

# A Sufi Treatise on Vampires: Muḥammad Nūr al-‘Arabī’s *Risāle-i Sa‘īdiyye*

Cüneyd Yıldırım\*

---

## Abstract

This essay looks at the *Risāle-i Sa‘īdiyye*, a treatise in which the Ottoman Sufi Muḥammad Nūr al-‘Arabī (d. 1305/1888) presents a unique theological justification for the reality of vampires. In an attempt to clarify the connection between Sufism and vampirism, which at first glance seems absurd, I argue that the vampire reference represents the transference of an Islamic eschatological model to Balkan folk belief. The basis of this study is a critical edition that makes the treatise accessible to academia for the first time.

## Keywords

Sufism, vampires, Ottomans, Balkan, eschatology

## Introduction

The aim of this essay is to shed light on the *Risāle-i Sa‘īdiyye*, a treatise attributed to the 19th-century Ottoman Sufi scholar Muḥammad Nūr al-‘Arabī (d. 1305/1888), in which he explains how to deal with vampires, i.e., evil returners from death. In this study, I present both a critical edition and an analysis of the text that provides biographical background and presents intertextual links to relevant discourses. I argue that the vampire reference indicates the transfer of a specific Islamic eschatological model to the popular Balkan belief in evil returners from death.

I begin by examining the Ottoman vampire discourse to which the *Risāle-i Sa‘īdiyye* belongs, starting with the fatwas of Ebū’s-Su‘ūd Efendi (d. 982/1574). I then review Muḥammad Nūr’s biography in an effort to clarify the unique use of the word “vampire” in a Sufi context. My approach to the treatise is intertextual, inasmuch as I discuss passages from texts with a similar eschatology. I also discuss the style and language of the treatise. In the conclusion, I evaluate the hermeneutical knowledge established by my analysis and consider the social function of the *risāla* genre in this special case.

---

\* Dr. Cüneyd Yıldırım is a private scholar and teacher for Islamic Religion at Otto-Seeling-Schule in Fürth, Bavaria (Germany).

## Ottoman Balkan Vampirism

The phenomenon of vampirism appears in 16th-century Ottoman administrative, literary, and Islamic legal sources. The earliest testimonies on vampirism within the Ottoman borders are three fatwas of Ebū's-Su'ūd Efendi, one of which established a precedent for the legal treatment of incidents involving alleged vampires. At the same time, stories about the undead were told at the Ottoman court. In Cinānī's (d. 1004/1595) *Bedāyi' u'l-Āsār*, a collection of entertaining but terrifying prose stories, vampire-like beings play an important role. A few decades later, the Ottoman traveller Evliyā Çelebī (d. ca. 1095/1684) mentions *obur*, powerful returners from the grave who live on blood. In addition, several *sicill* entries from the 18th and 19th centuries indicate that the fear of vampires was shared by Christians and Muslims alike in the Ottoman Balkans.<sup>1</sup>

In written sources, evil returners from death appear under different names. The term *obur* used by Evliyā Çelebī may have derived from the Russian *opyr* and is widely accepted as the linguistic proto-form of the modern “vampire”.<sup>2</sup> The widespread Persian word *cadu*, meaning “witchcraft, sorcery”, has survived in contemporary Turkish and is used for the figure of the female witch in popular culture and, more widely, as a pejorative term for unpleasant women.<sup>3</sup> *Hortlak* and *vampir* seem to be the most recent terms, evident in the 19th century.<sup>4</sup> In the legal context, the established term is *ervāḥ-ı ḥabīse* (from Arabic *al-arwāḥ al-khabītha*), “evil spirits”. Along with the Slavic *vampir*,<sup>5</sup> this is the term that the author of the *Risāle-i Sa'īdiyye* uses.

One of Ebū's-Su'ūd's three fatwas is to be found in the fatwa collection *Fetāvā-yi Ebū's-Su'ūd*. The chapter on prayer (*kitāb aṣ-ṣalāt*) has a section on the “funeral and what is related to it”, where it is stated that it is forbidden to desecrate graves and that returners from the dead do not harm Muslims.

- 
- 1 Cf. Marinos Sariyannis, “Of Ottoman Ghosts, Vampires and Sorcerers: An Old Discussion Disinterred”, in: *Archivum Ottomanicum* 30 (2013), pp. 194–203; Zeynep Aycibin, “Osmanlı Devleti'nde Cadılar Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme”, in: *Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi* 24 (2008), pp. 57–64. On the use of the relevant *sicills*, see: Markus Köhbach, “Ein Fall von Vampirismus bei den Osmanen”, in: *Balkan Studies* 20 (1979), pp. 83–90; Michael Ursinus, “Osmanische Lokalbehörden der frühen Tanzimat im Kampf gegen Vampire? Amtsrechnungen (maṣārif defterleri) aus Makedonien im Lichte der Aufzeichnungne Marko Cepenkovs (1829–1920)”, in: *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 82 (1992), pp. 359–374.
  - 2 Cf. Sariyannis, “Of Ottoman Ghosts”, p. 199; Elisabetta Ragagnin, “Is Vampire a Turkic Word?”, in: Antonio Fabris (ed.), *Tra quattro paradisi: Esperienze, ideologie e riti relative alla morte tra Oriente e Occidente*, Venice 2013, pp. 62 f.
  - 3 Cf. Aycibin, “Osmanlı Devleti'nde”, p. 56; Sariyannis, “Of Ottoman Ghosts”, pp. 203 f.
  - 4 Cf. Sariyannis, “Of Ottoman Ghosts”, pp. 213 f.
  - 5 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 196.

