Dhu'l-Nún b. Ibrāhīm al-Ikhnīmī al-Miṣrī professed the art of alchemy, and belongs to the same class as Jābir b. Ḥayyān. He devoted himself to the science of esoterics (*'ilmul-bāṭin*) and became proficient in many branches of philosophy. He used to frequent the ruined temple (*barbā*) in the town of Ikhnīm, which temple is one of the ancient 'Houses of Wisdom' (بيوت الحكمة), containing marvellous figures and strange images that increase the believer's faith and the infidel's transgression. And it is said that knowledge of the mysteries therein was revealed to him by the way of saintship (بطريق الولاية); and he wrought miracles."

Mas'ūdī, who died exactly a century after Dhu'l-Nún and is the first authority to mention him, derived his information from the inhabitants of Ikhnīm on the occasion of a visit which he made to that place. He relates the local tradition as follows:—"Abu'l-Fayḍ Dhu'l-Nún al-Miṣrī al-Ikhnīmī, the ascetic, was a philosopher who trod a particular path (طريقة) and pursued a course of his own in religion. He was one of those who elucidate the history of these temple-ruins (*barābi*). He roamed among them and examined a great quantity of figures and inscriptions." Mas'ūdī gives translations of some of the latter, which Dhu'l-Nún claimed to have deciphered and read (*Murūju'l-Dhahab*, ed. by Barbier de Meynard, ii, 401 seq.).

The statement that Dhu'l-Nún assiduously studied the inscriptions in the *barābi* or ancient Egyptian temples requires some explanation. Egypt was regarded by Muḥammadans as the home of alchemy, magic, and the occult sciences. The first who discoursed on alchemy was Hermes the Babylonian (*Fihrist*, 351, 20), who afterwards became king of Egypt and was buried under one of the Pyramids. Others relate that Hermes was one of the seven priests in charge of the temples of the seven Planets. The Moslems identify this Hermes with the Prophet Idrīs (Enoch), and ascribe to him the origin of Egyptian art, science, and religion. "He built the Pyramids and the temples (*barābi*) in Upper Egypt, and figured thereon all the arts and

scientific instruments (الصناعات والآلات), and engraved thereon descriptions of the sciences, because he desired to preserve them for posterity, and feared lest they should disappear from the world and leave no vestige behind.”¹ We see from this passage that the hieroglyphics on the Egyptian monuments were believed to hold the secret of those ancient and mysterious sciences first practised, as was thought, by the people of Babylon, viz., alchemy, astrology, and magic. This was the view taken by the most enlightened of Moslem historians, Ibn Khaldún, who not only asserts the reality of magic, but affirms that the *barábi* in Upper Egypt still show traces of the art and furnish abundant proofs of its existence.² We read in the *Fihrist* (353, 3 sqq.) :—“In Egypt are buildings, called *barábi*, composed of great stones enormous in size. They are houses of diverse shape, which contain places for crushing and pounding and dissolving and compacting and distilling, whence it may be inferred that they were made for the practice of alchemy. And in these buildings are figures and inscriptions in Chaldean and Egyptian, of which the nature is unknown. Subterranean treasuries have been discovered, where these sciences are written on bast (*falján*) made of thin bark and on membrane of the white poplar (*túz*) which bowmen employ and on sheets of gold and copper and on stones.”

It is now clear that Dhu'l-Nún was an alchemist and magician, but we must remember that at this time magic and alchemy (which latter was regarded as a branch of magic) had long been associated with theurgy and theosophy. This connection is very marked in the later Neo-Platonists, like Iamblichus and Proclus, and it pervades the whole history of Gnosticism, which Irenæus appropriately derives from Simon Magus, as well as of Šabianism. In Šúfism, on the other hand, it is more or less disguised; the great Šúfis of the third century are theosophists rather than theurgists. Magic, which is condemned by the Koran, could

¹ *Tārīkhul-Ḥukamá*, 348, last line et seqq.

² *Prolegomena*, translated by De Slane, iii, 176 seq.

have no recognised place in their system. The miracles which they wrought were Divine gifts (كرامات) and came to them unsolicited, by virtue of their holiness and sincere faith in God.¹ It would be easy to show, however, that the old theurgic ideas exercised a powerful influence on Šúfism. Ja'far al-Šádiq († 148 A.H.), whose life is given in the *Tadhkiratu'l-Awliyá*, is said to have written a treatise on alchemy, augury, and omens. His pupil, Jábir b. Ḥayyán, the celebrated alchemist known to Europeans by the name of Geber, was called "Jábir the Šúfí," and, like Dhu'l-Nún, he studied the science of esoterics (علم الباطن), which, according to Ibnu'l-Qiftí, is identical with Šúfism.² More important evidence is afforded by the biographies of the Šúfí saints. It is related that Ibráhím b. Adham, while travelling in the desert, met a man who taught him the greatest name of God (اسم الله الأعظم), and as soon as he pronounced it he saw the Prophet Khidr (Qushayrí, 9, 12). Dhu'l-Nún is represented as knowing the greatest name. One of his pupils, Yúsuf b. al-Ḥusayn († 304 A.H.), desired to learn it, but failed to pass a simple preliminary test.³ which Dhu'l-Nún imposed on him (T.A. i, 316, 10 sqq.). The magical efficacy of certain names and formulas is a commonplace of theurgy. A Coptic work on Gnosticism mentions "the mystery of the great name," which enabled the disciples to dispense with all other mysteries.⁴ Dhu'l-Nún seems to have used invocations and incense; at least, we are told by one who visited him that he saw a golden bowl in front of the holy man, while around him rose the fumes of aloes-wood and ambergris. "Art thou," he cried

¹ Cf. Ibn Khaldún, *Prolegomena*, trans. by De Slane, iii, 184.

² *Tárikhu'l-Ḥukamá*, 160. This combination of natural science and religion is exemplified in the history of mediæval mysticism in Europe. Jábir b. Ḥayyán and Dhu'l-Nún anticipate Cornelius Agrippa and Paracelsus.

³ This is the قصة الفارة to which Ibnu'l-Athír alludes (vol. vii, p. 79, l. 7, in Tornberg's edition).

⁴ Carl Schmidt, *Gnostische Schriften in Koptischer Sprache*, p. 197.

to the intruder, "one of those who enter into the presence of kings in their hour of 'expansion'?" (فى حال بسطهم).¹

An ascetic, philosopher, and theurgist, living in the ninth century among the Christian Copts, himself of Coptic or Nubian parentage—such was Dhu'l-Nún al-Miṣrī, from whom, as his extant sayings bear witness, and as Jámí, moreover, expressly states, the Ṣúfī theosophy is mainly derived. The origin of this doctrine has often been discussed, and various theories are still current; a result which is not surprising, inasmuch as hardly anyone has hitherto taken due account of the historical and chronological factors in the problem.² To ignore these factors, and to argue from general considerations alone, is, in my opinion, a perfectly futile proceeding, which can lead to no safe or solid conclusion. It is obvious that the principles of Ṣúfism resemble those of the Vedānta, but the question whether Ṣúfism is derived from the Vedānta cannot be settled except on historical grounds, i.e., (1) by an examination of the influence which was being exerted by Indian upon Muḥammadan thought at the time when Ṣúfism arose; and (2) by considering how far the ascertained facts relating to the evolution of Ṣúfism accord with the hypothesis of its Indian origin. Similarly, with regard to the alternative form of the 'Aryan reaction' theory, namely, that Ṣúfism is essentially a product of the Persian mind, it must be shown, in the first place, that the men who introduced the characteristic Ṣúfī doctrines were of Persian nationality. As we have seen, however—and I do not think that my conclusions will be disputed by anyone who studies the evidence chronologically—this was by no means the case. Ma'rúf al-Karkhī came of Persian stock, but the characteristic

¹ Qushayrī, 193, 9 sqq. T.A. i, 121, 14. For the use of incense by the 'Ṣábians' of Egypt, who were probably Copts or Nubians, cf. Chwolsohn, *Die Sabier und der Sabismus*, vol. i, p. 493 seq.

² One of the first to do so was Dr. A. Merx, who in his *Idee und Grundlinien einer allgemeinen Geschichte der Mystik* (Heidelberg, 1893) traced the progress of mystical ideas in Islam down to the time of Abū Sulaymán al-Dārání, and argued that they must have been derived from Greek philosophy. Before seeing his book, I had approached the question independently, and, working on the same lines, had come to a similar conclusion.

theosophical mysticism of the Šúfis was first formulated by his successors, Abú Sulaymán al-Dárání and Dhu'l-Nún al-Misrí, men who passed their lives in Syria and Egypt, and who probably had not a drop of Persian blood in their veins.

