

Medieval Moroccan Sufi Imaginary of *Tazkiyah*: Oral Narratives on Taming the Lion as a Manifestation of Subduing the *Nafs*

Amedjar Lahoucine

Mohammed V University, Faculty of Letters, Rabat, Morocco

Copyright © 2024 ISSR Journals. This is an open access article distributed under the **Creative Commons Attribution License**, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

ABSTRACT: The mystical teachings of world traditions alongside the spiritual teachings of Sufism have long been occupied with the idea of understanding the *nafs* (the inner self) and the various inflictions of the ego. Although the perception of the *nafs* differs from one religious, spiritual, philosophical tradition to the other, it is a matter of fact that all of these teachings have sought to establish the centrality of the human struggle in the process of cultivating the *nafs* and overcoming the fluctuations of the ego for the purpose of achieving self-salvation and liberation. In this regard and based on a legal and theological understanding of the notion of *tazkiyah* (self-purification) as well as a textual reading of some oral narratives and stories from the teachings of Zen spirituality, Christian mysticism, and Moroccan Sufism which have linked the reprehensible and blameworthy attributes of the human *nafs* to the vicious aspects of wild animals, including oxen, tigers, bears, and lions, the research seeks to underline the medieval Moroccan Sufi imaginary of *tazkiyah*. It argues that some oral narratives of medieval Moroccan ascetics on possessing the *karāma* (saintly marvel) of taming the lion symbolizes the idea of subduing the *nafs*.

KEYWORDS: zen spirituality, christian mysticism, moroccan sufism, self-purification, spiritual struggle, self-reform, saintly marvel, taming animals.

1 INTRODUCTION

The term *tazkiyah* is usually perceived as one of the most comprehensive concepts in Islamic teachings, especially that the term and its various derivative forms have been frequently mentioned in the Quran and the reported sayings of the Prophet. The linguistic connotation of *tazkiyah* in Arabic language is derived from the verbal root *zakkā* (lit. to grow), and it revolves around a wide range of meanings all of which have to do with self-purification, self-development, personal growth, and self-righteousness gained through the process of subduing the *nafs* (the inner self) and its untamed desires from the lust of the ego.¹ While some of these concepts are also rooted in contemporary major self-theories of various fields, the means and ways of self-discipline have been dealt with in Sufism through what is known as *ilm as-sulūk* (lit. science of conduct).² In this regard,

¹ Throughout this article, I translated the Arabic word *an-nafs* and *tazkiyat an-nafs* in English as "the inner self" and "self-spiritual purification" respectively without actually indulging into the discussion of the various synonymous translations of the term, which, for the limit of the scope of the current paper are not going to be discussed thoroughly. However, for more details on these issues, see Anas Ahmad Karzun, *Minhaj al-Islam fi tazkiyat al-nafs* (2 vols. Beirut : Dar Ibn Hazm, 1997), vol. 1, pp. 26-40 ; see also Abd al-Rahman Hasan Habanaka al-Maydanl, *al-Akhlaq al-Islamiyya wa Ususuha*, 5th ed (2 vols. Damascus: Dar al-Qalam, 1999), vol. 1, pp. 229-55; A.S. Tritton, 'Man, *nafs*, ruh, qalb, Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, 34:3 (1971), pp. 491-5.

² Among the synonymous legal terms for *taṣawwuf* (Sufism) in Sufi literature, *ilm as-sulūk* (science of conduct), *ilm al-akhlāq* (science of ethics), *ilm al-haqāiq wa al-manāzil wa al-aḥwāl* (science of truths, stages, and states), *ilm al-mu'āmalāt* (science of dealings). See, Muḥammed 'Ali at-Tahānawī. *Mawsū'at Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥat al-'Ulūm*. Translated by 'Abdullāh al-Khāldi. (Beirut: Maktabat Lubnān Nāshirūn, 1996), v 1, p 41.

and as earlier as the 2nd/7th centuries of Islam, a copious literature on *ādāb an-nafs* (self-etiquettes) and *riyādat an-nafs* (disciplining the inner self) has already been produced by eminent Sufi scholars such as al-Ḥārith ben Asad al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857), al-Ḥakīm at-Tirmidhī (d.320/869), Abū ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān as-Sulamī (d. 412/1021), and Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d.505/1111).³ The research aims at investigating the Moroccan Sufi imaginary of *tazkiyah* as underlined in the Sufi literature by scrutinizing the various manifestations of the Sufi practices surrounding self-discipline, including some oral narratives on the idea of taming animals, especially the lion, and its representations in the process of subduing the *nafs*. By contemplating the linguistic and theological connotations of *tazkiyah*, discussing the stages of self-reform, and highlighting *jihād an-nafs* (spiritual struggle) in the practice of *tazkiyah*, the research provides an overview on the depictions of the inner self in some oral mystical and Sufi traditions, arguing that Moroccan Sufis perceive taming animals as a manifestation of subduing the *nafs*. These early Sufis consider *hawa an-nafs* (the lust of the ego) as one of the most vicious foes that need to be subdued and disciplined, a process which is presumably depicted in medieval Moroccan Sufi imaginary in the form of oral narratives on possessing the *karāma* (saintly marvel) of taming the lion, one of the most vicious animals that symbolizes *an-nafs al-ammāra bi as-sū’* (the unruly animal self that dictates evil). Although the Quran does not use the term “the animal self” as an equivalent term for *an-nafs al-ammāra bi as-sū’*, as it is more of a philosophical concept⁴, yet many early eminent Sufis, including Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072) and Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) provide a very comprehensive analysis on the *nafs*.⁵ They compare the reprehensible and blameworthy attributes of the human *nafs* to the faculties of animals, especially when the person is dominated by the lust of the ego.⁶ In fact, al-Ghazālī ascribes perception to the animal self with its *qiwā hayawāniyya* (animal faculties) and intellection to the human inner self with its *qiwā ‘aqliya* (rational faculties), assuring that when animal faculties overflow the human rational faculties, the person descends to the lowest stage of beasts by being stripped of the sense of humanity and its merits.⁷ As we shall see later on, such views of the *nafs* is well documented in the literature of medieval Moroccan Sufis as well. So, they consider the practice of *mujāhadat an-nafs* (self-spiritual struggle) through *tazkiyah* as the only way towards subduing the animal faculties of the *nafs* because Sufism, as defined by the prominent Sufi scholar Abū al-Ḥasan ash-Shādīlī, is “training the *nafs* to be in accordance with ‘*ubūdiyyah* (servitude) and imposing its return to the principles of lordship (*aḥkām al-rubūbiyyah*)”.⁸

2 THE LINGUISTIC AND TERMINOLOGICAL CONNOTATIONS OF *TAZKIYAH*

As emphasized earlier, the term *tazkiyah* is derived from the linguistic verbal root *zakkā* which literally signifies “to grow” or “to increase”, and the linguistic connotation of the word as a *maṣdar* (verbal noun) *zakāt* denotes the third pillar of Islam (i.e. almsgiving) and revolves around two meanings: purification and growth.⁹ In fact, the Persian philologist ar-Rāghib al-Īṣfahānī (d.502/1108) in his treatise on Arabic lexicography of Qur’anic terms states: “almsgiving is called *zakāt* because of its origins in *an-numuw* (growth) out of the *baraka* (blessing) of the Almighty, and this growth covers both the worldly and

³ Cf. See, for instance, Abū ‘Abdullah al-Ḥārith ben Asad al-Muḥāsibī. *Adāb an-Nufūs*. Edited by ‘Abd al-Qāder Ahmed ‘Aṭa. (Beirut: Muassasat al-Kutub at-Thaqāfiya, 1991). See also, Abū ‘Abdullah al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī *Risālat al-Mustarshidin*. Edited by ‘Abd al-Fattāh Abū Ghudda. (Ḥalab: Dār as-Salām, 1964), 26. See also, Abū ‘Abdullāh al-Ḥakīm at-Tirmidhī. *Kitāb ar-Riyāda wa Adab an-Nafs*. Edited by A. J. Arberry and ‘Ali Hasan ‘Abd al-Qādir (Cairo: Muṣṭafa al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa Awlādūh, 1947), 13. See also, Abū ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān as-Sulamī. ‘Uyūb an-Nafs wa Mudāwātuha. Edited by Muḥammed ‘Abd al-Mun‘im Khafājī and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Sharaf. (Cairo: Dār ash-Shurūq, 1981) and Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī. *Ma‘ārij al-Quds fī Madārij Ma‘rifat an-Nafs*. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1988).

⁴ For a more comprehensive discussion of the *nafs* from a philosophical view see, for instance, Abū ‘Ali ibn Sīna. *An-Najāt fī al-ḥikma al-Manṭiqiyya wa at-ṭabī‘a al-Ilāhiyya*. Edited by Muhy Ed-din Ṣabrī al-Kurdī. (Cairo: Maktabat Muṣṭapha al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1938), 192.

⁵ ‘Abd al-Karīm Abū al-Qasim al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072) in his epistle assures that when the Sufis use the term *nafs* they usually refer to *mā kāna ma‘lūlan min awṣāfi al-‘abdi wa mazmūman min af‘ālih* (what is regarded as the reprehensible and blameworthy attributes and actions of the human being). See ‘Abd al-Karīm Abū al-Qāsim Al-Qushayrī. *Ar-Rissāla Al-Qushayriyya*. Edited by ‘Abdelhālim Mahmūd and Mahmūd ben Sharīf (Cairo: Matābī’ Muassat Dār as-Sha‘b, 1989), 174. Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī. *Ma‘ārij al-Quds fī Madārij Ma‘rifat an-Nafs*. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1988), 39-40.

⁶ ‘Abd al-Karīm Abū al-Qasim al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072) in his epistle assures that when the Sufis use the term *nafs* they usually refer to *mā kāna ma‘lūlan min awṣāfi al-‘abdi wa mazmūman min af‘ālih* (what is regarded as the reprehensible and blameworthy attributes and actions of the human being). See ‘Abd al-Karīm Abū al-Qāsim Al-Qushayrī. *Ar-Rissāla Al-Qushayriyya*. Edited by ‘Abdelhālim Mahmūd and Mahmūd ben Sharīf (Cairo: Matābī’ Muassat Dār as-Sha‘b, 1989), 174. Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī. *Ma‘ārij al-Quds fī Madārij Ma‘rifat an-Nafs*. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1988), 39-40.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Cf. Ḥāmid Saqar. *Nūr at-Taḥqīq fī Ṣiḥhat A‘māl at-Ṭarīq*. (Cairo: Maṭba‘at Dār at-Ta‘līf, 1970), 98.

