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On the "Path of Love" A Journey with

by Omid Safi

Introduction and Positioning

There is a strong tendency among many scholars of Islam, and other observers and scholars, to treat the legacy of Islamic thought through the trite lens of a "Golden Age," followed by the inevitable "decline." This favoring of "Classical" Islam usually translates into a favoring of Muslims who lived from 632-1258, lived in what today we would call the Middle East, and wrote primarily in Arabic. While my focus in this essay will be on the notions of love, human and Divine, as espoused in the earliest and most foundational sources, let us begin with a 20th-century Muslim mystic expressing these same ideas. He was in many ways a typical figure of 20th-century globalism: a young Indian man who was sent to Europe, performed classical Hindustani concerts, and then brought his message of universal mysticism to the United States. His languages were Gujarati and English, not Arabic. Here is one of his most well known poems on the theme of love:

I have loved in life
and I have been loved.
I have drunk the bowl of poison
from the hands of love as nectar,
and have been raised above life's joy and sorrow.

My heart, aflame in love,
set afire every heart that came in touch with it.
My heart has been rent
and joined again;
My heart has been broken
and again made whole;
My heart has been wounded
and healed again;

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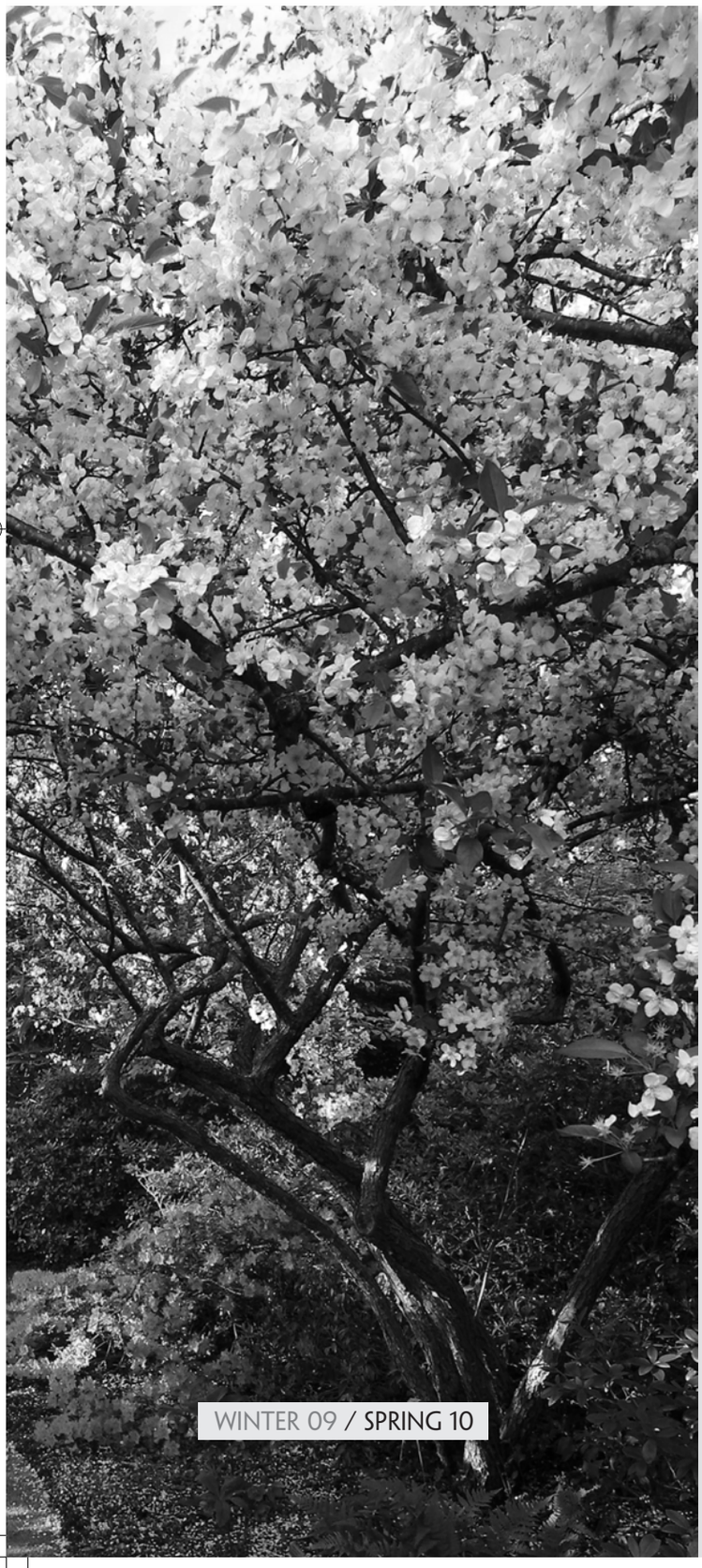
' Towards the Divine: ı Muslim Mystics



A thousand deaths my heart has died,
and thanks be to love,
it lives yet.

I went through hell and saw there love's raging fire,
and I entered heaven illumined with the light of love.
I wept in love
and made all weep with me;
I mourned in love
and pierced the hearts of men;
And when my fiery glance fell on the rocks,
the rocks burst forth as volcanoes.
The whole world sank in the flood
caused by my one tear;
With my deep sigh the earth trembled,
and when I cried aloud the name of my beloved,
I shook the throne of God in heaven.

I bowed my head low in humility,
and on my knees I begged of love,
"Disclose to me, I pray thee, O love, thy secret."
She took me gently by my arms and lifted me above the earth,
and spoke softly in my ear,
"My dear one,
thou thyself art love, art lover, and thyself art the beloved
whom thou hast adored."

(Hazrat Inayat Khan)[1]

Hazrat Inayat Khan's heartfelt poem in many ways stands in a thousand-year-old line of what has been referred to as the *madhhab-i 'ishq*, or "Path of Love" in Islam. What holds this thousand-year-old "path" together is neither creedal statements nor particular initiatory rituals, but rather an aesthetic, a "mood", a *rasa*: the intuitive experience of love, which

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must be tasted personally. This is what the Sufis of this path referred to as the "taste" (*dhauq*) of love:

> Of love one can only speak with lovers. Only a lover knows the true value of love. One who has not experienced it considers it all a legend. For such a person, even the claim of love, even the name of love, is forbidden![2]

In offering a genealogy of the *madhhab-i 'ishq*, it is also important to point out that there were important pre-Islamic and early Islamic strands of love discourse (such as the *'udhri* love tradition[3]) that would soon be woven into this path. Still, my focus in this essay will be on the Islamic articulations of the Path of Love.

There is another tendency that I would like to avoid in this presentation. In order to fully situate Islamic mysticism (*tasawwuf*) as an unmistakably Islamic discourse, the early Sufis present Sufism as largely emerging out of the Qur'an and the statements of the Prophet Muhammad (*ahadith*, sing. *hadith*). This approach has also been followed by many contemporary scholars of Islam and Sufism. It is, surely, a well-respected practice. There is no doubt great merit in going through the passages of the Qur'an, identifying all the many verses that talk about the great intimacy between humanity and the Divine: one could point to the very identification of the Divine as both *Rahman* and *Rahim*, often translated as "compassionate, merciful", or perhaps even more accurately, "Infinite Tenderness, Eternal Kindness." One could point to the passages that talk about God as being closer to the believers than their own selves, as well as the ones that emphasize the quality of God's being overflowing in love towards those who have faith.