The remarkably close correspondence between Neo-Platonism and Šúfism—a correspondence which is far more striking than that between Šúfism and the Vedanta system—would not in itself justify us in deriving the one doctrine from the other. Nevertheless, I am convinced that they are historically connected, and I will now state some of the considerations which have led me to this belief.

Starting with the proposition, which I have deduced from an examination of the materials contained in the *Tadhkiratu'l-Awliyá* and other works, that theosophical, as contrasted with quietistic and devotional Šúfism, arose and reached a high degree of development in the half-century which, broadly speaking, covers the reigns of Ma'mún, Mu'tasim, Wáthiq, and Mutawakkil, that is, between 198 and 247 A.H. = 813–861 A.D., we must see in the first instance what sort of influence was exerted in Western Asia during this period by Greek thought in general and by Neo-Platonism in particular.

Little need be said regarding the diffusion of Hellenic culture among the Moslems at this time. Every student of their literary history knows how the tide of Greek learning, then at its height, streamed into 'Iráq from three quarters: from the Christian monasteries of Syria, from the Persian Academy of Jundéshápúr in Khúzistán, and from the Syrian heathens, or Šábians, of Harrán in Mesopotamia. Innumerable works of Greek philosophers, physicians, and scientists were translated into Arabic, were eagerly studied, and formed a basis for new researches. In short, Muḥammadan science and philosophy are founded, almost exclusively, on the wisdom of the Greeks.

Aristotle, not Plato, is the dominant figure in Moslem philosophy. But the Arabs gained their first knowledge of Aristotle through Neo-Platonist commentators, and the system with which they became imbued was that of Plotinus,

Porphry, and Proclus. Thus the so-called "Theology of Aristotle," which, according to Dieterici, was translated into Arabic about 840 A.D., is in reality a manual of Neo-Platonism. The main point, however, is that Neo-Platonist ideas were widely circulated, and were easily accessible to educated Moslems in the first half of the ninth century of our era. This was especially the case in Syria and Egypt, which for many hundreds of years had been the two great centres of mysticism and pantheism, where Neo-Platonists, Gnostics, and Christian heretics were equally at home. About the beginning of the sixth century "there suddenly appeared a body of writings purporting to be by Dionysios the Areopagite, the convert of Saint Paul. It has been for some time generally recognised that they were the work of this period, and, in all probability, written by some follower of Proclus, who may have been a Syrian monk; a theory supported by the fact that, although eagerly received and studied by the whole East, these writings were brought forward and most powerfully supported by the Syrians."¹ The pseudo-Dionysios names as his teacher a certain Hierotheos, whom Frothingham has shown to be identical with Stephen bar Sudaili, a prominent mystic of the East Syrian school and a contemporary of Jacob of Sarúj (451-521 A.D.). Fragments of two works by this Stephen, viz. the *Erotic Hymns* and the *Elements of Theology*, are preserved by Dionysios; and a complete work, the *Book of Hierotheos on the hidden Mysteries of the Divinity*, has come down to us in a unique MS. of the British Museum. Here, then, is the true source of the pseudo-Dionysian writings, which, as is well known, were turned into Latin by John Scotus Erigena, and founded mediæval mysticism in the West. Their influence in the Eastern world was no less far-reaching. They were translated into Syriac almost immediately on their appearance, and their doctrine was vigorously propagated, as the numerous commentaries by Syrian writers attest. These studies must have flourished particularly in the ninth

¹ Frothingham, *Stephen Bar Sudaili, the Syrian Mystic* (Leyden, 1886), p. 2.

century, since from that time date the splendid MSS. which were sent from Scythopolis in Palestine to Edessa. "About 850 Dionysios was known from the Tigris to the Atlantic."¹

But it was not through literature alone that the Moslems were made familiar with Neo-Platonistic doctrine. The city of Harrán in Mesopotamia has been already mentioned as one of the principal avenues by which Greek culture poured into Islam. It was inhabited by a people who were really Syrian heathens, but who towards the beginning of the ninth century assumed the name of Šábians, in order to protect themselves from the persecution with which they were threatened by the Caliph Ma'mún. At this time, indeed, many of them accepted Islam or Christianity, but the majority clung to their old pagan beliefs, while the educated class continued to profess a religious philosophy which, as it is described by Shahrastání and other Muḥammadan writers, is simply the Neo-Platonism of Proclus and Iamblichus. Although the Šábian colony in Baghdád, which produced a brilliant succession of scholars, philosophers, and men of science, was not established until near the end of the ninth century, we may be sure that long before that epoch there was an active interchange of ideas between Šábian and Muḥammadan thinkers. I need not pursue this topic further. It is not too much to say that the Moslems found Neo-Platonism in the air wherever they came in contact with Greek civilisation.

Now the lands of Greek civilisation were pre-eminently Syria and Egypt, the very countries in which, as we have seen, the Šúfi theosophy was first developed. The man who bore the chief part in its development is described as a philosopher and an alchemist: in other words, he was a student of Greek wisdom. When it is added that the ideas which he enunciated are essentially the same as those which appear, for example, in the works of Dionysios, does not the whole argument point with overwhelming force to the conclusion that there is an historical connection between

¹ Merx, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

Neo-Platonism and Šúfism? Is any other theory of the origin of theosophical Šúfism conceivable in view of the facts which I have stated? I am not prepared to go so far as Merx, who traces the Šúfí doctrine back to the writings of Dionysios, but my researches have brought me to a result which is virtually the same: that *Šúfism on its theosophical side is mainly a product of Greek speculation*. That it was not, even at this early stage, a purely Greek system, goes without saying. Neo-Platonism itself had absorbed many foreign elements in the course of six centuries. I will not attempt just now to distinguish the Greek from the non-Greek element in the Šúfí mysticism of the period which we have been considering, i.e. before 860 A.D. It may be observed, however, that Ma'rúf al-Karkhí, whose parents, according to Abu'l-Mahásin, were "Šábians belonging to the dependencies of Wásit" (كان آبوا من أعمال واسط من الصابئة), was probably a Mandæan. These Mandæans (the Šábians of the Koran) were called by the Muḥammadans المغتسله on account of their frequent ceremonial ablutions. They dwelt in the swamp-land between Bašra and Wásit. Their founder is said to have been Elkhasai (الحسيح, 'Ηλχασαί), and, as their name denotes, they were the remnant of an ancient Gnostical sect.¹ If Ma'rúf was not himself a Mandæan, he must at all events have been acquainted with the doctrine of these صابة البطائح. It is curious that among the sayings attributed to him we find (T.A. i, 272, 7): "Close your eyes, if all is (derived) from a male and female," which seems to refer to the doctrine of the Mandæans or Elkhasaites ذَكَرَ وَأُنْثَى (Fihrist, 340, 27).² Abú Sulaymán

¹ Mandâ and Mandâyâ answer to the Greek expressions γυνῶσις and γνωστικός (Brandt, *Die Mandäische Religion*, p. 167).

² Ma'rúf, as I understand him, means to say that, if the phenomenal universe is dualistic, we should close our eyes to it and regard only the Absolute Unity.

The words ذَكَرَ وَأُنْثَى appear to be connected with the fact that in the

al-Daránī was also a native of Wásit (Abu'l-Mahásin, i, 591), and we have seen that Dhu'l-Nún attached great importance to the theory of معرفت (γνώσις). The six passes (عُقَبَات) which, according to Ibráhím b. Adham, a man must traverse in order to attain the rank of the pious,¹ recall the seven gates, each guarded by its peculiar Archon, which the soul encounters on "the holy way" to salvation, and which are opened only to those who possess the γνώσις or mysterious knowledge. Later on, these Archons were allegorised into evil passions—lust, envy, and the like.² I have no doubt that Gnosticism, as modified by Jewish-Christian ideas and by Greek speculation, contributed a good deal to Šúfism, and that the two systems offer many striking analogies. The subject is one that would repay investigation. In the meantime this much is certain, that having regard to the historical environment in which the Šúfí theosophy sprang up, we cannot refer its origin either to India or to Persia, but must recognise it to be a product of the union between Greek thought and Oriental religion, and in particular of Neo-Platonism, Christianity, and Gnosticism. It is possible that two at least of these systems may have been influenced by Persian and Indian ideas, but this is a large question which has not yet been, and perhaps never can be, definitely settled. The direct influence of Indian ideas on Šúfism, though undeniably great, was posterior and secondary to the influence exerted by Greek and Syrian speculation.

The principal Šúfí Shaykhs who died between 250 and 300 A.H. are Sarí al-Saqatí († 253), Yahyá b. Mu'adh al-Rázi († 258), Abú Yazíd (Báyazid) al-Bistámí († 261), Abú Ḥafṣ al-Ḥaddád († *circa* 265), Ḥamdún al-Qaṣṣár († 271), Abú Sa'íd al-Kharráz († 277 or 286), Abú Ḥamza al-Baghdádí († 289), Sahl b. 'Abdullah al-Tustarí († 273,

Babylonian religion, which is probably the parent of Gnosticism, each god has his feminine complement, e.g. Anu and Anatu. This is a constant feature in Gnostical systems of emanation. Similarly, the Βουθός is often described as ἀρρενόθηλος, 'masculo-feminine.'