Question: When deceased persons are found in their graves after burial eating their shrouds, with blood on their limbs and reddish bodies, is there a reason for these [phenomena]?

Answer: If such a thing [actually] happens, it is the work of the noble will of God, the Exalted. Some people say that evil souls (*nüfus-ı şerîre*) join the corpses of those who acted immorally in their lifetimes and make them an instrument of their violent machinations. It is not impossible for the divine power to do this.

[Question:] How should one deal with those who died in the manner mentioned, if they are found in the manner explained?

Answer: [Their grave] shall be closed [again]. No harm comes to Muslims from them.

[Question:] Is it legal to remove corpses from graves and burn them?

Answer: It is not.<sup>6</sup>

The other two fatwas are found in another manuscript.<sup>7</sup> In one of these, Ebū's-Su'ūd reiterates that Muslims should not leave the place where the supposed vampire is causing trouble among Christians, nor should they take action on their own. In the third fatwa, the Mufti advises to drive a stake into the grave, then behead the corpse if it still has colour or dig it up and burn it. In this fatwa the corpse of the supposed vampire is that of a Muslim.<sup>8</sup>

Ebū's-Su'ūd's authorship of the last two fatwas is not clear. If we assume that he is the author, then, by considering whether or not the situation is dangerous for Muslims, he took a more sophisticated view of the case than in the previous fatwa. The hesitation in Ebū's-Su'ūd's answers may stem from the fact that in his time vampirism was primarily associated with the Balkan Christian population. According to the historian Ioannis Zelepos, prior to the 19th century, Orthodox clerics, including the Patriarch of Jerusalem, held the view that a person who has been excommunicated does not attain peace after death and turns into a vampire. This view probably legitimised the desecration of graves in an effort to ruin a person's reputation after death. This practice continued even after 19th-century Orthodox clerics began to condemn it as a barbaric superstition.<sup>9</sup>

6 Ebū's-Su'ūd, *Fetāvā-yi Ebū's-Su'ūd Efendi*, Ms. İstanbul Atatürk Kitaplığı, Belediye Kütüphanesi Yazmaları, B 17, fol. 19b/20b: Text: "Mes'ele: Ba'zı kimesneler fevt olub defn olunduklarından soñra kabrinde kefenin yudub a'zāsına kân gelub bedenini hümret ihâta etmiş bulınsa bu vech üzere olmasına bir sebeb var mıdır? El-cevâb: Vâkı' ise mü'egşir Haqq te'âlâ hazretlerinin irâdet-i şerîfesidir. Hayâtında a'mâl ü ahlâkda kendüye müşârik nüfus-ı şerîreniñ ba'zı cesedine ta'alluk edub efâ'il-i zârriye âlet edinur demek vardır kudret-i rabbâniyyeden ba'îd değıldir. Bu şüretde zıkr olunan meyyitler vech-i meşrûh üzerine bulunduğı tağdirce nice olmak gerekdir? El-cevâb: Öрте komağ gerekdir müslim adına ise zararı olmâz. Ba'zı kimesneler mağberesinden çıkarub ihrâk etmeğe şer'an kâdir olur mı? El-cevâb: Olmazlar." Due to limited access to libraries during the pandemic in the winter of 2020, I was unable to consult two standard works on Ebū's-Su'ūd's fatwas, Ertuğrul Düzdâğ's *Şeyhülislâm Ebu-suud Efendi fetvaları* and Pehlül Düzenli's edition of the *Ma'rûdât*. I did find the digital copy cited above, however. According to its colophon (442b), the manuscript dates from 985 AH, three years after the author's death.

7 Cf. Sariyannis, "Of Ottoman Ghosts", p. 195.

8 Cf. Ibid.; Aycibin, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde", p. 64.

9 Cf. Ioannis Zelepos, "Vampirglaube und orthodoxe Kirche im osmanischen Südosteuropa: Ein Fallbeispiel für die Ambivalenzen vorsäkularer Rationalisierungsprozesse", in: Andreas Helme-dach et al. (eds.), *Das osmanische Europa*, Leipzig 2014, pp. 368–371.