One could easily take that time-honored approach, yet in this essay I would like to proceed in a slightly different fashion. Rather than starting with the jewels of the Qur'an and the highlights of the Prophetic tradition before moving on to the statements of the Sufis, I would like to propose that we undertake a more historical study of the Sufis themselves. In my examination of particular Sufis and their teachings, I will of course bring up the key Qur'anic passages and *ahadith* that they bring up. My reason for this is to acknowledge that there is no direct teleology between the Qur'an and Love-Sufism. These verses can and have been interpreted in a thousand and one ways, and indeed many earlier Sufis (9th, 10th century ones) do not make the frequently cited verses of the Qur'an the cornerstone of their teachings. In other words, I am not arguing here that the Qur'an "really" focuses on these love teachings to the exclusion of other interpretations, as that would be a partial and even polemical view that denigrates other interpretations of the Qur'an. Rather, I wish to come to the foundational sources as interpreted by the later sources. It is not a difficult task to identify passages in the Qur'an that lend themselves to "love readings", but I urge us to consider that it is imperative to identify interpretive communities that have identified the same verses before us. In other words, whether the question to which we are tending is Divine love or *jihad* or gender constructions, it is important to avoid what some have called a naive protestant reading of the Qur'an, and focus as well on the interaction of particular interpretive communities with the sacred text throughout history. That, it seems to me, is perhaps a grander but much more sincere project from the perspective of both a scholar and an admirer of the richness of meanings contained in the Qur'an.

What is the Path of Love? Towards a Typology of the Path of Love

My concern in this essay is with that loosely affiliated interpretive community that identifies itself as walking on the "Path of Love". This hermeneutic community appeared fully in the early 12th-century, and continues down to today. If we accept Ibn 'Arabi's (d. 1240) premise that the human heart is by nature synthetic and dynamic rather than discursive,[4] there is surely a problem with offering a static "list" of traits to identify the Sufis of the Path of Love. It is important to point out that any such list is merely suggestive, and not exclusionary. Furthermore, many "Path of Love" Sufis meet some but not all of the criteria in the "typology" offered below. Still, it might help us in getting a better sense of how these loosely affiliated Sufis differed from other Sufis, many of whom were also likely to give a high place of prominence to love in their teachings.

As simple as it might seem, there are a

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large number of Sufis who have chosen to identify themselves as following the *madhhab-i 'ishq*. In doing so, they have privileged passionate love (*'ishq*) as the foremost means of approaching God. These Sufis elaborated upon the conventional dichotomies posed by earlier Sufis between *'ishq-i haqiqi* ("Real" Love, that directed to God) and *'ishq-i majazi* ("metaphorical" love, that directed toward other creatures), and at times distanced themselves from it. Their conception of love was a more fluid and even mysterious one,[5] and they sought to explore the various nuances of the manifestations of love. In their explorations of love, they utilized well-known imagery which had been first developed in the context of human love, such as themes of the Cruel Beloved and affliction in love, to talk about the Divine.

In speaking of the Divine (and humanity), these Sufis demonstrated a particular fascination, even obsession, with beauty (*jamal*) as the paramount manifestation of the Beloved. This often led them to envisage particular humans as manifestations (*tajalli*) of the Divine, though not in the sense of incarnations, which they dismissed as *hulul*. They would also see many Divine manifestations in the natural realm: a rose could be a reminder of Divine Glory, the beauty mark on a beloved's face a reminder of Divine Unity. Perhaps most importantly, they have explored the consequences of God being revealed in phenomenal beings, including of course humanity. The fascination with beauty often led them to intricate examinations of the beloved as a *shahid*, "witness", which comes from the same root as *shahada*, or witnessing to Divine Unity. The Unity of God and Prophethood of Muhammad that most Muslims witnessed through repeated *La ilaha illa 'l-lah*, these mystics would testify to through an immersion in love's baffling aesthetics.

Since they sought the Divine inside humanity, these Sufis connected the path *of* God, *from* God, *to* God (*inna lilahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un*) [Qur'an 2:156], and even *in* God,[6] as something distinct from the conventional journey from here to Hereafter. Its ultimate aim is found neither in this world, nor even in Paradise. It is not to be found simply through intellection and what the seeker knows and sees: the path of the seeker is inside his/her own self. One must search inside one's own self; as the Qur'an commands: "Do they not contemplate in their own selves (*fi anfusikum afala tubsirun*)?" [Qur'an 51:21] It is above all with this inward path of love that the *madhhab-i 'ishq* has been concerned. The first aim of this path is to point out to the thirsty seeker that he, parched lips and dying of thirst, stands knee deep in a river, even an ocean:

You!
always traversing the world
searching...
tell me:
what benefit has come of it?

That
which you are seeking
is with you;
and you seek
elsewhere [7]

('Ayn al-Qozat)

Consistent with seeking the Divine inside their own being, the Sufis of the Path of Love consistently valued spiritual *experience* over theoretical knowledge. It is important to point out that they did not wish to abolish theoretical knowledge: indeed they themselves have left some of the richest theoretical works in all of Islamic history. Rather, they wished to emphasize that ultimately it is personal experience that will lead one down the path, not theoretical knowledge. As 'Ayn al-Qozat (d.1131) said, it is honey in the mouth which is sweet, not the letters h-o-n-e-y.

As a general rule, the *madhhab-i 'ishq* developed in the Persian and Persianate regions. Its teachings were easily passed on to the emerging Urdu and Turkish literary traditions.[8] Perhaps as much as anything else, it seems to be the non-gender basis of these Persianate languages which allows for deliberately delicious ambiguities where a love poem can be taken as referring to a poet's spouse, spiritual teacher, Prophet Muhammad, or God — and often times simultaneously to all of them!

Many writers of the *madhhab-i 'ishq* favored the use of poetry and music as a means of spiritual exercise. These meticulous performances provided the contexts for some of the first concerts of spiritual music, to

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achieve ecstasy, or what is referred to as *sama'* sessions, in these societies.

Many, though not all, of these Sufis favored using paradoxical statements to encourage the listeners to attain to a self-critical level of their own presupposed categories. At times these statements assumed the genre of *shathiyat*, or ecstatic utterances.[9] It is perhaps important to recall that not all of their utterances are to be read in a straightforward theological, legal, or philosophical fashion, all separate discourses in Islamic thought. The playfulness of such mystics vis-a-vis the blessed yet cursed medium of language should never be forgotten.

Perhaps a surprising aspect of *madhhab-i 'ishq* has been the willingness of these Sufis to recognize ways in which many people's adherence to Islam has become more rote than personal realization. Therefore, they have developed sophisticated ways in which they call for people to give up their "metaphorical Islam", and transcend to a higher level of God-realization. There is no question here of abandoning religiosity altogether or of advocating a "spirituality" disconnected from particular religious traditions, notions that would have been anachronistic to any pre-modern Sufi. Rather, they would invert symbols which in popular Muslim imagination represented "inferior" forms of belief ranging from infidelity and idol-worship to Magian sages, wine drinking, and even Christianity to represent this type of God-actualization that has transcended the norms and the public acknowledgment of these norms. Naturally the Sufis would not become idol-worshippers and Christians any more than they became wine-drinkers. Perhaps the most deliberately shocking of the "inversions" of symbols were occasions when some Sufis on the Path of Love depicted *Iblis* (Satan) as the perfect lover of God, and "True Infidelity" as superior to "metaphorical Islam."[10] As it might be expected, these hermeneutical exercises earned them the wrath of many religious scholars, and even some Sufis.