¹ Qushayrī, 9, 21 ; T.A. 100, 16.

² W. Anz, *Zur Frage nach dem Ursprung des Gnostizismus*, p. 17.

283, or 293), Abu'l-Ḥusayn al-Núrí († 295), Junayd of Baghdád († 297), 'Amr b. 'Uthmán al-Makkí († 291, 297, or 301), Abú 'Uthmán al-Hírí († 298), and Mimshád al-Dínawarí († 299). To examine in detail the doctrine taught by each of them would carry me far beyond the limits of a brief sketch. I will therefore conclude this paper with some account of the general development of Šúfism down to the end of the third century A.H., confining my attention, as before, to the features which stand out in prominent relief.

This development took place in two ways :—

- (1) Existing doctrine was amplified, elaborated, and systematised.
- (2) New doctrines and practices were introduced.

1. Šúfism, which was at first a form of religion adopted by individuals, and only communicated to a comparatively small circle of companions (*aṣḥáb*), gradually became an organised system, a school for saints, with rules of discipline and devotion which the novice (*muríd*) learned from his spiritual director (*pir*, *ustádh*), to whose guidance he submitted himself absolutely. Already in the third century it is increasingly evident that the typical Šúfí adept of the future will no longer be a solitary ascetic, shunning the sight of men, but a great Shaykh and divinely inspired teacher, who appears on ceremonial occasions attended by a numerous train of admiring disciples. The notion expressed in Báyzíd's saying, "If a man has no teacher (*ustádh*), his Imám is Satan" (Qushayrí, 213, 10), is probably connected with the well-known Shí'ite theory first enunciated by 'Abdullah b. Sabá; and Wellhausen's remark, "die Gottesverehrung der Schiiten war Menschenverehrung," may be applied with equal justice to the Persian Šúfís of a later age (cf., for example, the attitude of Jalálu'ddín Rúmí towards Shams-i Tabrízí). Divine favour and authority were claimed by the Šúfí theosophists from the very beginning. "Swear to God by me," said Ma'rúf al-Karkhí; and Dhu'l-

Nún declared that the true disciple should be more obedient to his master than to God Himself (T.A. i, 131, 7).

In the sayings of the Shaykhs of this period the tendency to codify and systematise is everywhere apparent. The 'Path' of the novice was marked out into a series of stages (T.A. i, 261, 9 sqq.), and different 'paths' were distinguished. Yahyá b. Mu'ádh al-Rázi († 258 A.H.) said: "When you see that a man inculcates good works, know that his path is piety; and when you see that he points to the Divine signs (*áyát*), know that his path is that of the *Abdál*¹; and when you see that he points to the bounties of God, know that his path is that of the lovers; and when you see that he is attached to praise of God (*dhikr*), know that his path is that of the gnostics."² Hamdún al-Qaṣṣár († 271 A.H.) founded in Níshápúr the sect of the Malámatís or Qaṣṣáris, who proved their sincerity and devotion to God by cloaking it under an affected libertinism.³

Sarí al-Saqatí († 253 A.H.) is said to have been the first who spoke in Baghdád concerning Divine realities (*haqá'iq*) and Unification (*tawḥíd*).⁴ The first to lecture on Súfism in public (بر منبر) was Yahyá b. Mu'ádh al-Rázi († 258 A.H.),⁵ and his example was followed in Baghdád by Abú Ḥamza al-Baghdadí († 289 A.H.).⁶ According to Jámí (*Nafahát*, 36, 4) the theory of Súfism was formulated and explained in writing by Junayd († 297 A.H.), who taught it only in private houses and in subterranean chambers (سردابها), whereas Shiblí († 334 A.H.) made it the subject of public discourse. From this we may conclude that the orthodox party, whom the accession of Mutawakkil (232 A.H.)

¹ The *Abdál* (Substitutes) form a particular class in the mysterious Súfi hierarchy, at the head of which stands the Qutb. According to Ibn Khaldún, they were derived from, and correspond to, the Nuqabá of the Shí'ites.

² T.A. i, 305, 21.

³ See *Nafahátu'l-Uns*, 8, 16; T.A. i, 319, 22 sqq., 333, 7 and 23. Other Súfi sects are the Tayfúriyán, the Kharráziyán, and the Núriyán, who followed Báyazid, Abú Sa'íd al-Kharráz, and Abú'l-Ḥusayn al-Núrí respectively.

⁴ T.A. i, 274, 9.

⁵ T.A. i, 299, 6.

⁶ Abú'l-Mahásin, ii, 47, 6 sqq.

re-established in power, treated the Šúfí mysticism with less intolerance than they displayed towards the liberal opinions of the Mu'tazilites. Dhu'l-Nún, however, was denounced as a *zindiq*, and was summoned to the presence of Mutawakkil, but a pious exhortation which he addressed to the Caliph secured his honourable dismissal.¹ Junayd himself was more than once accused of being a freethinker, and mention is made of an inquisition directed against the Šúfis (*mihnati Šúfiyán*) in Baghdád, in consequence of which Abú Sa'íd al-Kharráz († 286 A.H.) fled to Egypt.²

The Šúfis of the third and fourth centuries worked out a complete theory and practice of mystical religion, but they were not philosophers, and they took little interest in metaphysical problems, so that the philosophical terminology which later Šúfism borrowed, through Fárábí, Avicenna, and Ghazzálí, from the Neo-Platonists, does not concern us here. A few words may be said, however, regarding the symbolical language of the Šúfis.³ Traces of this appear very early. It is told of Dá'úd al-Tá'í († 165 A.H.) that a dervish saw him smiling, and asked, "Whence this cheerfulness, O Abú Sulaymán?" Dá'úd answered: "At dawn they gave me a wine which is called the wine of intimacy (*sharáb-i uns*); to-day I have made festival, and have abandoned myself to rejoicing."⁴ Love symbolism occurs in the sayings ascribed to Rábi'a († 135, 180, or 185 A.H.), in a passage already quoted from Abú Sulaymán al-Dárání († 215 A.H.), and thenceforward with increasing frequency. Hátim b. al-Ašamm († 237 A.H.) speaks of the four deaths of the Šúfí: white death = hunger, black death = endurance of injuries, red death = sincere self-mortification, green death = wearing a garment to which patches are always

¹ Ibn Khallikán, trans. by De Slane, vol. ii, p. 291.

² *Nafahátu'l-Uns*, 81, 16.

³ Ibn 'Atá († 309 A.H.) was asked why the Šúfis used strange and unusual expressions. He replied: "Forasmuch as this practice (i.e. Šúfism) is honoured by us, we were unwilling that any except Šúfis should be acquainted with it, and we did not wish to employ ordinary language. Therefore we invented a particular language" (T.A.).

⁴ T.A. i, 222, 2.

being added.¹ But the peculiar poetic imagery, which was afterwards developed by the famous Šúfī of Khurásán, Abú Sa'íd b. Abi'l-Khayr († 440 A.H.), is first found full-blown in the sayings of Báýazíd of Bistám († 261 A.H.). Yahyá b. Mu'ádh al-Rází wrote to Báýazíd: "I am intoxicated through having drunk deeply of the cup of His love," and Báýazíd replied: "Another has drunk the seas of heaven and earth, and is not yet satisfied, but his tongue comes forth and says, 'Is there no more?'"² Here are some striking examples of the same kind:—

"I went forth to the fields. Love had rained, and the earth was wet. My foot was sinking into Love, even as a man's foot sinks in clay."³

One day he was speaking of the Truth, and was sucking his lip and saying: "I am the wine-drinker and the wine and the cup-bearer."⁴

"Dost thou hear how there comes a voice from the brooks of running water? But when they reach the sea they are quiet, and the sea is neither augmented by their in-coming nor diminished by their out-going."⁵

"Desire is the capital of the Lovers' kingdom. In that capital there is set a throne of the torment of parting, and there is drawn a sword of the terror of separation, and there is laid on the hand of hope a branch of the narcissus of union; and every moment a thousand heads fall by that sword. And seven thousand years (said he) have passed, and that narcissus is still fresh and blooming: never has the hand of any hope attained thereto."⁶

2. As has been said, the germ, at any rate, of nearly all the characteristic Šúfī doctrines may be traced back to Dhu'l-Nún al-Miṣrī and his immediate predecessors. The idea of

¹ Qushayrī, 18, 8 from foot.

² Qushayrī, 171, 4 from foot.

³ T.A. i, 155, 9.

⁴ T.A. i, 159, 2.