⁹ Cf. Abū al-Hussain Ahmed ben Fāris. *Mu‘jam Maqāyīs al-Lughā*. Edited by ‘Ab-Asalām Muḥammed Hārūn. (Beirut, Dār al-Fikr, 1979) v3, 17.

otherworldly matters (i.e. wealth and deeds) of the servant of God”.¹⁰ Al-Iṣfahānī assures that the word *zakāt* is named as such because it implies both hope in God’s blessing and purification of the *nafs*, meaning self-development and growth with goodness and blessing.¹¹ Upon exploring the overall linguistic connotations of the term *tazkiyah* and its derivative forms as indicated in the sacred texts of the Quran and hadith, Ibn Manẓūr assures that it revolves around the meanings of *namā’* (growth), *ṭahāra* (purification), *baraka* (blessing), *ṣalāḥ* (righteousness), and *madḥ* (praise), depending on the contextual use of this term and its grammatical function within these sacred texts.¹²

As far as the Quran is concerned, most exegetists emphasize that the verbal form *tazakkā* “who purifies himself and “*yatazzakkā* “to purify himself” in verses such as (Qu’ran 35: 18), (Qu’ran 92: 18), (Qu’ran 20: 76), (Qu’ran 73: 18), and (Qu’ran 87: 14) denote the linguistic connotation of “purification”, depending on the verbal form in these verses.¹³ Many other verbal forms of the plural form such as *yuzakkikum* “he is purifying you”, *yuzakkīhim* “he is purifying them”, and *yuzakkūn* “they purify themselves” in verses (Qu’ran 2: 129), (Qu’ran 2: 151), (Qu’ran 2: 174), (Qu’ran 3: 77), (Qu’ran 3: 164), (Qu’ran 4: 49), (Qu’ran 9: 103), and (Qu’ran 62: 2) are also interpreted by Quranic exegetists to indicate the meaning of “purification”.¹⁴ However, many early Quranic commentators did not explain the rhetorical cause (*as-sirr al-balāghī*) behind the introduction (*taqdīm*) of the word *yuzakkīhim* in the above-mentioned verses as opposed to the delay (*takhīr*) of it in verse (Qu’ran 2: 129). While these verses emphasize that *tazkiyah* alongside the teaching of *al-kitāb* (lit. the book) and *al-hikma* (lit. wisdom) are the noblest missions of the Prophet of Mohammed (peace be upon him) towards his *ummah* (nation), the mission of purification cited in verse (Qu’ran 2: 129) should be understood in the context of the Prophet Abraham and Ishmael’s prayer which was accepted in favor of the Prophet Mohammed.¹⁵ In attempting to explain the wording arrangement of these Prophetic missions as mentioned in the prayers of the Prophet Abraham and Ishmael in verse (Qu’ran 2: 129), the renowned Tunisian Quranic commentator Muḥammad aṭ-Ṭāhir ben ‘Āshūr (d.1393/1973) assures that such wording arrangement (i.e. recitation of the book, teaching of wisdom, and purification) is in consistence with the revelation. This is because the first thing to be conveyed is the recitation of the Qur’an, then teaching its meanings, and finally teaching useful knowledge through which one obtains inward and outward purification.¹⁶ The term *tazkiyah*, denoting the inward and outward purification of the *nafs*, is usually approached by the Sufis as one of the defining aspects of Sufism.¹⁷ In his attempts to define Sufism, Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072) cites the word *ṣafā’* (purification) as one of the derivatives of the term *taṣawwuf*, though he emphasizes that such derivative is far from the Arabic lexicon.¹⁸ In fact, the eminent Persian Sufi Abū Bakr al-Kalābādhī (d.384/994) in his treatise *At-ta’arruf li madhabi ahli at-taṣawwuf* (the Doctrine of the Sufis) attributes *ṣafā’* (purification) as a linguistic connotation of *taṣawwuf* to the renowned scholar Bishr al-Ḥāfī (d.227/841) while Ahmed Ibn ‘Ajība al-Idrissī (d.1224/1809) ascribes it to Saḥl at-Tusturī (d. 283/896).¹⁹

As far as the prophetic tradition is concerned, many hadith reports indicate that the meaning of *tazkiyah* is synonymous with the Sufi state of *murāqabah* “inward accounting” or “spiritual surveillance”. In an authentic hadith, ‘Abdullah ben Mu’āwiya al-Ghādirī reports that a man asked the Prophet about the meaning of *tazkiyah* and the Prophet said: “*tazkiyah* is to know that God is with you wherever you are”.²⁰ As we shall see in further details, *murāqabah* is a constant continuous heightening of self-spiritual awareness and self-consciousness of the divine presence through the process of *tazkiyah* and self-improvement towards the sublime *maqām* (state) of *ihsān* (excellence) as defined by the famous hadith of the archangel

¹⁰ Cf. Ar-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī. *Mufradāt al-Fāz al-Qurān*. Edited by Safwān ‘Adnān Dāwudī. 4th edition (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2009) v1, 380.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Cf. Ibn Manẓūr. *Lisān al-‘Arab*. (Beirut: Dār Ṣāder, 1990) v14, pp 358-359.

¹³ Cf. Qur’anic commentaries on the following verses: (Qu’ran 35 :18), (Qu’ran 92 :18), (Qu’ran 20 :76), (Qu’ran 73 :18), (Qu’ran 87 :14).

¹⁴ Cf. Qur’anic commentators on the following verses (Qu’ran 2 :129), (Qu’ran 2 :151), (Qu’ran 2 :174), (Qu’ran 3 :77), (Q. 3 :164), (Q. 4 :49), (Q. 9 :103), (Q. 62:2)

¹⁵ Cf. (Qu’ran 2 :129).

¹⁶ Cf. Muḥammad aṭ-Ṭāhir ben ‘Āshūr. *Tafsīr at-Taḥrīr wa at-Tanwīr*. (Tunisia: ad-Dār at-Tūnusiyya li an-Nashr, 1984), v1, p723.

¹⁷ Cf. Ahmed Ben ‘Ajība. *Iqadh al-Himam fi Sharh al-Hikam*. Edited by Ahmed Hassab Allah (Cairo: Dar al-Ma’arif, n.d), 16. See also, Ḥāmid Saqar. *Nūr at-Taḥqīq fi Ṣiḥhat A’ mā’ aṭ-Ṭarīq*, 98.

¹⁸ Cf. ‘Abd al-Karīm Abū al-Qāsim Al-Qushayrī. *Ar-Rissāla Al-Qushayriyya*. Edited by ‘Abdelhālim Mahmūd and Mahmūd ben Sharīf (Cairo: Matābi’ Muassat Dār as-Sha’b, 1989), 464.

¹⁹ Cf. Abū Bakr al-Kalābādhī. *At-Ta’arruf li Madhabi Ahli at-Taṣawwuf*. Edited by Arthur John Arberry. 2nd edition (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1994), 5. See also Ahmed Ben ‘Ajība al-Idrissī. *Mi’rāj at-Taṣawwuf ila Ḥaqāiq at-Tṣawwuf*. Edited by ‘Abdelmajid Khayyālī. (Casablanca, Markaz al-Turāth al-Thaqāfī al-Maghribī, 2004), 26.

²⁰ Cf. Abū Baker al-Bayhaqī. *As-Sunan al-Kubrā*. Edited by Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Qāder ‘Aṭā. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2002), v4, 161.

Gabriel.²¹ Such spiritual state of excellence and perfection, however, entails striving and undergoing a spiritual path of extensive exercise of *jihād an-nafs* (self-spiritual struggle) through six stages. These stages begin with *al-mushāraṭa* (setting out conditions), and it is usually evaluated by *al-muḥāsaba* (ongoing self-account) so that one can eventually attain the sublime stage of *al-mushāhada* (witnessing).²² However, before indulging into the discussion of this stage of *al-mujāhada* (self-spiritual struggle), an indispensable preliminary of the literature on the concept of *tazkiyah* as well as an explanation of the unrefined state of the *nafs* and its stages of reform is inevitably needed.

3 AN OVERVIEW ON THE CONCEPT OF *TAZKIYAT AN-NAFS* IN THE LITERATURE

As we have already emphasized, most of early and modern literature on the Sufi teachings do you usually refer to the subject matter of *tazkiyat an-nafs* under different headings all of which have sought to indicate the pivotality of this concept, especially that Sufism itself is allied with the notion of *tazkiyah*. In fact, *tazkiyah* is regarded as one of the most agreed upon principles in Islam as it matters both Sufis and non-Sufis alike. The Hanbalī traditionalist al-Hāfiz ibn Rajab (d. 795/1393) in his *Majmū' ar-rasā'il* (Miscellaneous Epistles) assures that all revealed messages sought to purify the human *nafs* from its ruses and afflictions.²³ Likewise, the renowned jurist Ibn Taymīyah, Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Ḥalīm (d. 728/1328) confirms such view in his epistle on *tazkiyat an-nafs*, stating that the core of the concept of *tazkiyah* is *tawḥīd* (unicity of God) as one cannot achieve self-purification unless he gets rid of its inversion which is *shirk* (polytheism).²⁴

As a matter of fact, early scholars usually use concepts such as *tahzīb* (adornment) of *an-nafs* as a synonymous concept for *tazkiyat an-nafs*, and both Ibn 'Aqīl al-Baghdādī (d. 565/1172) as well as Ibn al-Mubarrad Hassan ben 'Abd al-Hādī al-Maqdisī (d. 909/1509) authored two treatises exploring the adornment aspects of the *nafs* in regards to the etiquettes of seeking knowledge.²⁵ Similarly, the Māliki Sufi jurist Ibn 'Atā Allah as-Sakandarī (d. 709/1309) devotes his magnum opus *Tāj al-'arūs al-ḥāwī li tahzīb an-nufūs* (The Bride's Crown Which Includes Self-Adornments) to the discussion of the spiritual and devotional aspects of *tazkiyah* alongside the profound teachings of Sufism.²⁶