In a related move, they often moved to de-exceptionalize Islam in their treatment of other religious traditions: one of them, 'Ayn al-Qozat, freely acknowledged that just as all religious traditions become "worn out", Islam too was becoming worn out in his own day.[11] They often saw this message of God-realization primarily through love of humanity and Divine as the means of reviving and rejuvenating all religious traditions. A concurrent aspect of this teaching was their emphasis on the possibility of many spiritual paths to lead one to salvation and enlightenment. This universality earned them the affection of many different followers, even as it raised the ire of stricter theologians.

To the Sufis of *madhhab-i 'ishq*, if any path brings humanity to the Divine, then that path is Islam, "Submission." Likewise, a path that does not bring enlightenment (*agahi*) is worse than infidelity in the sight of God. The seeker is concerned with the One who instituted the path, not the path itself.

I will incinerate this creed and religion, and burn it.
Then I will put your love in its place.
How long must I hide
this love in my heart?
What the traveler seeks
is not the religion
and not the creed:
Only You.[12]

Another tendency occasionally displayed in the Sufis of *madhhab-i'ishq* has been their transcending of conventional master-disciple hierarchy. Close examinations of the relations between 'Ayn al-Qozat and Ahmad Ghazali on one hand, and Rumi (d. 1273) and Shams (among the two most well known pairs of Sufi masters in history of Islam) on the other reveals the extent to which each mystic became a mirror in which the other contemplated himself.

Concurrent with transcending conventional master-disciple hierarchies, these Sufis often thought that the first step on this path of love was the abandoning of conventions and habits, *tark-i 'adat.*[13] They hold that the majority of people approach the Divine through the path of their ancestors, not one that they have realized for themselves. In a real sense, this critique is not a new one, but a reiteration of the Qur'anic message:

> When they are told to follow the (Revelation) that God has sent down, they say: "Nay, we shall follow the ways that we found our fathers (following)." [Qur'an 31:21]

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The majority of the occasions where the Qur'an refers to following the ways "of our fathers" emphasize the dichotomy between recognizing the truth that is before one to the conventional ways of error that one's forefathers have always followed. To underscore this point, Ahmad Ghazali quotes a Prophetic *hadith* in one of his sermons: *bu'ithtu li-rafzi 'l- 'adat*; "I was sent to remove customs."[14] 'Ayn al-Qozat even connected the reading of the Qur'an to this transcending of norms:

> O chivalrous youth...If you want to see the beauty of the Qur'an, abandon the worship of habits (*'adat-parasti*). Forget everything you have heard![15]

Theirs was not a call towards "spiritual anarchy." One can only transcend what one has mastered, and these Sufis were already masters of the normative religious sciences (law, theology, etc.). There is no indication that they intended to abandon their religious affiliations. Such an assertion is in fact a common misreading of these teachings in our own age. The dynamic Sufi tradition has never abandoned wholesale what has come before, but rather selected those elements that seem to address the contemporary situation, and re-articulated them in a fresh way. It is a sign of this "conservative" yet dynamic nature of Sufi teachings that many statements of the *madhhab-i'ishq* — to abandon conventions and norms, to give up "metaphorical Islam" and enter into "real infidelity", to adorn oneself with the Christian *zunnar*, etc. — all became tropes in due time! The aim of those on the "Path of Love" was to invest their religious tradition with a spirit of focusing on the Ultimate, and not the means towards the Ultimate.

Time and time again the Sufis of the "Path of Love" begged their disciples, readers and spiritual communities to transcend the conventions and norms in which they were steeped, to obtain a personal realization of God:

> The people of the world have contented themselves with worship of habits (*'adat-parasti*). How far are they from this tale?...The others have so many veils before them that prevent them from comprehending: blind imitationism (*taqlid*), bigoted partisanship (*ta'assub*), haughtiness (*kibr*), conceit, and pride.[16]

The Path of Love Sufis remind us that those who have fanatically attached themselves to their own experiences, their own communities, and their own fixed and limited articulations of The Truth have limited God to their own intellectual conceptions. Hafiz's aching rejoinder echoes this:

Excuse all the seventy-two sects[17] *at war.*
They did not see the truth,
and took the road of fable.[18]

In a poignant poem, full of the compassion of a living sage who has insight into the lives of those around him, Rumi cries out to the pilgrims setting out for Mecca:

O you who have left for Hajj,
where are you?
where are you?
The Beloved is here!
Come, come!

The Beloved is your neighbor
what are you doing,
lost in the wilderness?

If you could see the formless face
of the Beloved
you'd know that you are the lord,
the house, and the Ka'ba![19]

So many times you set out on that road to that house;
Just once...
come to the roof of this house.[20]

Yes, that house [Ka'ba] is subtle,
you've told me about it.
But show me something
about the Lord of that house!

If you saw that garden,
where are the flowers?
If you dove in God's ocean,
where is a single soul-jewel?[21]

Having a fairly fluid typology of the path of love at hand, we will proceed to examine the legacies of the two key terms *madhhab* and *'ishq* before undertaking a chronological examination of the seminal figures of the Path of Love.

On *Madhhab* and *'Ishq*

The term *madhhab* had a multi-faceted usage in Islamic thought. When the Sufis of the Path of Love used this term, they intended the

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meaning of "path." In the story of Moses and the Shepherd, Rumi, that supreme falcon of love, states:

> *The spiritual community of love*
> *is apart from all faiths.*
> *The lovers' community and path (*madhhab*)*
> *is God.* [22]

It is precisely this term, the *madhhab-i 'ishq*, which has also been rendered as "Creed of Love" and "Religion of Love." We will return to the discussions of *'ishq* later. The term *madhhab* has been previously translated as "school", "sect", "creed", or "religion" — leading to such terms as "School" or "Religion" of Love. This can be a bit misleading, as theirs was by no means an attempt to start a new religion, or add yet another "school" to the already crowded field of pre-modern Islamic intellectual thought. In using the term *madhhab*, they were returning to the root meaning of the word: As with many other words used by Sufis such as *tariqa* and *shari'a*, the literal meaning of the word *madhhab* is that of a trodden path. This was to be a path to be walked on not alone, but with fellow seekers. *Madhhab* had been previously used to refer to the various Islamic theological and legal schools: One could talk about the Shafi', Hanafi or Ash'ari *madhhab* [pl:*Madhahib*]. The titles of these "schools" were eponyms after a significant founder. These Sufis sought to set themselves apart. Their "path" was named not after a founder, but after "love", and even God! Their claim was as radical as it was simple:

> God-willing, I shall expound upon the lover and the beloved...I mentioned the *madhhab* (path) and community of the lovers of God. They follow the path and community of God; not that of Shafi'i, Abu Hanifa, and others.[23] The lovers of God follow the *madhhab-i 'ishq* (path of love) and *madhhab-i khuda* (God's path).[24]

The Path of Love is God's own path. The path *to* God, and the path *of* God (as both are possible translations of *madhhab-i khuda*) is in fact the path of love. Only love delivers humanity to the Divine. Rather than identifying the path with a noted theologian or jurist, they identified the path with love, and even more, directly with God:

> They asked Husayn Mansur [Hallaj]: "Which path are you on?" He said: "I am on God's path." (*ana 'ala madhhab rabbi*).[25]

It is important to point out that these Sufis were not abrogating the established theological and legal schools, nor were they dismissing their relevance. In fact, many of the Sufis we are about to discuss were themselves important members of these other "schools" as well.[26] At the same time, the Sufis of the "Path of Love" asserted that those scholars who denied the primacy of love — and limited themselves to the "externals"—were "highway robbers and immature children"! 'Ayn al-Qozat stated:

> O precious one... If Shafi'i and Abu Hanifa, who were leaders of the community, were alive in this age, praise be to God they would find many benefits, Divine sciences, and traces of spiritual words; they would all turn to these words... and would utter nothing but this![27]

The Sufis of the Path of Love were presenting not a new religion, but a fresh, dynamic, and ever transforming understanding of themselves, the world around them, and the Divine based primarily on love. Rumi, directly quoting from an earlier poem of Sana'i,[28] stated:

> *Love is nothing,*
> *Save felicity and grace.*
> *Love is nothing,*
> *save opening the heart*
> *and guidance.*
> *Abu Hanifa?*
> *Did not teach about love.*
> *Shafi'i?*
> *Does not narrate about it.*[29]

Their aim was to re-invigorate religion and revive it from a tradition of sectarianism and blind imitationism (*taqlid)* to one reaching a dynamic understanding of God not as an "idea", but as the Real. The first step on this path towards God-realization (*tahqiq*) was one of transcending conventional norms in which people had come to conceptualize God and their relationship with the Divine.