⁵ T.A. i, 163, 7.

⁶ T.A. i, 166, 17.

ecstasy and self-annihilation was no doubt familiar to these early theosophists, but the doctrine, which became of vital importance in the subsequent history of Šúfism, is nowhere clearly stated by them. It was a Persian, the celebrated Báyazíd of Bistám, that first used the word *faná* denoting self-annihilation, and he may probably be regarded as the author of this doctrine.¹ Abú Yazíd Ṭayfúr b. 'Isá b. Ádam b. Surúshán² was born at Bistám, a town in the province of Qúmis situated near the south-eastern corner of the Caspian Sea. His grandfather was a Zoroastrian, and his master (*ustádh*) in Šúfism a Kurd.³ Báyazíd at first held the opinions of the *aṣḥábu'l-ra'y*, "but a saintship was revealed to him in which no positive religion (*madhhab*) appeared."⁴ If we can assume the genuineness of the sayings attributed to Báyazíd by Farídu'ddín 'Aṭṭár in the *Tadhkiratu'l-Awliyá* (i, 134-179), he was not only an antinomian pantheist of the most extravagant type—a precursor of Ḥusayn b. Manṣúr al-Ḥalláj—but also a singularly imaginative and profound thinker, not unworthy to be compared with men like 'Aṭṭár and Jalálu'ddín Rúmí. It is hard to say what proportion of the utterances collected by his biographers is fact and how much is fiction. 'Abdullah al-Anṣárí of Herát († 481 A.H.) asserts that many falsehoods have been fathered on Báyazíd, e.g. his alleged saying, "I went into Heaven and pitched my tent opposite the Throne of God."⁵ Out of this grew the story of his ascension (*Mi'ráj*), which is told at great length by 'Aṭṭár (T.A. i, 172-176). Ibn Khallikán describes him as an ascetic pure and simple, but the

¹ According to Jámí (*Nafahát*, 81, 4 from foot) Abú Sa'íd al-Kharráz († 286 A.H.) was the first that spoke concerning the theory of *faná u baqá*, i.e. death to self and life in God.

² So Ibn Khallikán, Qushayrî, and Jámí. Yáqút (sub voc. Bistám) names him Abú Yazíd Ṭayfúr b. 'Isá b. Sharwasán, and says that he must not be confused with Abú Yazíd Ṭayfúr b. 'Isá b. Ádam, who is known as al-Bistámí al-aṣghar.

³ The text of the *Nafahát* (62, penult. line) has گردی, but گردی is the correct reading.

⁴ *Nafahát*, 63, 1.

⁵ *Nafahātu'l-Uns*, 63, 1.

account of him given by Qushayrî, 'Attâr, and Jámî is confirmed by what we know of his race and Magian ancestry. Báyzíd, unless I am mistaken, became the legendary hero of Persian Šúfism just because he was in reality a thorough Persian and true representative of the religious aspirations of his countrymen. He it was who brought into Šúfism the extreme pantheistic ideas which even in Sásanian times were widely prevalent in Persia.¹ This pantheistic (Perso-Indian) element is as distinctively Oriental as the older theosophical tendency is distinctively Greek.²

I shall now translate some of the most characteristic sayings ascribed to Báyzíd, which illustrate (a) the doctrine of *faná*, (b) his uncompromising pantheism, (c) the poetical and imaginative colour of his thought.

- (a) Creatures are subject to 'states' (*aḥwál*), but the gnostic has no 'state,' because his vestiges are effaced and his essence is annihilated by the essence of another, and his traces are lost in another's traces.³

I went from God to God, until they cried from me in me, "O Thou I!"—i.e., I attained the stage of annihilation in God.⁴

Thirty years the high God was my mirror, now I am my own mirror—i.e., that which I was I am no more, for 'I' and 'God' is a denial of the Unity of God. Since I am no more, the high God is His own mirror. Lo, I say that God is the mirror of myself, for He speaks with my tongue and I have vanished.⁵

¹ Justi, *Gesch. des alten Persiens*, pp. 184 sqq. and 204 sqq.

² The monastic system of the Šúfîs was, no doubt, formed to some extent on Buddhistic models. In an interesting passage of the *Kitâbu'l-Ḥayawân*, Jâhîz († 255 A.H.) speaks of the رهبان الزنادقة, "monks of the zindiqs," who travel in pairs, never passing two nights in the same place, and observing vows of holiness, chastity, truth, and poverty; and he tells an anecdote concerning two of them who entered Aḥwâz (Baron V. Rosen in *Zapiski*, vi, 337).

³ Qushayrî, 166, 1.

⁴ T.A. i, 160, 13.

⁵ T.A. i, 160, 16.

Nothing is better for Man than to be without aught, having no asceticism, no theory, no practice. When he is without all, he is with all.¹

They asked, "When does a man know that he has attained real gnosis?" He said: "At the time when he becomes annihilated under the knowledge of God, and is made everlasting on the carpet of God, without self and without creature."²

- (b) Verily, I am God, there is no God except me, so worship me!³ Glory to me! how great is my majesty!⁴

I came forth from Báyazíd-ness as a snake from its skin. Then I looked. I saw that lover, beloved, and love are one, for in the world of unification all can be one.⁵ He was asked, "What is the '*ars̄h*'?" He said, "I am it." "What is the '*kursi*'?" "I am it." "What is the Tablet and the Pen?" "I am they."⁶

- (c) It is related that he was asked, "How didst thou gain this rank, and by what means didst thou win unto this station?" He answered: "One night in my boyhood I came forth from Bistám. The moon was shining, and everything was still. I saw a Presence beside which the eighteen thousand worlds appeared as an atom. Agitation fell upon me, and a mighty emotion overwhelmed me. I cried, 'O Lord! a court of this grandeur, and so empty! Works of this sublimity, and such loneliness!' Then a voice came from heaven, saying, 'The court is empty, not because none comes, but because We do not will; since it is not everyone with face unwashed that is worthy to enter this court.'"⁷

For twelve years I was the smith of my soul. I put it in the furnace of austerity and burned it in the fire of combat and laid it on the anvil of reproach and

¹ T.A. i, 162, 21.

² T.A. i, 168, 24.

³ T.A. i, 137, 6.

⁴ T.A. i, 140, 14.

⁵ T.A. i, 160, 11.

⁶ T.A. i, 171, 18.

⁷ T.A. i, 155, 20.

smote upon it with the hammer of blame, until I made of my soul a mirror. Five years I was the mirror of myself, and was ever polishing that mirror with divers sorts of worship and piety. Then, for a year, I gazed in contemplation. On my waist I saw a girdle¹ of pride and vanity and self-conceit, and reliance on devotion, and approbation of my works. I laboured for five years more, until that girdle became cut and I professed Islam anew. I looked and saw that all created things were dead. I pronounced four *takbirs* over them and returned from the funeral of them all, and without intrusion of creature, through God's help alone, I attained unto God.²

With the exception of Báyazíd and Abú Sa'íd al-Kharráz, the Šúfís of the third century keep the doctrine of *faná* in the background and seldom use the language of unguarded pantheism. They are anxious to harmonise Šúfism with Islam, to hold an even balance between the Law and the Truth. Of course they do not succeed in this, but the necessity is felt of maintaining a certain reserve. While Báyazíd and his followers, called Tayfúris (طيفوريان), spoke and acted as God-intoxicated men, the great majority of Šúfís at this time agreed with Junayd in preferring "the path of sobriety." The Koran and the Sunna were proclaimed to be the standard to which, not speculation only, but also spiritual feelings and states

¹ The girdle (*zunnár*) is the symbol of Zoroastrianism, i.e. of duality.