Other scholars would incline to use the expressions of *mudāwāt an-nafs* (self-healing) or *muḥāsbat an-nafs* (self-accountability) in dealing with the means of disciplining the *nafs* through the method of spiritual purification.²⁷ Among the most often cited examples in this regard is al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857) whose spiritual conception of *tazkiyat an-nafs* is thoroughly investigated by Gavin N. Picken in his PhD study.²⁸ Although such work is more of a comprehensive overview on the perception, methodology, and works of al-Muḥāsibī as a prominent master of Islamic spirituality, Picken has actually done so well in citing a useful list of references on the subject matter of *tazkiyah*, paving the way for other scholars to go through such concept in further details.²⁹ Following the works of al-Muḥāsibī, the Baghdādī ascetic Abū Bakr 'Abd Allāh ben Muḥammad ben 'Ubayd ben Sufyān al-Kurashī, known as Ibn Abī ad-Dunyā (d. 281/894), outlined in his five chapter treatise on *Muḥāsbat an-nafs* the deficiencies of the *nafs*, suggesting the spiritual remedies for these deficiencies based on a collection of hadiths ascribed to the Prophet.³⁰ As we shall see later on in further details, the cornerstone of the copious work on *tazkiyat an-nafs* has already been available by the beginning of the 3rd /8th centuries onwards.

²¹ Cf. Abū Nāṣar as-Sarj at-Ṭūṣī in his treatise *al-luma'* while defining the stage of *al-murāqabah* cite the famous hadith of the archangel Gabriel on *iḥsān*, Abū Nāṣar as-Sarj at-Ṭūṣī. *Al-luma'*. Edited by 'Abdelhalim Mahmud and Taha 'Abd al-Baqi (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-haditha, 1990), 82. For the full hadith see, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, the Book of Blief, Hadith 50.

²² Cf. 'Abdullah ben Ahmed Ibn 'Ajība al-Idrissī. *Mi'rāj at-Tashawuuf ila Ḥaqāiq at-Tṣuwuuf*. Edited by 'Abdelmajid Khayyālī, 32 and 38.

²³ Cf. Ibn Rajab al-Hanbalī. *Majmu' Rasā'il al-Hāfiz Ibn Rajab*. Edited by Abū Muṣ'ab Ṭal'at ben Fuad al-Julwānī, (Cairo: Al-Fārūq al-Haditha Li at-Tibā'a wa an-Nashr, 2003), 462.

²⁴ Cf. Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Ibn Taymīyah. *Tazkiyat an-Nafs*. Edited by Muhammed ben Sa'id ben Salim al-Qaḥṭānī. (Riyad: Dār al-Muslim li an-Nashr wa at-Tawzī', 1994), 43

²⁵ Cf. Hājī Khalīfa. *Kashf az-Zunūn*. Edited by Isma'il Bāsha. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, nd) v4, 269.

²⁶ Cf. Ibn 'Atā Allah as-Sakandarī. *Tāj al-'Rūs al-Ḥāwī li Tahzīb an-Nufūs* (Cairo: Dār Jawāmi' al-Kalim, nd). For English translation, see Sherman A. Jackson. *Sufism for Non-Sufis? Ibn 'Ata' Allah Al-Sakandari's Taj Al-'Arus*. (Oxford University Press: 2012)

²⁷ Cf. 'Alī ibn Aḥmad Ibn Hazm. *Mudāwāt al-Nufūs*. (Beirut: Dār al-Baṣā'ir, 1970), see also

²⁸ Cf. Picken Gavin. *The Concept of Tazkiyat al-Nafs in Islam in the light of the works of al-Harith al-Muhsib*. PhD thesis, (University of Leeds, 2015).

²⁹ Ibid. 8-12. See also, Picken Gavin. *Spiritual Purification in Islam: The Life and Works of al-Muḥāsibī* (Abingdon, Oxon & New York: Routledge, 2011).

³⁰ Cf. Ibn Abī ad-Dunyā. *Muḥāsbat an-Nafs*. Edited by al-Musta'sim bi Allah ben Abi Hurayra and Mustapha ben 'Ali ben 'Iwaz. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1986).

4 THE UNREFINED STATE OF THE *NAFS* AND ITS STAGES OF SELF-REFORM

The words *tazkiyah* and *an-nafs* are usually combined together in various Qur'anic verses and prophetic traditions, and I have already cited some of them in the previous paragraphs. However, many other Qur'anic verses and prophetic hadiths do not necessarily include these two words together. As for the Quran, scholars would usually cite three different verses that manifest the stages of the *nafs* and one of which is the verse (Qur'an 12: 53) describing the unrefined state of the *nafs* as being prone to evil labeling it *an-nafs al-ammāra bi as-sū'* (the evil-commanding self).³¹ The second verse is (Qur'an 75: 2) which talks about the *nafs* that feels guilty, labeling it *an-nafs al-lawwāma* (the blaming self).³² The last verse of these stages of the *nafs* is the verse (Qur'an 89: 27) which is about *an-nafs al-muṭma'inna* (the peaceful soul) that is reassured due to its attainment of the highest level of tranquility, certainty, sincerity, and thus final salvation.³³

The first stage of the *nafs*, being the stage of commanding evil, is what the Quran actually ascribes to every human soul as it emphasizes that the *nafs* is naturally inclined towards desires and obsessed with them, and uses its faculties and limbs to achieve them all the time.³⁴ In fact, the revelation contexts (*asbāb an-nuzūl*) of the above-mentioned verse about *an-nafs al-ammāra bi as-sū'* is emphasized in Qur'anic exegeses, yet most of the earliest commentators disagree on whether the statement in the verse is ascribed to the Prophet Joseph or the wife of al-'Aziz of Egypt. Most of early commentators, including Imam aṭ-Ṭabarī, Imam az-Zamakhsharī, Imam ar-Rāzī, and Imam al-Baydāwī indicate that the verse reflects the Prophet Joseph's statement, as it comes in the context of self-critical of his own *nafs*, confirming the humanistic aspect of the *nafs* which is usually prone to evil, and demonstrating God's blessing of moral infallibility upon him.³⁵ However, some other commentators ascribe such statement to the wife of al-'Aziz, assuring that it is a confession of being guilty inasmuch as it is also an approval of the righteousness of the Prophet Joseph vis-à-vis her alleged accusations of seduction.³⁶

The struggle of the *nafs* through constant resistance and perpetual fluctuation between doing good and commanding evil is also stressed in various Prophetic traditions, and among them is the well-known hadith reported by Imam Anas ben Mālik in the hadith corpus of Imam at-Tirmidhī, Imam Ibn Māja, and Imam Ahmed. The Prophet is reported saying: "all the sons of Adam are sinners, and the best sinners are those who repent."³⁷ Obviously, repentance is a key concept in the Qur'an as an entire chapter is named *at-tawba* (repentance), and many verses invite the sinners to constantly repent, including the verse (Qur'an 2: 222) which bestows God's love upon those who repent and purify themselves.³⁸ The renowned medieval Persian Sufi, 'Alī Al-Hujwīrī (d.465/1072) considers sincere repentance as the initial phase in the spiritual path of *as-sālik* (Sufi wayfarer) towards *falāḥ* (salvation) exactly as the ablution is the fore-step in performing the worship, citing various hadiths which praise the attitude of constant and sincere repentance, including the report of 'Abdullah ben Mas'ūd which says: "the one who repents from sin is like the one who did not sin".³⁹ Likewise, Imām `Abd al-Wahid ibn `Ashir in his treatise *al-Murshid al-Mu'in* begins his chapter on the foundations of the spiritual path which lead to the knowledge of God by emphasizing *wujūb* (the obligation) of immediate *tawba* (repentance) from the misdeeds in the form of feeling sorry and with the preconditions of ceasing the wrongdoings, intending not to persist, and asking for forgiveness.⁴⁰

³¹ Cf. (Quran 12:53).

³² Cf. (Quran 75: 2).

³³ Cf. (Quran 89:27).

³⁴ Cf. (Quran 12:53).

³⁵ Cf. Muhammed ben Jarīr At-Ṭabarī. *Jāmi' al-Bayān'an Tafsīr āy al-Quran*. 'Abdullah ben' Abd al-Muhsin at-Turki. (Cairo: Dār Hājar li at-Tibā wa an-Nashr, 2001), v13, 207. See also Jār Allah az-Zamakhsharī. *Al-Kashshāf 'An Ghawāmid at-Tanzīl wa 'Uyūn al-Aqāwīl fī Wjūh at-Tāwīl*. Edited by Ahmed 'Abd al-Wujud and Muhammed Muawid. (Riyad: Maktabat al-Bikāt, 1998) v3, 298. See also Fakhr ad-Din ar-Rāzi. *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*. (Beirut: Matba'at Dār al-Fikr, 1981), v18, pp 159-160. 'Abdullah ben 'Umar al-Baydāwī. *Anwār at-Tanzīl wa Asrār at-Tawīl*. Edited by Muhammed' Abd ar-Rahmān al-Mar'ashli. (Beirut: Dār Ihyaa at-Thurat al-'Arabī,nd), v3, p 167. Imam ar-Rāzī, and Imam al-Baydāwī.

³⁶ Cf. Ismā'īl ben 'Umar ben Kathīr. *Tafsir al-Quran al-'Adhim*. Edited by Sāmi ben Muhammed as-Salāma. Dār Tayba li an-Nashr wa at-Tawzī'. (Riyad: 199), V4, 395.

³⁷ Cf. Muḥammad ben 'Īsā Tirmidhī. *Jami Al-Tirmidhi*. Maa Sharhihi Tuḥfat Al-Aḥwadhī / Li-Abd Al-Rahman Al-Mubarakfuri. (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, 1970), Vol. 4, Book 11, Hadith 2499.

³⁸ Cf. Quran (2:222).