We can now move on to an examination of the second term, *'ishq*. These Sufis did not invent the terms for "love" *(mahabba, 'ishq,* etc.), yet they made them the focal point of their teachings in a way that was never done before. Many earlier Sufis had held that the term *'ishq* was too radical to be applied to a

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human-Divine relationship, and preferred to use the Qur'anicly-based term of "loving-kindness", *mahabba*. When the important early Sufi writer, Abu Bakr al-Kalabadhi (d. 385/995) was discussing "their [i.e., 'the Sufis'] sayings on love", he used the term *mahabba*. In this context, he cited many statements from early Sufis such as al-Junayd ("Love is the inclination of the heart."), and Abu 'Abd Allah al-Nibaji ("Love for creatures is a pleasure; love for the Creator means annihilation.").[30]

While al-Kalabadhi does not use the term *'ishq,* Qushayri (d. 1072) is a good representative of those who use both terms, while preferring *mahabba*. In his famous *Risala,* he pleads — to no avail— that: "When the scholars use the term *mahabba*, by this term they mean 'desire.' But the Folk [i.e., the Sufis] mean something other than desire when they use this term. Desire can not be said to belong to the Ancient One [God]."[31] This seems to have been the main objection to attributing *'ishq* to the Divine. Another objection, relating to both the human being and the Divine was the following:

> The master Abu 'Ali al-Daqqaq (may God grant him mercy) asserted, "Love is a sweetness, but its inner reality is bewilderment." He also said, "Passionate love [*'ishq*] is exceeding all limits in *mahabba*. God [may he be exalted] cannot be described as exceeding limits, so He cannot be characterized as possessing passionate love for anything. If the love of all mankind were joined together in one man, this would not come close to the measure of love due to God.
>
> Let it not be said, 'This person has exceeded all limits in the love of God.' God cannot be described as having the quality of passionate love, nor can the servant be described as having it in his relation to God. Passionate love cannot be used [as a description of the relations between man and God] because there is no way for it to be related to God, either from Him toward the servant or from the servant to God."[32]

Interestingly enough, Daqqaq's statement starts from the premise that God's love is so infinite that in describing it as "exceeding limits in love" (*mujawizat al-hadd fi 'l-mahabba*)[33], one is doing injustice to it. Yet the floodgates had been opened too wide for many Sufis to heed these cautionary words: The next centuries saw an effervescence of expressions describing this passionate love. Their words of love at times attained to such power that it was said: "I was present when Samnun spoke on love, and all the lamps (*qanadil*) in the mosque shattered."[34]

It is precisely this notion of *'ishq* as a passionate and extreme variety of love which was to be the subject of the first text written on love in Persian, the *Sawanih* of Ahmad Ghazali (d. 1126). It is to this founding member of the *madhhab-i 'ishq* that we now turn.

Salient Features of Ahmad Ghazali's Teachings on Love

The "virgins" of love-ideas

One of the more powerful insights articulated by the Sufis is that the *reality* of love is not the same thing as the words chosen to express that reality. The full meaning of the words of love are open to those who have had direct experience of it. Ahmad Ghazali made a beau-

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Crazy from Love

From love for You,
I am more crazy than any madman,
For in beauty You are more precious
than any pearl.

Compared with the rationality of everyday people
we are mad;
Yet in this world we are wiser
than any sage.

Within my heart and soul, every breath
I become more intimate with You.
Yet I see myself as more alien to You
than any stranger.

Do you know why I see the Truth
manifest with the soul's eye?
I saw that other than the Truth
is more of a fable than any fiction.

Our heart and soul we sacrificed,
offering the self as the price,
for in our eyes You were lovelier
than any other beloved.

I fell into the trap of the pre-eternal hunter,
bewildered until post-eternity;
Now, my bird-like heart is more homeless
than any nestless bird.

O candle of the gathering of the people of heart,
O bestower of light to water-and-clay,
I burn in Your fire, more ardent
than any moth.

—Dr. Javad Nurbakhsh

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tiful comparison to elucidate the disjunction between the reality of love and words that seek to convey that reality in the very beginning of his masterpiece, the *Sawanih*. He stated that the "ideas of love are like virgins, and the hand of words can not reach the hem of their skirt." Using a particularly erotic language, Ghazali went on to suggest that the task of one who writes on love is precisely to "marry" the "men of words" to the "virgins of ideas" in the "private chambers of speech."[35]

Ghazali states the reader should perpetually remember that his treatise does not belong to any specific view in terms of the realities, modes, and aims of love: the love he is presenting is not to be attributed to (either) the Creator (*Khaliq*) or the creature *(makh- l uq)*. In doing so, Ghazali is bypassing the much-discussed categories of "Real Love" (*'ishq-i haqiqi*) and "Metaphorical Love" (*'ishq-i majazi*). According to those who would favor such a dichotomy, only God is worthy of Real love, and all the loves experienced on this terrestrial realm can be called love only in a metaphorical sense. Interestingly enough, while the perspective of Ahmad Ghazali in general is worlds removed from the metaphysical framework of Ibn 'Arabi, the two saints seem to be in agreement with respect to this point: Ibn 'Arabi also has a notion that rather than "binding" our selves to certain fixed understanding of God, our approach should be one of "perpetual transformation" (*taqallub*). Through an ingenious word play, he points out that such a synthetic and dynamically integrative approach can only take place in the heart (*qalb*). Our conceptions of the Real need to be open to perpetual transformations so that we do not make an idol of the Real.[36] Ahmad Ghazali concurs with this: rather than limiting our understanding to static, fixed notions of "human love" and "divine love", we must allow our own perspective towards these notions to be constantly open to change and transformation.

It is after these introductory remarks that Ghazali moves on to the Qur'anic verse which might legitimately be said to be the ocean into which all the Sufis of the "Path of Love" have dived for centuries in search of pearls:

God Almighty has said:

"He loves them,
and they love him." [Qur'an 5:54]

It might even be said that the whole of love mysticism in Islam is a meditation upon the above verse: *yuhibbuhum wa yuhibbunahu*. It is no accident that in this verse, God's love for humanity is mentioned first. Humanity's response to God's love can be nothing but love itself. In a subtle language, Ahmad Ghazali related these two terms to one another:

> The root of love grows out of the infinite preexistence. The diacritical dot of (the letter) *'ba'* (ب) of *yuhibbuhum* (He, i.e., God, loves them) was cast as a seed on the soil of *yuhibbunahu* (they love 'Him'); nay, that dot was on *hum* (them) until *yuhibbunahu* (they love 'Him') grew out. When the narcissus of love grew out, the seed was of the same nature as the fruit and the fruit had the same nature as the seed.[37]

Human love is thus described as being *hamrang*, "of the same nature" [lit: of the same color] as the Divine love. The language of "real" and "metaphorical" love — with all the suggested facile dichotomies and static definitions it can contain — is thus circumvented.