² T.A. i, 139, 5. It is instructive to compare this poetical description of the mystic's ascent with the Arabic version (Qushayrî, 56, penultimate line):

قال ابو يزيد كُنْتُ ثِنْتَيْ عَشْرَةَ سَنَةً حَدَادَ نَفْسِي وَخَمْسَ سَنِينَ
 كُنْتُ مَرَّآةً لِقَلْبِي وَسَنَةً أَنْظُرُ فِيهَا بَيْنَهُمَا فَاذَا فِي وَسْطَى زَنَاظِرَ ظَاهِرٍ
 فَعَمَلْتُ فِي قِطْعِهِ ثِنْتَيْ عَشْرَةَ سَنَةً ثُمَّ نَظَرْتُ فَاذَا فِي بَاطِنِي زَنَارٍ
 فَعَمَلْتُ فِي قِطْعِهِ خَمْسَ سَنِينَ أَنْظُرُ كَيْفَ أَقْطَعُهُ فَكُشِفَ لِي فَنَظَرْتُ
 إِلَى الْخَلْقِ فَرَأَيْتَهُمْ مَوْتَى فَكَبَّرْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَرْبَعَ تَكْبِيرَاتٍ

must conform.¹ Great stress was laid on the ascetic, moral, and devotional aspects of Šúfism. "Our principles," said Sahl b. 'Abdullah al-Tustarí, "are six: to hold fast by the Book of God, to model ourselves upon the Apostle (may God bless him and his family and grant them peace!), to eat only what is lawful, to refrain from hurting people even though they hurt us, to avoid forbidden things, and to fulfil obligations without delay."² "We derived Šúfism," said Junayd, "not from disputation, but from hunger and abandonment of the world and the breaking of familiar ties and the renunciation of what men account good."³ On the other hand, it was recognised that when the Šúfí, after painfully mounting the steps of the mystic ladder, at last reached the summit of Divine knowledge, all his words and actions were holy and in harmony with the spirit of the Divine law, however they might seem to conflict with its letter. Hence "the hypocrisy of gnostics is better than the sincerity of neophytes."⁴

To recapitulate the main points which I have endeavoured to bring out—

- (1) Šúfism, in the sense of 'mysticism' and 'quietism,' was a natural development of the ascetic tendencies which manifested themselves within Islam during the Umayyad period.
- (2) This asceticism was not independent of Christian influence, but on the whole it may be called a Muḥammadan product, and the Šúfism which grew out of it is also essentially Muḥammadan.
- (3) Towards the end of the second century A.H. a new current of ideas began to flow into Šúfism. These ideas, which are non-Islamic and theosophical in character, are discernible in the sayings of Ma'rúf al-Karkhí († 200 A.H.).

¹ See, for example, Qushayrî, 17, 4 from foot = *Nafahât*, 43, 3 from foot; T.A. 329, 2; Qushayrî, 22, 10 sqq.

² T.A. i, 261, 4.

³ Qushayrî, 21, penultimate line.

⁴ Qushayrî, 112, 18.

- (4) During the first half of the third century A.H. the new ideas were greatly developed and became the dominating element in Šúfiism.
- (5) The man who above all others gave to the Šúfi doctrine its permanent shape was Dhu'l-Nún al-Miṣrī († 245 A.H.).
- (6) The historical environment in which this doctrine arose points clearly to Greek philosophy as the source from which it was derived.
- (7) Its origin must be sought in Neo-Platonism and Gnosticism.
- (8) As the theosophical element in Šúfiism is Greek, so the extreme pantheistic ideas, which were first introduced by Abú Yazíd (Báyazíd) al-Biṣṭámí († 261 A.H.), are Persian or Indian. The doctrine of *faná* (self-annihilation) is probably derived from the Buddhistic Nirvana.
- (9) During the latter part of the third century A.H. Šúfiism became an organised system, with teachers, pupils, and rules of discipline; and continual efforts were made to show that it was based on the Koran and the Traditions of the Prophet.

II.

The following list of definitions, which occur in the *Risála* of Qushayrī, the *Tadhkiratu'l-Awliyá* of Faridu'ddín 'Aṭṭár, and the *Nafahátu'l-Uns* of Jámí, is tolerably complete, but I have omitted a few of comparatively modern date and minor interest, as well as several anonymous definitions to which no date can be assigned. It will be seen that from the first definition, by Ma'rúf al-Karkhí († 200 A.H.), to the last, by Abú Sa'íd b. Abi'l-Khayr († 440 A.H.), a period of almost two and a half centuries comes into reckoning. The definitions are of all sorts—theosophical, pantheistic, ethical, epigrammatic, etymological. No one nowadays is likely to dispute the derivation of 'Šúfi' from *šúf* (wool), but these

definitions show very plainly that such was not the view taken by the Ṣúfis themselves, for against a single case in which the word is connected with *ṣúf* there are twelve which allude to its supposed derivation from *ṣafá* (purity). Some definitions occur only in Arabic, others only in Persian, and a large number in both languages. I have always given the Arabic version whenever I found it in Qushayrī's *Risála* or in the *Nafahātu'l-Uns*. Doubtless it would be possible to discover an Arabic original for most of the Persian definitions preserved in the *Tadhkiratu'l-Awliyá*, if similar works in Arabic were thoroughly searched.

1. Ma'rúf al-Karkhí († 200 A.H.):

التصوّف الأخذ بالحقائق واليأس ممّا في أيدي الخلائق

Taṣawwuf is: to grasp the verities and to renounce that which is in the hands of men. (Qushayrī, 149, 1; T.A. i, 272, 4.)

2. Abú Sulaymán al-Dárání († 215 A.H.):

تصوّف آنست که بروی افعال می رود که جز خدای نداند و بیوسته با خدای بون جنانگ جز خدای نداند

Taṣawwuf is this: that actions should be passing over the Ṣúfí (i.e. being done upon him) which are known to God only, and that he should always be with God in a way that is known to God only. (T.A. i, 233, 19.)

3. Bishr al-Háfí († 227 A.H.):

صوفی آنست که دل صافی دارد با خدای

The Ṣúfí is he that keeps a pure heart towards God. (T.A. i, 112, 13.)

4. Dhu'l-Nún († 245 A.H.):

سئل ذو النون عن التصوّف فقال هم قوم آثروا الله عز وجل على كل شيء فأثّرهم الله عز وجل على كل شيء

He was asked concerning Taṣawwuf, and he said: "They (the Ṣúfis) are folk who have preferred God to everything, so that God has preferred them to everything." (Qushayrī, 149, 20; T.A. i, 133, 10.)

5. Dhu'l-Nún :

صوفی آن بود که چون بگوید نطقش حقائق حال وی بود یعنی
چیزی نگوید که او آن نباشد و چون خاموش باشد معاملتش معبر
حال وی بود و بقطع علایق حال وی ناطق بود

The Ṣúfī is such that, when he speaks, his language is the essence of his state, that is, he speaks no thing without being that thing; and when he is silent his behaviour interprets his state and is eloquent of the detachedness of his state. (T.A. i, 126, 13.)

6. Abú Turáb al-Nakhshabí († 245 A.H.) :

الصوفی لا یکدره شیء ویصفو به کل شیء

The Ṣúfī is not defiled by anything, and everything is purified by him. (Qushayrī, 149, 19.)

7. Sarí al-Saqaṭí († 257 A.H.) :

التصوّف اسمٌ لثلاث معانٍ وهو الذی لا یطفئ نور معرفته نور ورعه
ولا یتکلم بباطن فی علم یتقضه علیه ظاهر الكتاب او السنّة ولا تحمله
الکرامات علی هتک استار محارم الله

Taṣawwuf is a name including three ideas. The Ṣúfī is he whose light of divine knowledge (gnosis) does not extinguish the light of his piety; he does not utter esoteric doctrine which is contradicted by the exterior sense of the Koran and the Sunna; and the miracles vouchsafed to him do not cause him to violate the holy ordinances of God. (Qushayrī, 12, 1; T.A. i, 282, 20.)

8. Abú Ḥafṣ al-Ḥaddád († *circa* 265 A.H.) :

تصوّف همه ادب است

Taṣawwuf is wholly discipline. (T.A. i, 331, 6.)

9. Sahl b. 'Abdullah al-Tustarí († 283 A.H.) :

الصوفی من یری دمه هدرًا ومملکة مباحًا

The Ṣúfī is he that regards his blood as shed with impunity and his property as lawful prey. (Qushayrī, 149, 9.)

10. Sahl b. 'Abdullah al-Tustarī :

صوفی آن بود که صافی شود از کدر و بُر شود از فِگرو در قرب
خدای منقطع شود از بشر و یکسان شود در چشم او خاک و زر

The Ṣúfī is he that is purged of defilement and is filled with meditations, and in the vicinity of God is cut off from mankind; and earth and gold are equal in his eyes. (T.A. i, 264, 1.)¹

11. Sahl b. 'Abdullah al-Tustarī :

تصوّف اندک خوردن است و با خدای آرام گرفتن و از خلق
گریختن

Taşawwuf is: to eat little, and to take rest with God, and to flee from men. (T.A. i, 264, 3.)

12. Abú Sa'íd al-Kharráz († 286 A.H.):

برسیدند از تصوّف گفت آنست که صافی بود از خداوند خویش
و بُر بود از انوار و در عین لذّت بود از ذکر

They asked concerning Taşawwuf. He said: "The Ṣúfī is made pure by his Lord, and is filled with splendours, and is in the quintessence of delight from praise of God." (T.A.)

13. Sumnún al-Muhibb († before 297 A.H.):²

سئل سمنون عن التصوّف فقال أن لا تملك شيئاً ولا يملكك شيء ۞

¹ The Arabic original is given by Suhrawardī in the '*Awārifu'l-Ma'ārif*:
الصوفی من صفا من الكدر وامتلا من الفكر وانقطع الى الله من
البشر واستوى عنده الذهب والمدر

² According to Zakariyyā al-Anṣarī († 926 A.H.), who wrote a commentary on Qushayrī's *Risāla*, سمنون is generally pronounced Sumnún. This saying is attributed to Ruwaym in the *Nafahāt*, p. 105, last line.