³⁹ Cf. Abu al-Hassan al-Hujwiri. *Kashf al-Mahjub*. Edited by Is'ad 'abd al-Hadi Qindil. (Alexandria: Maktabat al-Iskandariyya, 1984),294. See also Abu 'Abdullah ben Majah. *Sunan Ibn Majah*. (Beirut: Dar Ihay al-Ktub al-'Arabiyya,), Book 37, Hadith 151.

⁴⁰ Cf. Ahmed Myara al-Maliki. *Ad-Durru Athamin wa al-Mawridu al-Mu'in Sharh Al-Murshid al-Mu'in*. Edited by 'Abdullah al-Manshawī. (Cairo: Dar al-Hadith, 2008),546.

The attitude of expressing constant repentance is one of the major characteristics of the second stage of self-reform, and the *nafs* being in this stage of perpetual fluctuation between good and evil is usually defined as *an-nafs al-lawwāma* (the blaming self). Qu'ranic references to such stage of the *nafs* is evident in the previously mentioned verse (Qu'ran 75: 2) while the other verse which does not explicitly mention the term *lawm* (blame) but rather uses its synonymous term *ḥaşra* (remorse) is (Qu'ran 39: 57).⁴¹ The eminent exegetist Fakhr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī (d.606/1210) in his commentary provides six meanings to the blaming self, including that such *nafs* is “the pious *nafs* which blames itself even if it exerts its efforts in worship and obedience”.⁴² He further assures that such blame is an indication of the wonders of the *nafs* as embodied in the Prophetic tradition “he who knows himself knows his Lord”.⁴³ Although some hadith traditionalists raise questions regarding the authenticity of such report as did ‘Abd al-Rahmān as-Sakhāwī who ascribes it to the Shāfi‘ī Persian Sufi Yahya Ibn Mu‘adh ar-Rāzī of the 3rd /9th century, yet the report has been one of the most important references on the centrality of the *nafs* in Sufi teachings. The great master Muhy Ed-Din Ben‘Arabī devotes an entire epistle to the discussion of this report.⁴⁴ The attitude of blaming the *nafs* has preoccupied a significant portion of the Sufi discourse as early as the 3rd /8th centuries. Two renowned ascetics Abū Ḥafṣ al-Hadād (d.265/878) and his disciple Hamdūn al-Qaṣṣār (d.270/879) founded the *Malamatiyya* (the Path of the blame) based on cultivating the self and fighting the inflictions of the ego.⁴⁵ Although some contemporary scholars of Sufism are not inclined to specifically associate the emergence of the *Malamatī* teachings to these two figures but to a specific tendency within early Islamic Sufism that looks at the *nafs* and its various deficiencies; it is well-known that one of the early references on the *Malamatī* teachings is Abū ‘Abd Ar-Rahmān as-Sulamī’s epistle, known as *ar-Risālat al-Malāmatiyya* (Epistle on the Malāmatiyya) (d.412/ 1021).⁴⁶

The practical side of the Malāmātī teachings exemplified in attempting to resort to spiritual struggle against every possible inclination of the *nafs* towards evil is manifested in Moroccan Sufism through the dissemination of these teachings by the prominent Maghribī figures, including Abū al-Hassan ‘Alī ben Hirzihim, his disciple Abū Madyan al-Ghawt (d. 589/1193), and Muhy Ed-Din Ben‘Arabī (d.638/1240). According to the hagiographical account *at-Tashwwuf* of Ibn az-Zayyāt, the Moroccan ascetic Abū al-Ḥssan‘Ali ben Hirzihim was known as the follower of the Sufi path of the blame.⁴⁷ As for Abū Madyan al-Ghawt who is considered as the forerunner of Sufism in the Maghrib and one of the disciples of Abū Ya‘za Yalnūr (d.572/1177), Muhy Ed-Din Ben‘Arabī reports in his epistle *Rūḥ al-quḍus* that he was the spokesman and the revival of such Sufi path in the Maghribī region.⁴⁸ In fact and as indicated by Abū al-‘Alā ‘Afifi, Ibn ‘Arabī himself in various instances of his widely recognized Sufi treatise *al-Futūḥāt al-makkīyah* (the Openings Revealed in Macca) was a prominent advocator of the Malāmātī Sufism, putting them “at the highest rank of *as-Sālikīn* (spiritual wayfarers)”.⁴⁹ As we shall see later on, the spiritual dimensions of such teachings in regards to disciplining the *nafs* have been manifested in the Moroccan Sufi practices reflecting the dominance of constant struggle and merciless self-reform.

As for the third stage in the process of self-reform, Sufis would usually consider *an-nafs al-mulhima* (the inspiring self) as a significant phase in subduing the limbs and faculties in accordance with the spiritual teachings, achieving the genuine comfort and pleasure of worship as the Prophet says “Give us comfort with it, Oh Bilal!”⁵⁰ This stage of self-reform is inferred from the Qu'ranic verse (91.8) which talks about inspiration and profound consciousness that God bestows on the *nafs*, allowing it to distinguish between piety and impiety.⁵¹ Robert Frager in his pioneering study on the Sufi psychology of growth describes such

⁴¹ Cf. Quran (75:2) and (39:57).

⁴² Cf. Fakhr ad-Din ar-Rāzi. *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*,160.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Cf. ‘Abd ar-Rahman as-Sakhāwī. *Al-Maqasid al-Hassana fi Bayan Kathir min al-Ahadith al-Mushtahira ‘Ala al-‘Ala*. Edited by Muhammed ‘Uthmān al-Khit. (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-‘Arabi, 1985), 568. See also Muhy Eddin Ibn ‘Arabi. *Ar-Risala al-Wujudiyya fi Man ‘Arafa Nafsahu ‘Arafa Rabbahu*. (Beirut: Dar al-Kutuub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1971).

⁴⁵ Cf. Abu al-Hassan al-Hujwiri. *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, 259.

⁴⁶ Cf. Abu ‘Ala ‘Afifi. *Al-Malamatiyya wa as-Sufiyya wa ahl al-Futuwa*. (Beirut: Dar al-Qalam li at-Tiba‘a wa an-Nashr, 2020), pp 30-67.

⁴⁷ Cf. Ibn al-Zayyāt Abu Ya‘qub Yusuf ben Yahya al-Tādīlī. *Al-Tashawwuf ila Rijal at-Taswwuf*, (Rabat: Manshurat kulliyat al-Adab wa al-‘Ulum al-Inssaniyya, 1984), 169.

⁴⁸ Cf. Ibn al-‘Arabī. *Risālat Rūḥ al-Quds fi Muḥāsabat an-Nafs*. (Damascus: Mu‘assasat al-‘Ilm, 1964), 47. See also Abd al-Wahhab al-Sha‘rani . *Lawaqih al-Anwar al-Qudsiyya fi bayan al-‘Uhud al-Muhammadiyya*. Edited by Ahmed Farid al-Mazyadi. (Kitāb-Nāshirūn, 2015) v 1, 15. See also Ibn Qunfud al-Qusantīnī. *Unssu al-Faqīrwa ‘Izzu al-Haqīr*. Edited by Mohammed al-Fāssi and Adolf Faure (Rabat: Manshūrāt al-Markaz al-Jāmi‘ībiKulliyat al-Adābjāmi‘at Mohammed al-Khāmiss, 1965), 14.

⁴⁹ Cf. Abu al-‘Ala ‘Afifi. *Al-Malamatiyya wa as-Sufiyya wa ahl al-Futuwa*, 30.

⁵⁰ Cf. Sunan Abi Dawud, Book 42, Hadith 4967.

⁵¹ Cf. Quran (91 :8).

phase as “the beginning of the real practice of Sufism” as its preceding phase is characterized by nothing more than “superficial understanding and mechanical worship”.⁵² Therefore, when the *nafs* is strong enough to resist its temptations and is more inclined towards spiritual liberation, it starts to receive spiritual illumination in the form of profound consciousness and reasonable distinction between good and evil. This stage is actually in opposition with the first stage where the *nafs* is prone to evil whereas it starts now commanding the good instead. The spiritual tendencies of the *nafs* in this stage overflow the material tendencies, and personal traits manifesting negative attitudes such as praise, pride, arrogance, adulation, and contempt are being turned into positive ones such as satisfaction, humility, selflessness, and surrender.

The achievement of spiritual satisfaction and contentment in the progress of self-reform leads to the next stage which is the stage of possessing *an-nafs al-muṭma'inna* (the peaceful self). The Qu'ranic verse which is usually cited as a reference to this type of the *nafs* is (Qu'ran 89: 27) in which the Almighty addresses, through his angels, the souls of the venerated saints, the ones reassured God's promise of dignity in hereafter. The Moroccan Sufi commentator Ibn 'Ajība al-Idrissī (d.1224/1809) interprets the word *al-muṭma'inna* as a reference to the *nafs* being reassured by God's presence, or by His remembrance, or by witnessing the Almighty, thus achieving the ultimate certainty where the shades of doubts of the *nafs* disappear.⁵³ As indicated in the previous verse, the *nafs* expresses two major aspects of the human soul in this stage, the aspects of being *rādiya* (being content) and *mardiyya* (being pleased by God). However, before enjoying this sublime stage of tranquility, the *nafs* of the wayfarer is actually required to exercise an extensive spiritual struggle with its six stages towards the final stage of self-salvation and liberation.