These marvelous Qur'anic verses have been for centuries the objects of meditation and practice for Sufis: One is hard pressed to find Sufi writings after this period in which the verse "He loves them and they love Him" is not featured. Yet, it is fair to say that the legacy of love mysticism in Islam is much more extensive than the brevity of the above verses would tend to suggest. Immediately after quoting the above Qur'anic lines, Ghazali moves on to a quatrain which identifies the *madhahb* followed by him and other members of the Path of Love:

From before existence
our steed set out with love.
Our night,
forever illuminated
from the lamp of Union.

Until we return to non-existence
you will not find our lips dry
from that wine
un-forbidden in our path (madhhab).[38]

Ghazali continues the theme of existence and non-existence: when the spirit crossed over from the realm of "non-exis-

FPO FPO FPO FPO

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tence" to that of "existence", love was there waiting. There could be no spirit in this realm, without love. It is this emphasis on this love that has accompanied us in the deepest core of our being, that distinguishes the *madhhab-i 'ishq,* "Path of Love."

Affliction-in-Love

The theme of the afflictions that all lovers undergo was not a new one, even reaching back to Pre-Islamic poetry where the poet lamented the passing of the departed caravan.[39] Some of the early Sufis, such as Junayd, had also explored this theme.[40] The Sufis of the *madhhab-i 'ishq* explored this theme further, and stated that no Prophet ever suffered affliction the way Muhammad, Peace be upon him, did.[41] With the rise of Sufi mysticism, they used all the imagery of the Qur'an to underscore affliction-in-love. In one of the more ingenious re-interpretations, the Qur'anic verse: "When kings enter a village, they decimate it," [Qur'an 27:34] was re-interpreted as the afflictions sent by God upon the heart of a seeker to the point that the servant *becomes* the affliction.[42] In the *Sawanih*, Ahmad Ghazali connected this affliction to a sophisticated love theory:

> Love, in its true nature, is but an affliction (*bala'*), and intimacy (*uns*) and ease are something alien to it and are provisionally borrowed. This is because separation in love is indeed duality while union is indeed oneness. Everything short of this is a delusion of union, not its true reality. This is why it is said,
>
> *Love is an affliction and I am not*
> *about to abstain from affliction,*
> *(In fact) when love falls asleep I turn to it and raise it.*
> *My friends tell me to abstain from affliction*
> *Affliction is the heart, how can I abstain from the heart?*[43]

The above theme of affliction-in-love was elaborated upon by Ahmad Ghazali's disciple, 'Ayn al-Qozat, to a hauntingly sublime height: "Whoever distinguishes between grace and wrath, is still in love with grace, or with wrath but he is not yet a lover of the beloved!"[44] He detected a relationship between love and affliction in the very orthography of one of the words for love, *mahabbat.* In a simple pun involving transferring the diacritical dot under the letter 'ba' (ب) in mahabbat to over it, he pointed to the transformation of (محبت) (mahabbat, "love") to (محنت) (mihnat, "suffering").[45]

Furthermore, rather than seeing affliction as merely the trial that the lover has to endure, affliction (*bala'*) was the "jewel of God's treasury.":

> Take heed...You think that they give affliction to just anyone? What do you know of affliction? Remain [on this path] till you get to the point where you will buy God's affliction [at the price] of your life-soul.
>
> It was from this same perspective that Shibli said: "O God! Everyone seeks you for grace and ease, and I seek you for affliction. We do not destine anyone for affliction until we list him amongst the saints. This affliction is the jewel of our treasury. We do not bestow jewels on just any unrefined soul."[46]

The early Chishtian master Shaykh Nizam al-Din Auliya' took this metaphor of affliction-in-love to yet another level by simply stating:

> *Even though He says He'll kill me,*
> *That He says it can't but thrill me!*[47]

In offering this sophisticated explanation, the aim of the Sufis of the Path of Love was to offer a profound engagement with and acknowledgment of the emotions felt by a soul. Emotions, whether positive or negative, joyous or painful, were not seen as illusory. Rather, their *real*ness was admitted and acknowledged: the aim of a mystic was to utilize the power of the emotions to recognize the trans-mundane origin of these sentiments, and remain ever-mindful of the Beloved. Much of the nuance of Sufi teaching here is concerned with the sublimation of sentiments.

Each Blind to His/Her Own Beauty

One of the amazing insights provided by Ahmad Ghazali, indeed one that he calls a "great secret", is that each beloved's eye is blind to her own beauty. None can perceive her own beauty, "except in the mirror of the lover's love." As Ahmad elaborates:

> Therefore, beauty necessitates a lover so that the beloved can take nutriment from her own beauty in the mirror of the lover's love and quest. This is a great secret...[48]

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Through this amazing vision of love, the hierarchical nature of master-disciple, lord-servant relationships are converted to a highly nuanced dance of reciprocity: for all of the charming claims to self-sufficiency and coquetry (*naz*), the beloved *needs* the lover. It has been well known how the lover is utterly dependent (*niyaz*) on the beloved; but now thebeloved is exposed for being caught up in this net of reciprocity. Through many anecdotes, he demonstrated that the beauty of the beloved in herself is not the same as the beauty she has when a lover treats her as beautiful:

> The glance of loveliness (*kirishmah-i husn*) is one thing and the (amorous) glance of belovedness (*kirishmah-i ma'shuqi*) is something else. The glance of loveliness has no "face" turned towards anything "other" (than love itself) and has no connection with anything outside (of love). But as to the glance of belovedness and the amorous gestures, coquetry, and alluring self-glorification (*naz*), they are all sustained by the lover, and without him they will have no effect.
>
> Therefore, this is why the beloved is in need of the lover. Loveliness is one thing and belovedness is something else.[49]

The above notion, the distinction between "loveliness" and "belovedness", was also seen as a powerful way to explore the relationship between God and creation: whereas God in his *dhat* (Essence) was seen to be completely transcendent and independent of all creation, some Sufis asserted that the Divine Attributes (*sifat*) were part of God's relationship with creation. In other words, for the Divine to assume attributes of Mercy and Compassion there has to be someone or something to receive the mercy. In this perspective, one could almost state that creation is *needed* for the Divine to realize the potential of all His attributes.[50] Naturally Sufis were extremely careful not to appear as if they were suggesting that the Divine was somehow *needy* or less than perfect. Perhaps an analogy might clarify the matter: it is one thing to state that a person contains the potential of being a good parent, and contains that quality in a latent form. However, it is when that person actually becomes a mother or a father that the latent quality is made manifest. In this way, one might be able to state that the child enables the full expression and manifestation of that quality which had been there all along.

In a similar manner, one could state that the creation enables the full manifestation of Divine Attributes.

In this view of creation, as with the previous theme of the positive appreciation of emotions, the Cosmos is seen as an inherently positive force, not a negative one: this view of the Divine purpose of creation is far away from the pessimistic gnostic view in which the world (*dunya)* is merely a veil or a distraction. It is in this light that the Sufis of the Path of Love have repeated the well-known sacred *hadith*, communicated by God directly to Prophet Muhammad:

> *I was a Hidden Treasure,*
> *and loved to be known intimately,*
> *so I created the Heavens and the Earth,*
> *so that they may come to intimately know Me.*[51]

The very purpose of creation, these Sufis remind us, is for the Divine to manifest Himself in utter fullness, and for the creation to come into that intimate relationship of knowledge and adoration with the Divine.