Sumnún was asked concerning Taṣawwuf. He answered:
 “It is this, that thou shouldst possess nothing
 and that nothing should possess thee.” (Qushayrī,
 148, 6 from foot.)

14. ‘Amr b. ‘Uthmán al-Makkí († 291 A.H.):

سئل عمرو بن عثمان المكي عن التصوّف فقال أن يكون العبد في
 كل وقت مشغولاً بما هو أولى به في الوقت

‘Amr b. ‘Uthmán al-Makkí was asked concerning
 Taṣawwuf. He said: “A man should always be
 occupied with that which is most suitable to him
 at the time.” (Qushayrī, 148, 8 from foot.)¹

15. Abu’l-Ḥusayn al-Núrí († 295 A.H.):

نعت الصوفيّ السكون عند عدم والايتار عند الوجود

It is the attribute of the Ṣúfī to be at rest when he
 has nothing, and unselfish when he finds anything.
 (Qushayrī, 149, 9.)²

16. Abu’l-Ḥusayn al-Núrí:

صوفيان آن قوم اند كه جان ايشان از كدورت بشریت آزاد
 گشته است و از آفت نفس صافی شده و از هوا خلاص یافته تا در
 صفّ اوّل و درجۀ اعلیٰ با حق بیارامیده اند و از غیر او رمیده نه
 مالک بودند و نه مملوكت

¹ Cf. Qushayrī, 36, 21: يقولون الصوفيّ ابن وقته يريدون بذلك أنّه “مشتغل بما هو أولى به في الحال
 time,” meaning thereby that he occupies himself with what is most suitable to
 him at the moment.” In other words, he must let himself be a passive instrument
 of the Divine energy.

² Or, “to be at rest when he is non-existent, and to prefer (non-existence)
 when he is existent.” Probably وجود and عدم are not used here solely in
 their philosophical sense.

The Ṣúfis are they whose souls have become free from the defilement of humanity and pure from the taint of self, and have obtained release from lust, so that they are at rest with God in the first rank and in the highest degree, and having fled from all besides Him they are neither masters nor slaves. (T.A.)

17. Abu'l-Ḥusayn al-Núrí :

صوفی آن بون که هیچیز در بند او نبون و او در بند هیچیز نشون

The Ṣúfi is he to whom nothing is attached, and who does not become attached to anything. (T.A.)

18. Abu'l-Ḥusayn al-Núrí :

تصوّف نه رسوم است و نه علوم لیکن اخلاقی است یعنی اگر رسم بودی بمجاهده بدست آمذی و اگر علم بودی بتعلیم حاصل شدی بلک اخلاقی است که تَخَلَّقُوا بِأَخْلَاقِ اللَّهِ وَبِخُلُقِ خَدَای بیرون آمذن نه برسوم دست دهد و نه بعلوم

Taṣawwuf is not a system composed of rules or sciences, but it is morals: i.e., if it were a rule it could be made one's own by strenuous exertion, and if it were a science it could be acquired by instruction; but, on the contrary, it is morals—*form yourselves on the moral nature of God*; and it is impossible to come forth to the moral nature of God either by means of rules or by means of sciences. (T.A.)

19. Abu'l-Ḥusayn al-Núrí :

تصوّف آزادی است و جوانمردی و ترک تکلف و سخاوت

Taṣawwuf is freedom, and generosity, and absence of self-constraint, and liberality. (T.A.)

20. Abu'l-Ḥusayn al-Núrí :

تصوّف ترک جملة نصیهاء نفس است برای نصیب حق

Taṣawwuf is, to renounce all selfish gains in order to gain the Truth. (T.A.)

21. Abu'l-Ḥusayn al-Nūrī :

تَصَوَّفُ دُشْمَنِي دُنْيَا اسْتِ وَدُوسْتِي مَوْلِي

Taṣawwuf is hatred of the world and love of the Lord.
(T.A.)

22. Junayd al-Baghdādī († 297 A.H.) :

هُوَ أَنْ يُمِيتَكَ الْحَقُّ عَنْكَ وَيُحْيِيكَ بِهِ

It (Taṣawwuf) is this: that the Truth (i.e. God) should make thee die from thyself and should make thee live in Him. (Qushayrī, 148, 19.)

23. Junayd :

هُوَ أَنْ تَكُونَ مَعَ اللَّهِ بِلاَ عِلَاقَةٍ

It is this: to be with God without attachment (to aught else). (Qushayrī, 148, 4 from foot.)

24. Junayd :

التَّصَوَّفُ عُنُوةٌ لَا صَلَاحَ فِيهَا

Taṣawwuf is violence: there is no peace in it.
(Qushayrī, 149, 5.)¹

25. Junayd :

هُمْ أَهْلُ بَيْتٍ وَاحِدٍ لَا يَدْخُلُ فِيهِمْ غَيْرُهُمْ

They (the Ṣūfīs) are one family: no stranger enters among them. (Qushayrī, 149, 5.)

26. Junayd :

التَّصَوَّفُ ذِكْرٌ مَعَ اجْتِمَاعٍ وَوَجْدٌ مَعَ اسْتِمَاعٍ وَعَمَلٌ مَعَ اتِّبَاعٍ

Taṣawwuf is praise of God with concentration (of thought), and ecstasy connected with hearing (of

¹ Cf. Ruwaym's saying: (read *تَنَاقَرُوا*) *مَا تَنَاقَرُوا بِخَيْرٍ* ما تنال الصوفية بخير

فانذا اصطالحوا فلا خير فيهم (Qushayrī, 149, 17), the meaning of which is explained by 'Abdullah al-Anṣārī in the *Nafaḥāt*, 84, 5 sqq.

the Koran, Traditions, or the like), and practice accompanied with conformity (to the Koran and the Sunna). (Qushayrî, 149, 6.)

27. Junayd :

الصوفى كالأرض يُطرحُ عليها كلُّ قبيحٍ ولا يخرج منها إلا كلُّ مليمٍ

The Ṣūfî is like the earth, on which every foul thing is thrown and from which only fair things come forth. (Qushayrî, 149, 6.)

28. Junayd :

انه كالأرض يطوها البر والفاجر والسحاب يُظلل كلَّ شىءٍ وكالقطر يسقى كلَّ شىءٍ

Verily, he (the Ṣūfî) is like the earth which is trodden by the pious and the wicked, and like the clouds which cast a shadow over everything, and like the rain which waters everything. (Qushayrî, 149, 7.)

29. Junayd :

تصوّف اصطفا است هرکه گزیده شد از ما سوى الله او صوفى است

Taṣawwuf is : to be chosen for purity. Whoever is thus chosen (and made pure) from all except God is a Ṣūfî. (T.A.)

30. Junayd :

صوفى آنست كسى دل او جون دل ابراهيم سلامت يافته بود از دنيا و بجای آرندۀ فرمان خدای بود و تسلیم او تسلیم اسمعیل و اندوه او اندوه داود و فقر او فقر عیسی و صبر او صبر ایوب و شوق او شوق موسی در وقت مناجات و اخلاص او اخلاص محمد صلی الله علیه وعلی آله وسلم

The Ṣūfî is he whose heart, like the heart of Abraham, has found salvation from the world and is fulfilling

God's commandment; his resignation is the resignation of Ishmael; his sorrow is the sorrow of David; his poverty is the poverty of Jesus; his longing is the longing of Moses in the hour of communion; and his sincerity is the sincerity of Muḥammad—God bless him and his family and grant them peace! (T.A.)

31. Junayd :

تصوّف نعتی است که اقامت بنده در آنست گفتند نعت
حق است یا نعت خلق گفت حقیقتش نعت حق است
ورسمش نعت خلق

"Taṣawwuf is an attribute wherein man abides." They said, "Is it an attribute of God or of His creatures?" He answered: "Its essence is an attribute of God and its system is an attribute of mankind." (T.A.)

32. Junayd :

برسیدند از ذات تصوّف گفت بر تو بان که ظاهرش بگیری و از
ذاتش نبُرسی که مستم کردن بروی بود

They asked about the essence of Taṣawwuf. He said: "Do thou lay hold of its exterior and ask not concerning its essence, for that were to do violence to it." (T.A.)

33. Junayd :

صوفیان آنند که قیام ایشان بخداوند است از آنجا که نداند الا او
The Ṣūfīs are they who subsist by God in such sort that none knoweth but only He. (T.A.)