5 JIHĀD AN-NAFS (SELF-SPIRITUAL STRUGGLE) IN THE PROCESS OF TAZKIYAH

Al-Mujāhada is the Sufi stage denoting self-spiritual struggle in Sufism, and it is derived from the verbal form *jāhada*, meaning to struggle against someone or something. Both terms “*al-jihād*” and “*al-mujāhada*” signify the linguistic connotation of striving and exerting every possible effort either against evil, enemy, or above all one's own inner self.⁵⁴ In fact, understanding *mujāhada* as a form of struggle against the inner self is inferred from the verse (Qu'ran 29: 6) which emphasizes that the outcomes and benefits of one's strive goes back to him and not to God who is independent of all beings.⁵⁵ Scholars like Abū al-Ḥassan Muqātil ben Sulaymān Al-Balkhī (d.150/767), 'Abdullah ben 'Umar al-Baydāwī (d.685 or 691/1286 or 1319), and Burhān Ed-Dīn al-Biqā'ī (d.885/1480) were among the renowned exegetists who underlined such understanding of *mujāhada* in their commentaries on this verse.⁵⁶ Likewise, the Moroccan Sufi commentator Ibn 'Ajība al-Idrissī (d.1224/1809) assures that striving against the *nafs* entails being patient, bearing the *mashaqqa* (hardship) of obedience, undermining untamed desires, staying away from hurting creatures, and subduing the *nafs* by being vigilant to the Truth in every single moment and breath.⁵⁷ Other Sufi commentators, including the Shāfi'ī scholar Najm ad-Dīn Kubrā (d.618/1221), indicate that the *mujāhada* of the *nafs* in the mentioned verse refers to *tazkiyat an-nafs* (self-spiritual struggle) by obviating the reprehensible and blameworthy attributes and strengthening positive ones so that one can escape *sijn al-ammāriya* (the prison of the unruly animal self) in his spiritual quest.⁵⁸

The exercise of *jihād an-nafs* with its six stages has been one of the most important subject matters of the Sufi teachings, and Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī in his *Ihyā' 'ulūm ad-dīn* (Revival of Religious Sciences) devotes an entire book within this treatise to the discussion of these stages.⁵⁹ According to al-Ghazālī, the key to *falāḥ* (salvation) of any human being is undertaking *tazkiyah* (purification) of the *nafs* through *al-murābaṭa* (self-commitment), a synonymous term for *al-mujāhada*⁶⁰, with its stages of *al-mushāraṭa* (setting out conditions), *al-murāqaba* (eye witnessing), and *al-muḥāsaba* (self-accountability) in case the *nafs* is

⁵² Cf. Frager, Robert. *Heart, Self and Soul: the Sufi Psychology of Growth, Balance, and Harmony*. (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 1999), 70.

⁵³ Cf. Ibn 'Ajība al-Idrissī. *Al-Baḥr al-Madīd fī Tafsīri al-Qurān al-Majīd*. Edited by 'Abdullah al-Qurashi Raslan. (Cairo: al-Haya al-Misriya al-'Amma li al-Kitab, 2000) v 2, p603.

⁵⁴ Cf. Ar-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī. *Mufradāt al-Fāz al-Qurān*, 208.

⁵⁵ Cf. Quran (29 :6)

⁵⁶ Cf. Abū al-Ḥassan Muqātil ben Sulaymān. *Tafsīr Muqātil Ben Sulaimān*. Edited by 'Abdullāh Mahmūd Shaḥḥāta. (Beirut: Dār Ihyā at-Turāth al-'Arabī, 2002) v3, 373. See also, 'Abdullah ben 'Umar al-Baydāwī. *Anwār al-Tanzīl wa-Asrār at-Ta'wīl*. Edited by Muhammed 'Abderahmān al-Mar'ashli. (Beirut: Dār Ihyā at-Thurāt al-'Arabī, nd) v4, 189. See also Burhān Ed-Dīn al-Biqā'ī. *Naẓm ad-Durar fī Tanāsib al-Ayāt wa-as-Suwar*. (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, nd) v14, 394.

⁵⁷ Cf. 'Abdullah ben Ahmed Ben 'Ajība al-Idrissī. *Al-Baḥr al-Madīd fī Tafsīri al-Qurān al-Majīd*.

⁵⁸ Cf. Najm Ed-dīn al-Kubrā. *Tafsīr At-Ta'wīlāt an-Najmiya*. Edited by Aḥmed Farīd al-Mizyādī. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiya, 2009) v4, 390.

⁵⁹ Cf. Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī. *Ihyā' 'Ulūm Ad-Dīn*. (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2005), 1765.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 1781.

inclined towards the cultivation of its positive attributes or *at-tawbikh* (blame), *al-mujāhada* (spiritual struggle), and *al-mu'āqba* (punishment) in case the *nafs* is still reluctant.⁶¹ One of the most appealing examples that al-Ghazālī provides to explain the role of 'aql (lit. reason) in dealing with the *nafs* in these stages is the example of mutual trade where the contributor or the owner establishes the sustainment of an incentive income as a primary condition for such mutual trade with the partner.⁶² The extent to which the partner is facilitating the prosperity of the trade is usually checked by means of constant financial accounting and reporting which monitors the sustainment of the capital as well as the incentive income. Likewise, al-Ghazālī views the 'aql as having responsibility over the *nafs* as it sets the ultimate goal of *tazkiyah an-nafs* as a condition for *falāh* (salvation) of the inner self.⁶³ This stage of identifying the goals in the course of *al-murābaṭa* of the *nafs* is called *al-mushārāṭa*, and the *nafs* is being held an ongoing accountable for its intentions and desires through *murāqaba* and *muḥāsaba* in order to make it comply with the stated terms and conditions.⁶⁴ When the *nafs* attempts to transgress the terms and conditions outlined by the 'aql, then it has to undergo an extensive process of *al-mujāhada* through the stages of *al-mu'ātaba* (blame) or *al-mu'āqba* (punishment) in order to tame the evil prompting of its unquenchable desires.⁶⁵

The Moroccan Sufi narratives would usually outline the common practice of spiritual seclusion known as *uzla* and *khulwā* (lit. isolation) as an important step towards disciplining the *nafs*, and the renowned Moroccan Sufi figure Abū Ya`zā Yallanūr ben Maymūn (d.572/1177) was the archetype of the Moroccan illiterate ascetic tribesman exemplifying this Sufi attitude of reclusive asceticism.⁶⁶ As indicated by the eminent Moroccan historian Ibn Khaldūn, the Amazigh tribe of Abū Ya`zā Yallanūr ben Maymūn was arguably either the Maṣmūdyan Hazmirī tribe or the Haskkurian tribe or the Iruggānī tribe in the townlet of *Taghya* which is situated in the high Atlas mountain.⁶⁷ Being one of the well-recognized masters of the Maghribī sheikh Abū Madyan al-Ghawth (d.593/1198), Abū Ya`zā Yallanūr lived almost twenty years of spiritual seclusion in the region of Tinmel, advocating the life style of extreme asceticism as he used to cover his body with palm fiber mat and consume different types of herbs and plants.⁶⁸ Upon this constant diet and fashion habits, Abū Ya`zā Yallanūr bears the epithets of Bū gartīl (lit. the person wearing palm fiber mat) and Bū nalkūt (lit. the person eating herbs).⁶⁹ In fact, Abū al-Abbās at-Tādīlī in his hagiographical account assures that the nourishment of Abū Ya`zā Yallanūr manifests a non-human diet which is characterized by severity.⁷⁰ It was reported that while Abū Ya`zā's sustainment was more or less herbs and plants, he would usually offer his guests and those joining him in his spiritual retreat luscious food, including honey, sheep meat, and chicken.⁷¹

The fundamental principle surrounding this ascetic attitude undertaken by Abū Ya`zā Yallanūr lies in the fact that spiritual seclusion or *uzla* is regarded as a pivotal phase of *al-mujāhada* as it allows for infringing the habits of the *nafs* and subduing its untamed desires.⁷² Western scholars like Micheaux Bellaire and Vincent J. Corneill highlight the connections between Abū Ya`zā's ascetic attitude and the Nūriyya teachings of the eminent Baghdadī Khurāsānī Sufi of the 3rd Hijrī century Abū al-Hassan (or al-Hussain) an-Nūrī (d. around 295/908), identifying a number of medieval Moroccan ascetics like Abū Jabal Ya'lā (d.503/1110), 'Abd al-Jalīl Ben Wayhyān ad-Dukkālī (d.541/1146), 'Abd Allah ben w-Agrīs al-Mashanzā'ī, known also as Sidī Ben an-Nūr or Sidī Bū an-Nūr (d. around the 6th/12th centuries), Ayyūb Ben Sa'īd aṣ-Ṣanhājī, also known as Mūlāy Būsh'īb or Ayyūb as-Sārya, (d. 561/1166), and Abū Ya`zā Yallanūr (d.572/1177) as the advocators of such teachings.⁷³ Although some Moroccan hagiographical accounts, including *al-Mu'za* and *at-Tashawwuf*, cite many reports emphasizing the chain of spiritual lineage of

⁶¹ Ibid, 1765-1797.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Cf. Ahmed at-Tādīlī. *Aṣ-Ṣawma'ī. Kītāb Al-Mu'zā fi Manāqibi Abī Y'zā*. Edited by Alī al-Jāwī. (Agadir: Manshūrāt Kulliyat al-ādāb wa al-'Ulūm al-Insāniya, 1996).33. See also Abū al-Abbās al-Azafī. *Da'āmat al-Yaqīn fi Za'āmat al-Muttaqīn*. Edited by Ahmed Toufiq. (Rabat, Maktabat Khidmat al-Kitāb, 1989).

⁶⁷ Cf. *Tarikh ibn Khaldun* v6/370.

⁶⁸ Ibn al-Zayyāt Abu Ya'qub Yusuf ben Yahya al-Tādīlī. *Al-Tashawwuf ila Rijal at-Taswwuf*, (Rabat: Manshurāt kulliyat al-Adab wa al-'Ulum al-Insaniyya,1984),213

⁶⁹ Ibid., 217.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 215.

⁷¹ Ibid., 216.

⁷² Ibid., 215.