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The foremost relation in which the Sufis of the Path of Love chose to elaborate the relationship between the Cosmos and the Divine was as that between a lover and a beloved. According to the Sufis of the School of Love, the foremost quality of the lover is that of *niyaz* "needfulness." This forms a perfect contrast to the *naz* of the Beloved. Ahmad-i Ghazali expressed the relationship between these two most eloquently:

> The Beloved said to the lover, "Let yourself become me, for if I become you, then the Beloved will be in a state of necessity, and the lover will become greater; thereby need and necessity will increase.
>
> But if you become me, then the Beloved will become greater. Thereby all will be the Beloved, and the lover will not be. There will be no more need (*niyaz*); instead, all will be the expression of self-sufficiency (*naz*).There will be no more necessity; all will be there, already attained. It will be all richness and no poverty, all remedy and no helplessness."[52]

It is in this sense that the lover turns to the Beloved in all of his needfulness, *niyāz*. And yet, the situation is far from bleak: the proud yet humble lover can indeed claim that he is bringing the one quality that the Beloved "lacks": needfulness. Rumi's spiritual mentor, Shams-i Tabrizi, raises this point in his *Discourses* (*Maqalat*):

> What good is it if you take your soul at hand, and present it [to God]? What use is it to take cumin to Kirman?[53] How will this add any value, or price, or cultivation to what is there? Since there is such a royal court, he is now without need (*bi-niyaz*), so take your needfulness (*niyaz*) there.
>
> Since the one without need likes needfulness.Using that needfulness, you can suddenly leap out of the midst of all these creatures. Something from the Ancient One [God] will be joined to you, and *that* is love (*'ishq*). The trap of love has been set, and you are wrapped up in it, since they love him" (*yuhibbunahu*) is the impression of "He loves them" (*yuhibbuhum*).[54]

The beloved might be able to carry on with the game of self-sufficiency, even if the lover presents heart and soul on a silver-platter. After all, does she not have a thousand hearts and souls offered to her each second? She does not, however, have "needfulness." What she "needs", paradoxically, is the lover's needfulness. What the Lord "needs" to be able to assume the quality of a "lord" is someone to assume the role of the servant. Theologically speaking, this is dangerous ground, no doubt, but a powerful message of reciprocity that the Sufis have explored with great delicacy and insight. Among the Sufis, perhaps none has explored these dangerous grounds more persistently than the martyred youth, 'Ayn al-Qozat, and it is to him that we now turn.

Loving God, Loving All

A major theoretical debate among the Sufis in this time period dealt with the relationship between the love for God and the love for creation. A number of early Sufis — such as Hujwiri — had asserted that the term *'ishq* is not appropriate in referring to humanity's love for the Divine, and instead one should use terms such as *mahabbat*.[55] Other Sufis— such as Ruzbihan Baqli—who wished to redeem the usage of the term *'ishq* in referring to both human and Divine love stated that human love was a "ladder", as it were, leading to the [higher] Divine Love[56] Later Sufis, and indeed many contemporary scholars of Sufism, have preferred to refer to the love for God as "Real Love" (*'ishq-i haqiqi*) and relegate love for creation (which would obviously include love for and between human beings) to a "metaphorical" or "borrowed" (*majazi*) status.[57] Without entering into a polemical exchange with the above, the Sufis of the *madhhab-i 'ishq* distanced themselves from the above categories, and stated instead that the love of God is an *'ishq* which would enfold the whole of creation.

Whoever loves God
should also love His messenger, Muhammad,
his own spiritual teacher
and his own life.

He also loves food and drink
which extends his life
that he may spend in obedience [to God].

He loves women
so that the progeny will not be interrupted.

He loves silver and gold
so that through them he can attain to food and drink.

He loves the cold, and the heat,
the snow and the rain

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Heaven and Earth
since if not for them, sustenance would not grow.
Like this, he also loves the farmer.

He loves the Heaven and the Earth
since they are God's handicraft:
A lover loves the handwriting
and every action of the Beloved.
All the creatures are His handicraft and action.
Loving them for the sake of following His love is no polytheism.[58]

Both of the above themes, that of human love as a pedagogical device for mastering divine love, as well as that of love as a unitary force which flows from the Divine to humanity and back up to the heavens, are to be traced all the way to contemporary Sufis such as Hazrat Inayat Khan. Given the prominence of love in these teachings, it came as no surprise that 'Ayn al-Qozat spoke of love in terms of an "obligation."

Love as Obligation

It has already been pointed out that many of these Sufis had training in other normative Islamic sciences. 'Ayn al-Qozat earned his honorific — being the *'ayn* ("source", "spring", "essence") of judges — through his training as a juridical master of Islamic law (*shari'a*). Given this training, he introduces legal terminology in a most shockingly refreshing way into his discourse on love. A critical feature of legal discussions in Islamic thought is discerning among acts classified as "religious obligations", "meritorious acts", and "forbidden."[59] It is with great subtlety, humor, and irony that 'Ayn al-Qozat invokes the juridical category of "religious obligation" (*farz*) to talk about love.

> O precious one! Arriving at God is a [religious] obligation (*farz*). To those on the [spiritual] quest, whatever through which one arrives at God is a religious obligation. What delivers the servant to the Divine is Love. In this sense, love has become an obligation (*farz*) on the Path...[60]

One can almost see the smile — even a smirk— on the young mystic's face, as he (being invested with juridical authority) declares passionate love a religious obligation for all on the spiritual path. Earlier on, some Hanbali scholars had spoken of love from a legal perspective.[61] Here 'Ayn al-Qozat seems to be returning the favor, deploying legal terminology from the perspective of the *madhhab-i 'ishq*.

Sufis like 'Ayn al-Qozat did not limit their analysis of phenomena to terrestrial realities: one of the most intriguing teachings of the *madhhab-i 'ishq* was their radical teaching on celestial phenomena, such as paradise. One such teaching was 'Ayn al-Qozat's concept of paradise which was beyond the conventional conceptions of paradise.

A Paradise beyond Paradise

Since the time of Rabi'a (d. 801), it had become customary for Sufis to express the merits of seeking God for His own sake, beyond the wish to attain to the joys of paradise and avoiding the torments of hell-fire: surely many are familiar with the great narrative of Rabi'a running down the alleys of her town with a bucket of water in one hand and a blazing torch in the other. Asked about this strange practice, she said that she was looking to quench the fires of hell with the water, and to burn down paradise, so that people would have no reason left to worship God other than God Himself.[62] 'Ayn al-Qozat extended these teachings to another level: He offers perceptive remarks on the conventional conceptions of paradise, which he describes as a "prison for the [spiritual] elite." He cites Yahya Ma'adh Razi in support of this: "Paradise is the prison of the gnostics, as the world is the prison of the believers." He articulates a radical conception of "God's paradise" beyond the conventional paradise:

> The [spiritual] elite is with God. What do you say? That God Almighty is in paradise? Yes, He is in paradise, but in His own paradise — in that paradise that Shibli spoke of: "There is, and will never be, anyone in paradise except God Almighty. If you like, hear it also from Mustafa: "Verily God has a paradise, in which there are no *houris*, no palaces, no milk, and no honey." And what is in this "God's own paradise"? That "which no eyes have seen, no ears have heard, and thought of which has not occurred to people's hearts." For one who thinks of *this* as paradise, to seek the paradise of the masses is an error. If this group is dragged to paradise in chains of light and grace, they do not go and do not accept...[63]

What is being rejected here is not so much the Qur'anic imagery of paradise, as the

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tendency of the ordinary believers to fixate on these descriptions to the neglect of the One beyond the paradise, the Cup-bearer beyond the Wine. Concurrent with the trend towards transcending the symbols of salvation (paradise), the Sufis of the Path of Love also sought to transcend the attachment to particular means of salvation. It is to this explicit universalism of the Path of Love that we now turn.