34. Junayd :

تصوّف صافی کردن دلست از مراجعت خِلْقَت و مفارقت از
اخلاق طبیعت و فرو میرانیدن صفات بشریّت و دور بودن از
دواعی نفسانی و فروز آمدن بر صفات روحانی و بلند شدن بعلم

حقیقی و بکار داشتن آنچه اولیترست إلی الابد و نصیحت کردن
جمله ائمت و وفا بجای آوردن بر حقیقت و متابعت بیغمبر کردن
در شریعت

Taşawwuf is : to purify the heart from the recurrence of inborn weakness, and to take leave of one's natural characteristics, and to extinguish the attributes of humanity, and to hold aloof from sensual temptations, and to dwell with the spiritual attributes, and to mount aloft by means of the Divine sciences, and to practise that which is eternally the best, and to bestow sincere counsel on the whole people, and faithfully to observe the Truth, and to follow the Prophet in respect of the Law.¹ (T.A.)

35. Mimshád al-Dínawarí († 299 A.H.) :

تصوّف صفای اسرار است و عمل کردن بذآنچه رضای جبار است
و صحبت داشتن با خلق بی اختیار است

Taşawwuf is purity of heart, and to do what is pleasing to God Almighty, and to have no personal volition although you mix with men. (T.A.)

36. Mimshád al-Dínawarí :

تصوّف توانگری نمودنست و مجهولی گزیدن که خلقت ندانند
و دست بد داشتن از چیزی که بکار نیاید

Taşawwuf is : to make a show of wealth,² and to prefer being unknown, that people may not recognise thee, and to abstain from everything useless. (T.A.)

37. Abú Muḥammad Ruwaym († 303 A.H.) :

سئل رُوَیْم عن التصوّف فقال استرسال النفس مع الله تعالى علی
ما یرید

¹ This definition is ascribed by Sha'rání (*Lawdqiḥ*, p. 160) to Abú 'Abdullah b. Khafif.

² I.e. for fear of becoming known as a dervish. It is told of Ruwaym that "towards the end of his life he hid himself among the rich, but thereby he was not veiled from God."

Ruwaym was asked concerning Taṣawwuf. He replied :
 “It is the self-abandonment of the soul with God according to His will.” (Qushayrī, 148, fifth line from foot.)

38. Ruwaym :

التَّصَوُّفُ مَبْنِيٌّ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ خِصَالٍ التَّمَسُّكُ بِالْفَقْرِ وَالْإِفْتِقَارِ وَالتَّحَقُّقُ
 بِالْبَذْلِ وَالْإِثَارِ وَتَرْكُ التَّعَرُّضِ وَالْإِخْتِيَارِ

Taṣawwuf is based on three qualities : a tenacious attachment to poverty and indigence ; a profound sense of sacrifice and renunciation ; and absence of self-obtrusion and personal volition. (Qushayrī, 148, last line.)

39. ‘Alī b. Sahl al-Isfahānī († 307 A.H.) :

التَّصَوُّفُ التَّبَرُّى عَمَّنْ دُونَهُ وَالتَّخَلَّى عَمَّنْ سِوَاهُ

Taṣawwuf is : to become quit of all persons save Him, and to make one's self clear of others except Him. (*Nafahātu'l-Uns*, 116, 1.)

40. Ḥusayn b. Mansūr al-Ḥallāj († 309 A.H.) :

سُئِلَ عَنِ الصُّوفِيِّ فَقَالَ وَحْدَانِيَّ الذَّاتَ لَا يَقْبَلُهُ أَحَدٌ وَلَا يَقْبَلُ أَحَدًا

He was asked concerning the Ṣūfī, and he answered :
 “One essentially unique ; none turns towards him, nor does he turn towards anyone.” (Qushayrī, 148, 21.)

41. Abū Muḥammad al-Jurayrī († 311 A.H.) :

سُئِلَ أَبُو مُحَمَّدٍ الْجُرَيْرِيُّ عَنِ التَّصَوُّفِ فَقَالَ الدَّخُولُ فِي كُلِّ خُلُقٍ
 سُنِّيٌّ وَالْخُرُوجُ مِنْ كُلِّ خُلُقٍ دِنِيٌّ

Abū Muḥammad al-Jurayrī was asked concerning Taṣawwuf. He said : “It is to enter into every lofty disposition and to go forth from every low disposition.” (Qushayrī, 148, 16.)

42. Abú Muḥammad al-Jurayrí :

التصوّف مراقبة الاحوال ولزوم الأدب

Taṣawwuf is : to be observant (of God) in all circumstances and to be constant in self - discipline. (Qushayrí, 149, 18.)

43. Abú 'Amr al-Dimashqí († 320 A.H.) :

التصوّف رؤية الكون بعين النقص بل غُضَّ الطرف عن كلّ ناقص
بمشاهدة من هو منزّه عن كلّ نقص

Taṣawwuf is : to behold the imperfection of the phenomenal world, nay, to close the eye to everything imperfect in contemplation of Him who is remote from all imperfection. (*Nafahātu'l - Uns*, 175, 14.)

44. Abú Bakr al-Kattání († 322 A.H.) :

التصوّف خُلُقٌ فمن زاد عليك في الخُلُقِ فقد زاد عليك في الصفاء

Taṣawwuf is a good disposition : he that exceeds thee in goodness of disposition has exceeded thee in purity of heart. (Qushayrí, 149, 10.)¹

45. Abú Bakr al-Kattání :

تصوّف صفوة است و مشاهدة

Taṣawwuf is purity and spiritual vision. (T.A.)

46. Abú Bakr al-Kattání :

صوفی کسی است که طاعت او نزدیک او جنایت بود که از آن
استغفار باید کرد

The Súfí is he that regards his devotion as a crime for which it behoves him to ask pardon of God. (T.A.)

¹ In the T.A. this definition is rendered: تصوّف همه خُلُق است

هرکرا خُلُق بیشتر تصوّف بیشتر

47. Abú 'Alí al-Rúdhbá'í († 322 A.H.):

التَّصَوُّفُ الْإِنَاخَةُ عَلَى بَابِ الْحَبِيبِ وَإِنْ طُرِدَ عَنْهُ

Taṣawwuf is: to alight and abide at the Beloved's door, even though one is driven away therefrom. (Qushayrī, 149, 11.)

48. Abú 'Alí al-Rúdhbá'í:

وَقَالَ أَيْضًا صَفْوَةُ الْقُرْبِ بَعْدَ كَدِّ دَوْرَةِ الْبُعْدِ

And he said also: "It is the purity of nearness (to God) after the defilement of farness." (Qushayrī, 149, 12.)

49. Abú 'Alí al-Rúdhbá'í:—

صُوفِي أَنْسَتْ كِه صُوفِ بُوْشْدِ بَصْفَا وَ بَجْشَانْدِ نَفْسِ رَا طَعْمِ جَفَا
و بِيْنْدَارْزِ دَنْيَا رَا اَزْ بَسِ قَفَا وَ سَلُوكِ كَنْدِ طَرِيقِ مُصْطَفَا

The Ṣūfī is he that wears wool with purity of heart, and makes his 'self' taste the food of maltreatment, and casts the world behind his back, and travels in the path of Muṣṭafá.¹ (T.A.)

50. 'Abdullah b. Muḥammad al-Murta'ish († 328 A.H.).

اَزْ وِی بَرَسِیدَنْدِ كِه تَصَوُّفِ چِیْسَتْ گِفْتِ اِشْكَالِ وَ تَلْمِیْسِ وَ كَتْمَانِ

They asked him, "What is Taṣawwuf?" He replied, "It is ambiguity and deception and concealment." (*Nafahātu'l-Uns*, 230, last line.)

51. 'Abdullah b. Muḥammad al-Murta'ish:

صُوفِ أَنْسَتْ كِی صَافِی شُودِ اَزْ جَمْلَةً بَلَاهَا وَ غَایِبِ گَرْدَنْ اَزْ جَمْلَةً
عَطَاها

The Ṣūfī is he that becomes pure from all tribulations and absent (in spirit) from all gifts. (T.A.)

¹ Muṣṭafá, i.e. the Chosen One = the Prophet Muḥammad. This saying, as quoted here, occurs in the Supplement to the T.A. It is also found (with omission of the final clause) in the body of that work, where it is ascribed to Abú 'Abdullah b. Khafif († 331 A.H.).

52. Abu'l-Hasan al-Muzayyin († 328 A.H.):

التصوّف الانقياد للحق

Taṣawwuf is, to let one's self be led to the Truth.
(Qushayrī, 149, 18.)

53. Abū 'Abdullah b. Khafīf († 331 A.H.¹):

تصوّف صبرست در تحت مجاری اقدار و فرا گرفتن از دست
جتار و قطع کردن بیابان و کوهسار

Taṣawwuf is patience under the events of destiny, and acceptance from the hand of Almighty God, and travelling over desert and highland. (T.A.)