⁷³ Cf. Edward Michaux-Belaire, « Les Confréries Religieuses au Maroc », *Archives Marocaines*, 27 (1927), 40. See also. Vincent J. Cornell. "Hayy in the Land of Absāl: Ibn Ṭufayl and Ṣūfism in the Western Maghrib during the Muwahḥid Era" in *The World of Ibn Ṭufayl Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān*. Edited by Lawrence Conrad. (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 156-167.

these Moroccan Sufi disciples to their renowned master Abū al-Hassan (or al-Hussain) an-Nūrī all the way to the Junayd's uncle and master, as-Sari as-Saqati (d. 251/865-66), it should be noted that the outlook of reclusive asceticism of some of these figures finds its roots not only in the altruistic teachings of the Nūriyya but also in the spiritual alchemy of rupturing the habits of the *nafs* in the process of transforming its deficiencies. The idea of rupturing the habits of the inner self as indicted by Ibn 'Atā Allah as-Sakandarī in his one hundred twenty-seven aphorism of *al-hikam al-'atā'iyya* remains a fundamental principle in disciplining the *nafs* and possessing the *karāmāt* (saintly marvels).⁷⁴ In his commentary on this important aphorism, Ibn 'Ajība al-Ḥassanī states that the habits of the inner self are divided into *'awā'id hissiyya* (sensory habits) which include daily human habits such sleeping, eating, and worshiping as well as *'awā'id ma'nawiyya* (abstract habits) such as love of worldly desires and hate of blameworthy traits.⁷⁵ So, it is only through the inner warfare against the *nafs* and the rupturing of both its sensory and abstract habits that one can purify himself, achieve the sublime status of self-perfection and excellence (*maqam al-ihsān*), and possess sensory marvels (*karāmāt hissiyya*).⁷⁶ As we shall investigate now, the saintly marvels that have been orally transmitted among the early Moroccan Sufis and which manifest their achievement of specificity (*nayl al-khuṣūṣiyya*) in their warfare against the *nafs* and its sensory habits include taming vicious animals, mainly the lion.

6 TAMING VICIOUS ANIMALS AS A MANIFESTATION OF SUBDUING THE NAFS

As we have seen earlier in the beginning of this research, the *nafs*, usually translated in English as the soul, the inner self, the carnal self, or the animal self has been dealt with extensively in Sufi literature, and early Sufis consider the appetites of the *nafs* as a representation of evil aspects of the person, pointing out to the constant striving against the *nafs* and its ruses as the highest rank of human struggle. They support such position by some frequently cited statements that they attribute to the Prophet, including the report which says: "we have returned from the lesser struggle to the highest struggle" which is striving against the self.⁷⁷ In fact, they even perceive the *nafs* as the greatest enemy of human beings, and such perception of the *nafs*, especially in its unrefined state, is often justified by some pietistic references, including the statement narrated by al-Bayhaqī and reportedly attributed to the Prophet: "the worst of your enemies is your *nafs* which lies between your flanks".⁷⁸ Accordingly, they were preoccupied with the idea of subduing this vicious enemy in order to prevent it from exceeding the boundaries by imposing exaggerating spiritual exercises, including continual fasting, little instances of sleeping, frequently under eating, and reflective spiritual seclusion. As indicated by Imam al-Ghazālī, Yaḥyā ben Mu'ād ar-Rāzī sums up the ways of disciplining the *nafs* in these fundamental attitudes: the attitude of under eating which undermines luscious desires, the attitude of sleep deprivation which results in purified intentions, and the attitude of being reticent which ensures safe from the harm of others.⁷⁹

Although the nature of the *nafs* is usually considered as a contested subject matter in Sufi teachings, some Sufi narratives and representations on this human faculty highlights its vicious nature, depicting it in the form of a black dog, a young fox, a mouse, a seductive disobedient woman, a restive horse, a mule, a camel, a pig, Pharaoh, a snake, or even a Satan.⁸⁰ Obviously, these vicious creatures and wild animals stand for the inside obstacles and represent the state of wrestling with passions as the common trait among all these various representations is the dangerous crude side of the lust of the *nafs* which must be spiritually tamed exactly as vicious animals are ought to be tamed. In fact, the idea and tradition of taming wild animals dates back as earlier as the fourth century and is rooted outside Islamic spirituality as some tales on the art of taming the wild are well-documented in mystical Christian tales, especially in hagiographical accounts on the Armenian Bishop St Blaise of Sebaste and the Frankish Bishop St Corbinian.⁸¹ Likewise, the mystical Zen Buddhist tradition of the ten ox-herding pictures originally authored and explained by P'u Ming and Kuoan Shiyuan around 1150 depicts the map cycle required for spiritual development as its stages of training begins by searching for the ox (i.e. the genuine nature of the inner self) inside one's own moral

⁷⁴ Cf. Al-Hikam al-'Ataiyya, n 127. How can the laws of nature be ruptured for you so that saintly marvels occur while you, yourself, have to rupture your habits?

⁷⁵ Cf. Ahmed ibn 'Ajība. *Iqadh al-Himam fi Sharh al-Hikam*. Edited by Ahmed Hassab Allah (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, n.d), 300/301.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 559.

⁷⁸ Cf. Isma'il ben Muhammed al-'Ajlūnī. *Kashfu al-Khafaā wa Muzīl al-Ilbās' Amma Ashtahara min al-Aḥādith 'alā Alsinat an-Nas*. (Beirut: Dar Al Kotob Al Ilmiyah, 2017), 127.

⁷⁹ Cf. Abū ḥāmid al-Ghazālī. *Iḥyā' ulūm ad-Dīn*. Edited by 'Abdullāh al-Khāldī. (Beirut: Dar al-Arqam ben al-Arqam, 2016) v3, p 85.

⁸⁰ Cf. Annemarie Schimmel. *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975), p 112-13.

⁸¹ Cf. *Lives of Saints with Excerpts from Their Writings: selected and illustrated*. Edited by Joseph Vann. (John J. Crawley & Co., NY, 1954), 34. See also, Paul Shepard and Barry Sanders. *The Sacred Paw: The Bear in Nature, Myth, and Literature*. (Viking, 1985), 133.

consciousness (bodhi mind).⁸² Then it follows the next step of reflective commitment known as *Tangaryo* in which the wayfarer initiates self-orientation towards the inner being through the attitudes of concentration, passion, and determination to see the ox (i.e. realize the nature of the self) in the third stage of this progressive spiritual growth. After a hard struggle against the fluctuations of the ego and once the ox (self) is perceived in the fourth stage, the wayfarer in the fifth stage attempts to tame it, moving from the step of realization to the next step of actualization so that he can trigger an enduring harmony between the mind and the self and get wisdom and sagacity in the sixth stage. This is followed by the state of serenity and tranquility where the ox disappears (annihilating the vicious self), resulting in the rise of pure consciousness (the absolute *samādhī*) which leads to liberation in this final stage.⁸³

The idea of reaching the final stage of salvation through annihilating one's self from worldly qualities is actually one of the most dominant ideas in Sufi teachings. Ibn 'Ajība al-Idrissī (d.1224/1809) assures that "the state of annihilation (*fanā*) is when the greatness of the Almighty is manifested to the servant of God to the extent that he is not capable of seeing things, including his own inner self"⁸⁴. Elsewhere, he depicts the wayfarer experiencing such state as a twice-born person, for he gets rid of both sensory and abstract habits. In fact, and as we shall see now, continuous taming of the *nafs* and constant exertion of spiritual efforts towards such state of annihilation is depicted in some Moroccan oral narratives in the form of possessing the *karāma* (the saintly marvel) of taming the lion. As emphasized by Annemarie Schimmel, "Sufi hagiography is full of stories about the ways in which the masters of the past tamed their appetites and, if they failed, the manner of their punishment. The *nafs* is something very real, and many stories tell of its having been seen outside the body". A very striking story of this was highlighted in the hagiographical narrative of *as-sirr al-maṣūn* by at-Tahir as-Sadafi, and it was about a pious craftsman, living the life of seclusion and struggle against his carnal soul to the extent that his neighbors would be convinced that he was living with his wife due to his quarrels being heard every single night because of his loud self-spiritual accounting.⁸⁵ Furthermore, another well documented reports in which the *nafs* is depicted outside the body in the form of a Satan is the report narrated by Ibn 'Umar: "Every human being has with him his own Satan", a man promptly said: "Is there a Satan with you, too?", the Prophet replied: "Yes, but I have surrendered my Satan to Islam".⁸⁶

The idea of surrendering and purging the vehement attitudes of the *nafs* by some early Moroccan saints is usually represented in the form of possessing the saintly marvel of taming the lion (i.e. *nafs*), as it occupies a significant portion of oral narratives of these early Moroccan Sufis.⁸⁷ For instance, in *at-Tashawwuf* of Ibn az-Zayyāt, the ascetic Abū Ḥafs 'Umar ben Ḥārūn (d.595) is one of the most salient examples in this regard as he bears the epithet *Sidī Balyūṭ* or *Abū al-Luyūth* (lit. the father of lion).⁸⁸ According to Ibn az-Zayyāt at-Tādilī, oral narratives indicate that Abū Ḥafs 'Umar ben Ḥārūn was one of the pious ascetics who belonged to the Amāzigh tribe of *Ansa* and was known for his attitude of reclusive asceticism as he was living a life of spiritual seclusion in the highest mountain of *Sūs*.⁸⁹ The Moroccan historian Ahmed Toufiq points out that "his tomb in the *zawiya* of *Buamslākht* is well-known in the region of *Rās al-Wād* which is situated three miles away from *Awlūz*", a rural commune in the Northern Morocco.⁹⁰ Abū Ḥafs 'Umar ben Ḥārūn, as indicated by oral accounts, had the life of celibacy and devotion, and "he was used to stay most of his time in a cemetery where a lion would come and Abū Ḥafs would tenderly pat the lion telling it: "Go ! May Allah provide for you whence you won't harm any Muslim". The contemporary Moroccan

⁸² Cf. Kuoan Shiyuan. *The Poems on the Ten Ox-herding Pictures*. (Buddha's light Publishing, 2009). See also P'u Ming's *Ox herding Pictures and Verses*. Translated by Red Pine, 2nd Edition. (Empty Bowl, 2015).

⁸³ Cf. Dean L. Frantz. *The Ten Oxherding Pictures: A Guide to Enlightenment*. (Kearney: Morris Publishing, 2003).

⁸⁴ Cf. 'Abdullah ben Ahmed Ibn 'Ajība al-Idrissī. *Mi'rāj at-Tashawwuf ila Haqāiq at-Tṣuwuf*. Edited by 'Abdelmajid Khayyālī, 59.

⁸⁵ Cf. Tahir as-Sadafi, *as-Sirr al-maṣūn fi ma ukrima hi-hi al-mukhlisūn*, éd. critique H. Ferhat (Beirut, 1998), 92-93.