All Paths are Stations towards God

Many Sufis have taught that Truth (*Haqq*) must be identified with God's own Being, and not with any intellectual conception of God or path leading to God. This idea, radical and Qur'anic, is affirmed in the passage:

We shall show them our signs (āyāt) *on the farthest horizons,*
And inside their own selves
Until it becomes clear to them
That He is Haqq *("The Truth")*. [Qur'an 41:53]

From this perspective, "Truth" is not to be equated with any religious tradition or path, but rather with Him who is the Destination of the path. Indeed, given that Truth is one of the most common Divine Names, to label a religious tradition (even Islam) as "Truth" is to commit the great sin of "Association-ism" (*shirk*, "polytheism")!

'Ayn al-Qozat continues the same theme from another angle. Rather than arguing that all paths lead to the same Truth (God) on an abstract level, he approaches it from a refreshingly new angle: that of the followers of the path. In a passage, he mentions Muslims, Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, and Idol-worshippers — the entire spectrum of religiosity known to him:

O friend!

If you would see what the Christians see in Jesus, you too would become a Christian!

And if you would see what the Jews see in Moses, you too would become a Jew!

Even more, if you would see what idol-worshippers see in idol-worship, you too would become an idol-worshipper!

The seventy-two paths (*madhhab*) are all waystations on the road to God.[64]

Once again, the choice of words used by 'Ayn al-Qozat is both profound and deliberate: he depicts the spiritual paths (*madhhabs*) using the traditional Sufi imagery of waystations (*manazil*) on a path, in which a caravan would find shelter. The important point about a *manzil*, of course, is that one would not wish to remain indefinitely at one, but to move on to the final Destination, which may be described as the Presence of God.

The same universalism is also expounded upon by later mystics, such as the famed Ibn 'Arabi. It would be a clear mistake to label Ibn 'Arabi's teaching a metaphysical system bereft of the tenderness of love. Ibn 'Arabi's well-known poem cited below alludes to the same motifs of universality and love, comprehensible only through the synthetic and dynamic quality of the heart, that have characterized the Path of Love:

Wonder,
a garden among the flames!

My heart can take on
any form:
a meadow for gazelles,
a cloister for monks,

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For the idols, sacred ground,
Ka'ba for the circling pilgrim,
the tables of the Torah,
the scrolls of the Qur'an.

My creed is love;
wherever its caravan turns along the way,
that is my belief,
my faith.[65]

'Ayn al-Qozat has a remarkable section in his *Tamhidat* which states:

> Do you know what I am saying? I say that the spiritual seeker has to search after God not in paradise, not in the world, and not in the Hereafter. He has to stop seeking God in everything that he has seen and everything that he has known: the path of the seeker is inside one's own self. He has to find the path in oneself, as the Qur'an says: "[We shall show them our signs...] and inside their own selves, do they not reflect [on this]?"....There is no path to God better than the path of the heart. This is the meaning of "the heart is the house of God."[66]

Although there is some debate about the authenticity of the poem, one of the most well-known poems attributed to Rumi in the English-speaking world is the following:

I was,
even before the Names came to be.
no hint was there that anything with a name existed.
I was.

The named and names came to be
through me
on the day when there was no me.

A hint came in the revelation of the tip of the Beloved's tress
when the tip of the Beloved's Tress was not.

I searched the Cross and Christians from end to end
He was not in the Cross.

To the idol-house I went,
the ancient monastery.
No trace of him.

Went to the mountain of Herat and Kandahar;
I looked.
He was not in the depths or the heights there.

On a mission,
I ascended to the summit of Mount Qaf;
in that place was naught but the 'Anqa.

I turned towards the Ka'ba;
searching
seeking
He was not in that place to which old and young aspire.

I questioned Avicenna about him;
He was beyond even the sage's grasp.

I journeyed to the scene of "the two bow-lengths' distance";
Where Muhammad went on the night journey.
He was not in that sublime Court.

I looked into my own heart.
There I saw him;
He was nowhere else.[67]

Ultimately, this is perhaps the greatest legacy of the mystics of the "path of love": a hermeneutics not just of the sacred text, but of the sacred heart of humanity—one that through the "glance of love" reveals the Divine in power and intimacy, linking together the human and the Divine from pre-eternity (*azal*) to post-eternity (*abad*). Somewhere in the stretch of infinities we stand in this present moment (*waqt*), bewildered by the effusion of Divine Love that makes breath possible, intellect a tool, Scripture a love-letter, and love the greatest of God's mysteries.

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[1] Hazrat Inayat Khan, "Vadan/Alankaras", in *The Complete Sayings,* (New Lebanon: Omega Publications, 1978/1991), 83-4.
[2] 'Ayn al-Qozat Hamadani, *Tambidat*, 'Afif 'Usayran, ed., (Reprint; Tehran: Kitabkhana-yi Manuchihri, 1373/1994), 111.
[3] Louis Massignon, "'Udhri", *E.I.*
[4] For a brilliant analysis of this profound teaching, see Michael Sells, *Mystical Language of Unsaying,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 90-92.
[5] An example of the "mysterious" nature of love is 'Ayn al-Qozat's insistence that there are three types of love: the Great Love, which is God's love for us; the Small Love, which is our love for him; and what he will only call the Middle Love. He refuses to offer any definitions for this mysterious middle term, perhaps wishing to frustrate those who would want a neat schematization.
[6] This was the insight of Mulla Sadra, who a few centuries later suggested a four-tiered spiritual journey in *Asfar al-arba'a*:
1) The journey from God to Creation;
2) The journey from Creation to Creation;