54. Abū Bakr al-Wāsiṭī († after 320 A.H.):

صوف آنست که سخن از اعتبار گوید و ستر او منور شده باشد بفکرت

The Ṣūfī is he that speaks from consideration, and whose inmost heart has become illuminated by reflection. (T.A.)

55. Abū Bakr al-Shiblī († 334 A.H.):

التصوّف الجلوس مع الله بلا هم

Taṣawwuf is, to sit with God without care.² (Qushayrī, 149, 13.)

56. Abū Bakr al-Shiblī:

الصوفى منقطع عن المخلوق متصل بالحق كقوله تعالى وَأَصْطَفَيْتَكَ
لِنَفْسِي قطعته عن كلّ غير ثم قال لَنْ تَرَانِي

The Ṣūfī is separated from mankind and united with God, as God hath said, "*And I chose thee for myself*,"³ i.e. He separated him from all others; then he said, "*Thou shalt not see Me*."⁴ (Qushayrī, 149, 15.)

¹ So Jāmī. Qushayrī gives the date of his death as 391 A.H.

² In the *Nafahāt*, 90, 4 from foot, this definition is attributed to Junayd.

³ Koran, xx, 43.

⁴ Koran, vii, 139.

57. Abú Bakr al-Shiblí :

التصوّف برقّة مُحرّقة

Taşawwuf is a burning flash of lightning. (Qushayrî, 149, 16.)

58. Abú Bakr al-Shiblí :

الصوفيّة اطفالٌ في حجر الحقّ

The Şúfîs are children in the bosom of God. (Qushayrî, 149, 16.)

59. Abú Bakr al-Shiblí :

هو عِصْمَةٌ عن رؤية الكون

It (Taşawwuf) is, to be guarded from seeing the phenomenal world. (Qushayrî, 149, 16.)

60. Abú Bakr al-Shiblí :

تصوّف آنست که جنان باشد که آن زمان که بوجود نیامده بود

Taşawwuf is this: that the Şúfî should be even as he was before he came into existence. (T.A.)

61. Abú Bakr al-Shiblí :

تصوّف ضبط قُوى است و مراعات انفاس

Taşawwuf is control of the faculties and observance of the breaths.¹ (T.A.)

62. Abú Bakr al-Shiblí :

صوفى وقتى صوفى باشد که جمله خلایق را عیال خود بیند

The Şúfî is a true Şúfî only when he regards all mankind as his own family. (T.A.)

¹ The practice of holding the breath, like that of carrying rosaries (Qushayrî, 22, 19), seems to be of Indian origin (cf. Von Kremer, *Culturgeschichtliche Streifzüge*, p. 48 sqq.). Among the sayings of Bāyazīd al-Bistāmī we find, "For gnostics, worship is observance of the breaths" (T.A. i, 162, 10).

63. Abú Sa'íd Ibnu'l-A'rábí († 340 A.H.):

التَّصَوُّفُ كُلُّهُ تَرْكُ الْفُضُولِ

The whole of the Taṣawwuf consists in abandonment of superfluities. (*Nafahātu'l-Uns*, 248, 2.)

64. Abu'l-Ḥasan al-Búshanjī († 347 A.H.):

برسیذند از تصوّف گفت کوتاهی امل است و مداومت بر عمل

They asked concerning Taṣawwuf. He answered:
"Deficiency of hope and incessant devotion to work." (T.A.)

65. Ja'far al-Khuldí († 348 A.H.):

تصوّف طرح نفس است در عبودیت و بیرون آمدن از بشریت

و نظر کردن بخدای بکلیت

Taṣawwuf is, to throw one's self into servility and to come forth from humanity, and to look towards God with entirety. (T.A.)

66. Abú 'Amr b. al-Najíd († 366 A.H.):

تصوّف صبر کردنست در تحت امر و نهی

Taṣawwuf is to be patient under commandment and prohibition. (T.A.)

67. Abú 'Abdullah al-Rúdhbárí († 369 A.H.):

التَّصَوُّفُ تَرْكُ التَّكَلُّفِ وَاسْتِعْمَالُ التَّطَرُّفِ وَحَذْفُ التَّشَرُّفِ

Taṣawwuf is, to renounce ceremony, and to use an affected elegance,¹ and to discard vainglory. (*Nafahātu'l-Uns*, 300, 11.)

68. Abú Muhammad al-Rásibí († 367 A.H.):

لا يكون الصوفي صوفيًا حتى لا يُقَلِّه أَرْضٌ ولا يُظِلَّه سَمَاءٌ ولا يكون

له قبول عند الخلق ويكون مرجعه في كل الأحوال الى الحق تعالى

¹ Elegance was a characteristic of the *zindiqs*. Some Súfis, e.g. the *Malámatis*, pretended to be *zindiqs* in order to escape the reputation of holiness.

The Ṣúfí is not a Ṣúfí until no earth supports him, and no heaven shadows him ; until he finds no favour with mankind ; and until his resort in all circumstances is to the most high God. (*Nafahātu'l-Uns*, 304, 8.)

69. Abu'l-Ḥasan al-Ḥuṣrî († 371 A.H.) :

[خلیفه] گفت تصوّف چه باشد گفت آنکه از جهان بدون حق
بهیچ چیز آرام نگیرد و نیاساید و آنکه کار خود با او گذارد که
خداوندست و او خود بقضای خویش توّلّا میکند فما ذا بعد الحقّ
آلّا الضلال چون خداوند را یافت بهیچ چیز دیگر باز ننگرد

The Caliph said, "What is Taṣawwuf?" He answered :
"It is this, that the Ṣúfí does not take rest or comfort in anything in the world except God, and that he commits his affairs to Him who is the Lord and who Himself oversees that which He has predestined. What remains after God unless error? When he has found the Lord, he does not again regard any other thing." (T.A.)

70. Abu'l-Ḥasan al-Ḥuṣrî :

صوفی آنست که چون از آفات فانی گشت با سرّ آن نشود
و چون روی فرا حق کرد از آن نیفتد و حوادث روزگار را درو اثر نباشد

The Ṣúfí is he that, having once become dead to (worldly) taints, does not go back thereto, and having once turned his face Godward, does not relapse therefrom ; and passing events in no wise affect him. (T.A.)

71. Abu'l-Ḥasan al-Ḥuṣrî :

صوفی آنست که وجد او وجود او است و صفات او حجاب
اوست یعنی من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه

The Ṣúfí is he whose ecstasy is his (real) existence, and whose attributes are his veil, i.e., if a man knows himself, he knows his Lord. (T.A.)

72. Abu'l-Ḥasan al-Ḥuṣrī :

صوفی آنست که او را موجود نیابند بعد از وجود خویش

The Ṣūfī is he whom they do not find existent after their own existence.¹ (T.A.)

73. Abu'l-Ḥasan al-Ḥuṣrī :

تصوّف صفای دلست از کدورت مخالقات

Taṣawwuf is, to have a heart pure from the defilement of oppositions. (T.A.)

74. Abú 'Uthmán al-Maghribí († 373 A.H.) :

تصوّف قطع علائق است ورفض خلائق و اتّصال حقایق

Taṣawwuf is severance of ties and rejection of created things and union with the (Divine) realities. (T.A.)

75. Abu'l-'Abbás al-Naháwandí († about 400 A.H.) :

تصوّف پنهان داشتن حالست و جاه بذل کردن بر برادران

Taṣawwuf is, to keep one's state hidden and to bestow honour on one's brethren. (T.A.)

76. Abu'l-Ḥasan al-Khurqání († 425 A.H.) :

صوفی بمرقع و سجّاده صوفی نبود و صوفی برسوم و عادات صوفی نبود

صوفی آن بود که نبود

The Ṣūfī is not a Ṣūfī in virtue of patched cloak and prayer-carpet, and the Ṣūfī is not a Ṣūfī by rules and customs ; the true Ṣūfī is he that is nothing. (*Nafahātu'l-Uns*, 337, 6.)

77. Abu'l-Ḥasan al-Khurqání :

صوفی روزی بود که بآفتابش حاجت نبود و شبی که بماء

و ستاره اش حاجت نبود و نیستی است که بهستیش حاجت نبود

¹ I.e. he only exists in God.

The Šúfí is a day that needs no sun, and a night that needs no moon or star, and a not-being that needs no being. (*Nafahātu'l-Uns*, 337, 7.)

78. Abú Sa'íd b. Abi'l-Khayr († 440 A.H.):

شیخ را پرسیدند که تصوّف چیست گفت آنچه در سر داری
بنهی و آنچه در کف داری بدهی و آنچه بر تو آید مجبی

They asked the Shaykh, "What is Taṣawwuf?" He said: "To lay aside what thou hast in thy head, to give what thou hast in thy hand, and not to recoil from whatsoever befalls thee." (*Nafahātu'l-Uns*, 345, 12.)