⁸⁶ Cf. Abū Shujā' Ad-Daylamī. *Al-Firdaws bi Mathūr al-Khiṭāb*. Edited by Sa'īd ben Basyūni Zaghlūl. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1986), 3/123

⁸⁷ Cf. 'Abd al-Ḥaqq ibn Ismā'īl al-Bādisī. *Al-Maqṣad al-Sharif wa al-Manza' al-Latif fi al-Ta'rif bi Sulahaa al-Rif*. Edited by Sa'id A'rab. 2nd edition (Rabat: al-Matba'a al-Malakiyya, 1993), 114. See also, Ahmed at-Tādilī as-Sawma'i. *Al-Mu'za fi Manāqibi asheikhi Abī Ya'zā*. Edited by 'Ali al-Jāwī. (Rabat: Matba'at al-Ma'arif al-Jadida, 1996), 115.

⁸⁸ Cf. Hāshim Ma'rūfī. *'Abir az-Zuhūr fī Tārīkh al-Dār al-Bayḍā' wa Mā 'Uḍifa ilayhā min Akhbār Ānfā wa-al-Shāwīyah 'Abra al-'Uṣūr*. (Matba'at an-Najāh al-Jadida, 1987), 88.

⁸⁹ Cf. Ibn al-Zayyāt Abu Ya'qub Yusuf ben Yahya al-Tādilī. *Al-Tashawwuf ila Rijal at-Taswwuf*, (Rabat: Manshurat kulliyat al-Adab wa al-'Ulum al-Inssaniyya, 1984), 342.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Cf. Hāshim Ma'rūfī. *'Abir az-Zuhūr fī Tārīkh al-Dār al-Bayḍā' wa Mā 'Uḍifa ilayhā min Akhbār Ānfā wa-al-Shāwīyah 'Abra al-'Uṣūr*. (Matba'at an-Najāh al-Jadida, 1987), 88.

⁸⁹ Cf. Ibn al-Zayyāt Abu Ya'qub Yusuf ben Yahya al-Tādilī. *Al-Tashawwuf ila Rijal at-Taswwuf*, (Rabat: Manshurat kulliyat al-Adab wa al-'Ulum al-Inssaniyya, 1984), 342.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

jurist, Hāshim Ma'rūfī, in his historiographical account on the city of Casablanca reports the same story, though he traces the origins of Abū Ḥafs to the Madyūna tribe.⁹¹ Hāshim Ma'rūfī highlights the fact that oral narratives on Abū al-Luyūth, possessing the *karāma* of taming the lion is well known among the inhabitants of this region, and that the practice of such *karāma* is probably taking place when Abū Ḥafs is in the state of seclusion, far from the inhabited areas.⁹²

As I have mentioned earlier, the state of spiritual seclusion is the turning point in dealing with the *nafs* and the practice of taming the *nafs* is the most important thing that takes place during this process of spiritual transformation. Moroccan Sufi hagiographies cite various stories manifesting such practice, and Abū Ya'za Yalnūr (d.572/1177) is also among the medieval ascetics who were known for undertaking such spiritual attitude.⁹³ In one of the oral accounts regarding Abū Ya'za's *karāma* of taming the lion, Ibn az-Zyyāt reports that while Abū Ya'za was in the forest to meet a bench of visitors, coming from Fez and were known as denouncers of his *karāmāt*, suddenly a lion appeared and attacked the guest's donkey. Then Abū Ya'za shouted at the lion and got close to it pulling its ears and asking them to ride the lion.⁹⁴ This story goes on to tell that only the servant of Abū Ya'za was able to ride the lion while the rest feared its harm and vicious character.⁹⁵ As we have previously seen in the statement of Abū Ḥafs 'Umar ben Ḥārūn, the lion is portrayed as a manifestation of subduing the *nafs* as both of them are conveying harm, so once the lion is tamed it turned into unharmed being and could even serve as a riding animal. In fact, a number of Sufi saints were known as the possessors of the saintly marvel of being able to ride the lion, and among them is the early ascetic Muhammad ben 'Abdullah Shaybān ar-Rā'ī (d. 158/775) and the Egyptian Sufi Sidi Muhammed aṣ-Ṣā'dī (d. 1232/1784).⁹⁶ Similarly, the *nafs* conveys harm as it has its crude ruses, but once it underwent a profound spiritual transformation, it could serve on the way to God. As Jālāl Eddin ar-Rūmī puts it: "the lion who breaks the enemy's ranks is a minor hero compared to the lion who overcomes himself."⁹⁷

7 CONCLUSION

The teachings of Sufism in general and Moroccan Sufism in particular revolve around the notion of *tazkiyah* and its overall legal, theological, and Sufi connotations refer to the idea of cultivating and subduing the *nafs* through constant and continuous spiritual struggle. The stage of spiritual struggle, known as *al-mujāhada*, is a turning point in which the *nafs* of a wayfarer seeking the path towards the sublime status of spiritual excellence has to undergo a profound transformation characterized by severe and extensive discipline in order to tame the evil prompting of its unquenchable desires. As a result, various representations and depictions of the *nafs*, its ruses, and its harmful dimension are well-documented in Moroccan Sufi literature, especially in some oral narratives of medieval Moroccan saints. Obviously, hagiographical accounts documenting some of these oral narratives which depict the inner self as a vicious animal are rooted in various world spiritual traditions, including Zen Buddhism, Christian mysticism, and medieval Moroccan Sufism. In Moroccan Sufism, the *karāma* of taming the lion is perceived an indication of subduing the *nafs*, especially that Moroccan Sufis such as Abū Ya'za Yalnūr (d.572/1177) and Abū Ḥafs 'Umar ben Ḥārūn (d.595/1199) were considered as the archetypes of early ascetics symbolizing the attitude of transforming the reprehensible and blameworthy attributes to the sublime qualities in their way to self-salvation and liberation.

⁹¹ Cf. Hāshim Ma'rūfī. *'Abir az-Zuhūr fī Tārīkh al-Dār al-Bayḍā' wa Mā 'Uḍifa ilayhā min Akhbār Ānfā wa-al-Shāwiyah 'Abra al-'Uṣūr*,88.

⁹² Ibid.89.

⁹³ Other saints who were known for possessing such saintly marvels are Abu Dawwud Muzahim, Abu Mussa 'Issa az-Zarhounī, Ibn 'Ali al-Muadin, 'Abdūn ben Yakhliḥtan ben 'Ali, and Abu Hafs ben Harun.

⁹⁴ Cf. Ibn al-Zayyāt Abu Ya'qub Yusuf ben Yahya al-Tādīlī. *Al-Tashawwuf ila Rijal at-Taswwuf*, (Rabat: Manshurat kulliyat al-Adab wa al-'Ulum al-Inssaniyya, 1984), 216.

⁹⁵ Cf. Ibid.

⁹⁶ Cf. Yūsuf ben Ismā'īl an-Nabḥānī. *Jāmi' Karāmāt al-Awliyā*. Edited by 'Abd al-Muttalib al-Amin az-Zaidi. (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir,nd),pp 94/198.

⁹⁷ Cf. Camille Adams Helmski. *Rumi Daylight: A Daybook of Spiritual Guidance*. (Shambhala, 1999).