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3) The journey from Creation to God; and
4) The journey from God to God.
[7] 'Ayn al-Qozat Hamadani, *Tambidat*, 23.
[8] There is no reason to attribute this to the trite divisions between Arab and Persian "mentalities", problematic divisions deeply rooted in 19th century European racial theories.
[9] On the controversial genre of *Shathiyat,* see Carl Ernst, Words of Ecstasy in Sufism, (Albany: SUNY, 1988).
[10] For such notions, one can refer to both Hallaj's *Tawasin* and Ayn al-Qozat's *Tambidat.* Peter Awn has a fine study of this, in his *Satan's Tragedy and Redemption*.
[11] 'Ayn al-Qozat Hamadani, *Nama-ha-yi 'Ayn al-Qozat Hamadani,* 'Ali-Naqi Munzawi and 'Afif 'Usayran, eds., 3 vols, (vols. 1 í 2, Tehran: Intisharat-i Bunyad-i Farhang-i Iran, 1969; Reprinted, Kitabfurushi-yi Manuchihri, 1362/1983), 2:301-2.
[12] 'Ayn al-Qozat Hamadani, *Tambidat*, 23.
[13] 'Ayn al-Qozat Hamadani, *Tambidat,* 21.
[14] Ahmad Ghazali, *Majalis*, Ahmad Mujahid, ed. (Tehran: Intisharat-i Danishgah-i Tehran, 1376/1997), 22.
[15] 'Ayn al-Qozat Hamadani, *Nama-ha*, 2:102.
[16] 'Ayn al-Qozat Hamadani, *Nama-ha,* 2:92.
[17] According to a Prophetic tradition, the Muslim community would be split into seventy-two sectarian groups. This number became a trope representing the entire spectrum of factionalism in later literature.
[18] Elizabeth, T. Gray, Jr., Trans. *The Green Sea of Heaven: Fifty Ghazals from the Diwan of Hafiz*, (Ashland: White Cloud Press, 1995),
98-99. [Slightly modified]
[19] The allusion is to: "So let them worship the [Qur'an 103:6]
[20] The roof of a house was a common metaphor in Sufi poetry, a place reserved for rendezvous with one's beloved. Significantly, the roof metaphor is often used along that of a ladder, *mi'raj*, the term used to identify the Prophet's Heavenly Ascension.
[21] Rumi, *Kulliyat-i Shams*, *ya Divan-i Kabir* [henceforth: *Divan-i Shams-i Tabrizi]*, Badi' al-Zaman Foruzanfar, ed., 10 vols., (Tehran:Danishgah-i Tehran, 1336/1957; Reprint, 3rd edition, 1363/1984), 2:65; lines 6762-6768.
[22] Maulana Jalal al-Din Rumi, *Masnavi*, Muhammad Isti'lami, ed.,7 vols. (Tehran: Kitabfurushi-yi Zavvar, 1362/1983), 2:82; line 1774.
[23] Shafi'i (d. 820) was the founder of a legal school of thought (*madhhab*) which was named after him. The Hanafi *madhhab* traces itself to Abu Hanifa (d. 767).
[24] 'Ayn al-Qozat Hamadani, *Tambidat*, 115-6.
[25] 'Ayn al-Qozat Hamadani, *Tambidat*, 22.
[26] For example, 'Ayn al-Qozat and Ahmad Ghazali followed the Shafi'i *madhhab*; Rumi was a Hanafi; 'Abd al-Qadir Gilani and Khwaja 'Abd Allah Ansari were Hanbali Sufis. Likewise, there were other Sufis who followed the Malaki and Ja'fari *madhhab*s.
[27] 'Ayn al-Qozat Hamadani, *Tambidat*, 198-199.
[28] Hakim Sana'i, *Divan-i Hakim Abu 'l-Majd Majdud [i]bn Adam Sana'i Ghaznavi*, Mudarris Radawi (Razavi), ed., (Tehran: Intisharat-i Sana'i, 4th reprint, n.d.), 827.
[29] Jalal al-Din Rumi, *Divan-i Shams-i Tabrizi*, 1:289. Shafi'i and Abu Hanifa were of course important jurists whose names provided the titles of the two legal schools that the majority of Sufis belonged to. Another manuscripts adds the names of the other two founders of Sunni schools of legal thought:
"Hanbali?
Has no tradition dealing with love.
Malaki?
Does not narrate about it."
[30] Abu Bakr al-Kalabadhi, *al-Ta'arruf li-madhhab ahl al-tasawwuf*, Mahmud Amin al-Nawawi, ed., (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Azhariyya, 1412 A.H./1992), 128. The first quote is taken from A. J. Arberry's masterful translation of this text, *The Doctrine of the Sufis,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935; reprinted 1991), 102.
[31] Qushayri, *al-Risalat al-qushayriyya*, edited by 'Abd al-Halim Mahmud, two volumes (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub, 1972?), 2:611. For an English translation of this text see Barbara Von Schlegell's *Principles of Sufism,* (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1999), 326. [henceforth Qusharyi-Von Schlegell]
[32] Qushayri-Von Schlegell, 330-1.
[33] Qushayri, 2:615.
[34] Qushayri-Von Schlegell, 335.
[35] Ahmad Ghazali, *Sawanih*, 2; Ghazali-Pourjavady, *Sawanih*, 15.
[36] For a brilliant and insightful presentation of this teaching, see Michael Sells, "Ibn 'Arabi's Garden Among the Flames", Mystical Language of Unsaying, 90-92.
[37] Ghazali-Pourjavady, *Sawanih*, 68-9.
[38] Ghazali, *Sawanih*, 4.
[39] These themes have been well explored by the "Chicago school" of scholars of Arabic literature, including Suzanne P. Stetkevych, Jaroslav Stetkevych, Michael Sells, Th. Emil Homerin, etc.
[40] *The Life, Personality and Writings of al-Junayd,* edited and translated by Dr. Ali Hassan Abdel-Kader, (London: E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Series, n.s., XXII, 1976), 152-159.
[41] 'Ayn al-Qozat Hamadani, *Tambidat*, 203.
[42] 'Ayn al-Qozat Hamadani, *Tambidat*, 244.
[43] Ghazali-Pourjavady, *Sawanih*, 36.
[44] 'Ayn al-Qozat Hamadani, *Tambidat,* 179.
[45] 'Ayn al-Qozat Hamadani, *Tambidat*, 245.
[46] 'Ayn al-Qozat Hamadani, *Tambidat,* 243-3.
[47] *Nizam ad-Din Awliya: Morals of the Heart,* translated by Bruce Lawrence, (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 63.
[48] Ghazali-Pourjavady, *Sawanih*, 33.
[49] Ghazali-Pourjavady, *Sawanih*, 31.
[50] See Henry Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi,* trans. Ralph Manheim, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 115: "Thus the divine Names have meaning and full reality only through
and for beings who are their epiphanic forms..."
[51] Badi' al-Zaman Foruzanfar, *Ahadith-i masnavi*, (Reprint; Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1366/1987), 29.
[52] Ghazali-Pourjavady, *Sawanih*, 35.
[53] The city of Kirman was known as the main producer of Cumin (zira) in Iran, so there is no sense in taking a product to a locale where it is already found in plenty. The American equivalent would be taking sourdough to San Fransisco, or as R. A. Nicholson, *Tales of Mystic Meaning,* (Reprint, Oxford: Oneworld Press, 1985), 57, n. 1, puts in a charmingly British English: "carrying coals to Newcastle."
[54] Shams-i Tabrizi, *Maqalat-i Shams-i Tabrizi,* Muhammad 'Ali Muwahhid, ed., (Tehran: Intisharat-i Khwarazmi), 69.
[55] Hujwiri-Nicholson, *Kashfal-mahjub*, 310.
[56] Ruzbihan Baqli, *'Abhar al-'ashiqin,* Henry Corbin and Muhammad Mu'in, ed., (Reprint; Tehran: Intisharart-i Manuchihri, 1366/1987), 88: *'ishq al-insan sullam 'ishq al-rahman*. As I will emphasize later, these divisions are to some extent arbitrary. Even in the writings of Hazrat Inayat Khan, who is moving in a direction of transcending these facile divisions, one still comes across statements which reinforce the pedagogic nature of human love: "When one has risen above human love, divine love springs forth." (the Complete Sayings, 115)
[57] William Chittick, *Sufi Path of Love*, 200-1.
[58] Ayn al-Qozat Hamadani, *Tambidat,* 140.
[59] For these legal classifications, and distinctions between *farz* and *wajib*, refer to Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence,* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1991), 324-7.
[60] 'Ayn al-Qozat Hamadani, *Tambidat,* 97.
[61] For an examination of these themes, see Joseph Bell, *Love Theory in Later Hanbalite Islam*, op. cit.
[62] Farid al-Din 'Attar, *Tadhkirat al-auliya',* 87.
[63] 'Ayn al-Qozat Hamadani, *Tambidat,* 136.
[64] 'Ayn al-Qozat Hamadani, *Tambidat,* 285.
[65] Michael Sells, "Ibn 'Arabi's Garden among the Flames: The Heart Receptive of Every Form", *in The Mystical Language of Unsaying,* 90.
[66] 'Ayn al-Qozat Hamadani, *Tambidat*, 23.
[67] Modified from Selected Poems from the *Divani Shamsi Tabriz*, R. A. Nicholson, ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1898, 1977), 70-72.