REFERENCES

- [1] 'Abd al-Ḥaqq ibn Ismā'īl al-Bādisī. *Al-Maqṣad al-Sharīf wa al-Manẓar al-Latif fi al-Ta'rif bi Sulahaa al-Rif*. Edited by Sa'id A'rab. 2nd edition. Rabat: al-Matba'a al-Malakiyya, 1993.
- [2] Abd al-Rahman Hasan Habanaka al-Maydanī, al-Akhlaq al-Islamiyya wa Ususuḥd, 5th ed. 2 vols. Damascus: Dar al-Qalam, 1999.
- [3] Abū 'Abdullah al-Ḥarith al-Muḥāsibī. *Adāb an-Nufūs*. Edited by 'Abd al-Qāder Ahmed 'Aṭa. (Beirut: Muassasat al-Kutub at-Thaqāfiya, 1991.
- [4] Abū 'Abdullah al-Ḥarith al-Muḥāsibī *Risālat al-Mustarshidīn*. Edited by 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghudda. Ḥalab: Dār As-Salām, 1964.
- [5] Abū 'Abdullāh al-Ḥakīm at-Tirmidhī. *Kitāb ar-Riyāda wa Adab an-Nafs*. Edited by A. J. Arberry and 'Ali Hasan 'Abd al-Qādir. Cairo: Muṣṭafa al-Babī al-Ḥalabī wa Awlādūh, 1947.
- [6] Abū Shujā.
- [7] Ahmed at-Tādīlī as-Sawmā'ī. *Al-Mu'za fi Manāqibi asheikhi Abī Ya'zā*. Edited by 'Ali al-Jāwī. Rabat: Matba'at al-Ma'arif al-Jadida, 1996.
- [8] Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Ibn Taymīyah. *Tazkiyat an-Nafs*. Edited by Muhammed ben Sa'id ben Salim al-Qaḥṭānī. Riyad: Dār al-Muslim li an-Nashr wa at-Tawzī, 1994.
- [9] Anas Ahmad Karzun, *Minhaj al-Islam fi tazkiyat al-nafs*. 2 vols. Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm, 1997.
- [10] A.S. Tritton, «Man, nafs, ruh, qalb», *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 34: 3 (1971), pp. 491-5.
- [11] 'Alī ibn Aḥmad Ibn Hazm. *Mudāwāt al-Nufūs*. Beirut: Dār al-Bašā'ir, 1970.
- [12] Hājī Khalīfa. *Kashf az-Zunūn*. Edited by Isma'il Bāsha. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-
- [13] Hāshim Ma'rūfī. 'Abīr az-Zuhūr fī Tārīkh al-Dār al-Bayḍā' wa Mā 'Uḍīfa ilayhā min Akhbār Ānfā wa-al-Shāwīyah 'Abra al-'Uṣūr. Matba'at an-Najāḥ al-Jadīda, 1987.
- [14] Ibn al-Zayyāt Abu Ya'qub Yusuf ben Yahya al-Tādīlī. *Al-Tashawwuf ila Rijal at-Taswwuf*. Rabat: Manshurāt kulliyat al-Adab wa al-'Ulum al-Inssaniyya, 1984.
- [15] Ibn Rajab al-Hanbalī. *Majmu' Rasā'il al-Hāfiz Ibn Rajab*. Edited by Abū Muṣ'ab Ṭal'at ben Fuad al-Julwānī (Cairo: Al-Fārūq al-Haditha Li at-Tibā'a wa an-Nashr, 2003).
- [16] Kuoan Shiyuan. *The Poems on the Ten Ox-herding Pictures*. Buddha's light Publishing, 2009.
- [17] P'u Ming's *Ox herding Pictures and Verses*. Translated by Red Pine, 2nd Edition. Empty Bowl, 2015.
- [18] Lives of Saints with Excerpts from Their Writings: selected and illustrated. Edited by Joseph Vann. John J. Crawley & Co., NY, 1954.
- [19] Paul Shepard and Barry Sanders. *The Sacred Paw: The Bear in Nature, Myth, and Literature*. Viking, 1985.
- [20] Isma'īl ben Muhammed al-'Ajlūnī. *Kashfu al-Khafaā wa Muzīl al-Ilbās' Amma Ashtahara min al-Aḥādith 'alā Alsinat an-Nas*. Beirut: Dar Al Kotob Al Ilmiyah, 2017.
- [21] Abū ḥamid al-Ghāzālī. *Iḥyā' ulūm ad-Dīn*. Edited by 'Abdullāh al-Khāldī. Beirut: Dar al-Arḡam ben al-Arḡam, 2016.
- [22] Edward Michaux-Belaire. *Les Confréries Religieuses au Maroc*, Archives Marocaines, 27 (1927).
- [23] Vincent J. Cornell. "Hayy in the Land of Absāl: Ibn Ṭufayl and Ṣūfism in the Western Maghrib during the Muwaḥḥid Era" in *The World of Ibn Ṭufayl Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān*. Edited by Lawrence Conrad. Leiden: Brill, 2022.
- [24] Najmu Ed-dīn al-Kubrā. *Tafsīr At-Ta'wilāt an-Najmiya*. Edited by Aḥmed Farīd al-Mizyādi. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiya, 2009.
- [25] Abū al-Ḥassan Muqātil ben Sulaymān. *Tafsīr Muqātil Ben Sulaimān*. Edited by 'Abdullāh Mahmūd Shaḥḥāta. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā at-Turāth al-'Arabī, 2002.
- [26] Abdullah ben 'Umar al-Bayḍāwī. *Anwār al-Tanzīl wa-Asrār at-Ta'wīl*. Edited by Muhammed 'Abderahmān al-Mar'ashli. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā at-Thurāt al-'Arabī, nd. Burhān Ed-Dīn al-Biqā'ī. *Naẓm ad-Durar fī Tanāsib al-Ayāt wa-as-Suwar*. Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, nd.
- [27] Abu al-Ḥassan al-Hujwiri. *Kashf al-Mahjub*. Edited by Is'ad 'abd al-Hadi Qindil. Alexandria: Maktabat al-Iskandariyya, 1984.
- [28] Ibn al-Zayyāt Abu Ya'qub Yusuf ben Yahya al-Tādīlī. *Al-Tashawwuf ila Rijal at-Taswwuf*, (Rabat: Manshurāt kulliyat al-Adab wa al-'Ulum al-Inssaniyya, 1984), 169.
- [29] Ibn al-'Arabī. *Risālat Rūḥ al-Quds fī Muḥāsabat an-Nafs*. Damascus: Mu'assasat al-'Ilm, 1964.
- [30] Ibn Abī ad-Dunyā. *Muḥāsbat an-Nafs*. Edited by al-Musta'sim bi Allah ben Abi Hurayra and Mustapha ben 'Ali ben 'Iwaz. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1986.
- [31] Abd al-Wahhab al-Sha'rani. *Lawaqih al-Anwar al-Qudsiyya fi bayan al-'Uḥud al-Muhammadiyya*. Edited by Ahmed Farid al-Mazyadi. Kitāb-Nāshirūn, 2015.
- [32] Ibn Qunfud al-Qusantīnī. *Unssu al-Faqīr wa 'Izzu al-Haqīr*. Edited by Mohammed al-Fāssi and Adolf Faure. Rabat: Manshurāt al-Markaz al-Jāmi'ībiKulliyat al-Adāb Jāmi'at Mohammed al-Khāmiss, 1965.

- [33] Ibn 'Atā Allah as-Sakandarī. *Tāj al-'Rūs al-Hāwī li Tahzīb an-Nufūs*. Cairo: Dār Jawāmi' al-Kalim, nd.
- [34] Abū al-Ḥassan Muqātil ben Sulaymān. *Tafsīr Muqātil Ben Sulaimān*. Edited by 'Abdullāh Mahmūd Shaḥḥāta. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā at-Turāth al-'Arabī, 2002.
- [35] Abdullah ben 'Umar al-Baydāwī. *Anwār al-Tanzīl wa-Asrār at-Ta'wīl*. Edited by Muhammed 'Abderahmān al-Mar'ashli. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā at-Thurāt al-'Arabī, nd. Burhān Ed-Din al-Biqā'ī. *Naẓm ad-Durar fī Tanāsib al-Ayāt wa-as-Suwar*. Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, nd.
- [36] Frager, Robert. *Heart, Self and Soul: the Sufi Psychology of Growth, Balance, and Harmony*. Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 1999.
- [37] Abu al-Hassan al-Hujwiri. *Kashf al-Mahjub*. Edited by Is'ad 'abd al-Hadi Qindil. Alexandria: Maktabat al-Iskandariyya, 1984.
- [38] Ibn al-'Arabī. *Risālat Rūḥ al-Quds fī Muḥāsabat an-Nafs*. Damascus: Mu'assasat al-'Ilm, 1964.
- [39] Abd al-Wahhab al-Sha'rani. *Lawaqih al-Anwar al-Qudsiyya fi bayan al-'Uhud al-Muhammadiyya*. Edited by Ahmed Farid al-Mazyadi. Kitāb-Nāshirūn, 2015.
- [40] Muḥammad aṭ-Ṭāhir ben 'Āshūr. *Tafsīr at-Taḥrīr wa at-Tanwīr*. Tunisia: ad-Dār at-Tūnusiyya li an-Nashr, 1984.
- [41] Ahmed Ben 'Ajība. *Iqadh al-Himam fi Sharh al-Hikam*. Edited by Ahmed Hassab Allah. Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, n.d.
- [42] Abd al-Karīm Abū al-Qāsim Al-Qushayrī. *Ar-Rissāla Al-Qushayriyya*. Edited by 'Abdelhālim Mahmūd and Mahmūd ben Sharīf. Cairo: Matābi' Muassat Dār as-Sha'b, 1989.
- [43] Abū Bakr al-Kalābādhi. *At-Ta'arruf li Madhabi Ahli at-Taṣwuuf*. Edited by Arthur John Arberry. 2nd edition Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1994.
- [44] Abdullah ben Ahmed Ben 'Ajība al-Idrissī. *Mi'rāj at-Tashawwuf ila Ḥaqāiq at-Tṣwuuf*. Edited by 'Abdelmajid Khayyāli. Casablanca, Markaz al-Turāth al-Thaqāfi al-Maghribī, 2004.
- [45] Abū Baker al-Bayhaqī. *As-Sunan al-Kubrā*. Edited by Muḥammed 'Abd al-Qāder 'Aṭā. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2002.
- [46] Abū Nāṣar as-Sarj aṭ-Ṭūṣī in his treatise *al-luma'* while defining the stage of *al-murāqabah* cite the famous hadith of the archangel Gabriel on *iḥsān*, Abū Nāṣar as-Sarj aṭ-Ṭūṣī. *Al-luma'*. Edited by 'Abdelhalim Mahmud and Taha 'Abd al-Baqi. Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-haditha, 1990.
- [47] Ahmed Ben 'Ajība. *Iqadh al-Himam fi Sharh al-Hikam*. Edited by Ahmed Hassab Allah. Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, n.d.
- [48] Ahmed Ben 'Ajība. *Mi'rāj at-Tashawwuf ila Ḥaqāiq at-Tṣwuuf*. Edited by 'Abdelmajid Khayyāli. Casablanca, Markaz al-Turāth al-Thaqāfi al-Maghribī, 2004.
- [49] Abū 'Ali ibn Sīna. *An-Najāt fi al-ḥikma al-Mantiqiyya wa aṭ-ṭabī'a al-Ilāhiyya*. Edited by Muhy Ed-din Ṣabrī al-Kurdī. Cairo: Maktabat Muṣṭapha al-Bābī al-ḥalabī, 1938.
- [50] Ar-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī. *Mufradāt al-Fāz al-Qurān*. Edited by Safwān 'Adnān Dāwudī. 4th edition Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2009.
- [51] Sherman A. Jackson. *Sufism for Non-Sufis? Ibn 'Ata' Allah Al-Sakandari's Taj Al-'Arus*. Oxford University Press: 2012.
- [52] Muḥammed 'Ali at-Tahānawī. *Mawsū'at Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥat al-'Ulūm*. Translated by 'Abdullāh al-Khāldi. Beirut: Maktabat Lubnān Nāshirūn, 1996.
- [53] Tahir as-Sadafī, *as-Sirr al-maṣūn fi ma ukrima hi-hi al-mukhlisūn*, éd. critique H. Ferhat. Beirut, 1998.
- [54] Picken Gavin. *The Concept of Tazkiyat al-Nafs in Islam in the light of the works of al-Harith al-Muhsib*. PhD thesis, University of Leeds.
- [55] Picken Gavin. *Spiritual Purification in Islam: The Life and Works of al-Muhasibi*. Abingdon, Oxon & New York: Routledge, 2011.
- [56] Yūsuf ben Ismā'īl an-Nabhānī. *Jāmi' Karāmāt al-Awliyā*. Edited by 'Abd al-Muttalib al-Amin az-Zaidi. Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, nd.