We may infer from the questions addressed to Ebū's-Su'ūd that the Balkan Christian belief in vampires was a matter of concern for the immigrant Muslims, who associated notions about vampires with ideas about sorcerers and evil souls. Beginning in the 19th century at the latest, Muslims were using the word *vampir*, a fact confirmed not only by the *Risāle-i Sa'īdiyye*, but also by the Austrian Slavicist and ethnologist Salomon Krauss (d. 1938), who travelled to the Balkans in 1884. This usage may have included the idea that vampires could take the shape of wolves, dogs, and donkeys.<sup>10</sup>

### Muḥammad Nūr al-‘Arabī

The author of the *Risāle-i Sa'īdiyye*, Muhammad Nūr al-‘Arabī, was born in al-Maḥalla al-Kubrā, Egypt, in 1813.<sup>11</sup> After studying with several Muslim scholars in Medina and at the Azhar in Cairo, he decided to follow the Sufi path. In his spiritual autobiography, *Manba‘ an-nūr fī ru‘yat ar-rasūl*, he describes a visionary experience he had at the Ḥusayn mosque in Cairo. Following this experience, his shaykh at the Azhar, Ḥasan al-Quwaysinī (d. 1254/1838–9), ordered him to leave Egypt. Muḥammad Nūr, twenty years old at the time, travelled to Kosova in the Balkans, where he remained for the rest of his life. The sole exceptions were pilgrimages to Mecca, where he made contact with several ‘ulamā’ and Sufis, and established interregional scholarly networks. Through these networks he embraced the idea of renewing religiosity, the *ṭarīqa muḥammadiyya* (Muhammadan path), widespread among Sufi circles in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>12</sup> He died in 1888 in Strumica, in present-day Macedonia.<sup>13</sup>

Unlike other orders, Muḥammad Nūr’s *ṭarīqa* had no strict hierarchy or distribution of tasks, nor were there any dedicated meeting places. Muḥammad Nūr and his followers used the *zāwīyas* of other Sufi communities. As for specific Sufi observances, the communal as well as individual *dhikr* exercises (i.e. *awrād*, *wazā‘if*, *ḥaḍra/dawarān*), Muḥammad Nūr rejected them in favour of a more contemplative Sufi method that focuses on understanding the Oneness of Being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*). He sought to make personal spiritual transformation (Arab. *as-sayr wa-s-sulūk*), the goal of Sufism, directly attainable to his followers.<sup>14</sup>

Muḥammad Nūr uses the term *ḥaqīqa* to designate the superiority of his path over all other Sufi traditions.<sup>15</sup> He acted independently of a *ṭarīqa* lineage to empha-

10 Cf. Himstedt-Vaid, “Der Vampir”, p. 562.

11 See Cüneyd Yıldırım, *Die Melāmiyye von Rumelien: Sozial- und Ideengeschichte einer Sufi-Gemeinschaft*, Würzburg 2019, p. 69.

12 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 121 f. For a historiography of the concept *ṭarīqa muḥammadiyya* see: Rachida Chih, “A New Historiographical Outlook on the *Tarīqa Muḥammadiyya*”, in: *Sufism East and West. Mystical Islam and Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Modern World*, Leiden/Boston 2019, pp. 104–126.

13 Cf. Yıldırım, *Die Melāmiyye*, p. 85.

14 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 99 ff., 186.

15 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 183 f.

side his role as a shaykh, similar to Aḥmad at-Tijānī (d. 1230/1815), Aḥmad b. Idrīs (d. 1253/1837), and Muḥammad as-Sanūsī (d. 1276/1859). The term *ṭarīqa muḥammadiyya*, to which all the aforementioned Sufis referred, signals a pragmatic approach to *fiqh* that encourages learned Muslims to engage directly in exegesis of the Qurʾān and Sunna and not to blindly follow the opinions of a school of law.<sup>16</sup> The Yemenite scholar Muḥammad b. ʿAlī ash-Shawkānī (d. 1250/1834), a contemporary of at-Tijānī and Ibn Idrīs, was probably the most powerful advocate of the demand to rethink traditional patterns of *fiqh*. However, whereas the legal authority of the aforementioned Sufi shaykhs bound only their disciples, as chief judge (*qāḍī l-quḍāt*) of the Yemenite Imamate, ash-Shawkānī’s judgments had a broader impact.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, Muḥammad Nūr assessed the question of how to deal with vampires in the style of a *mujtahid*, relying exclusively on the Qurʾān and Ḥadīths. After Muḥammad Nūr’s death, the Sufi community he created was called *Malāmiyya-Nūriyya*, indicating that it was seen as a continuation of the *Malāmiyya*-movement that included the new interpretations offered by Nūr al-ʿArabī.<sup>18</sup> Mostly from the provincial madrasa milieu, his followers must have experienced social marginalisation, for the centralisation of *waqf* donations led to a reduction in the material requirements for staffing a madrasa, and indeed sometimes a complete loss. Muḥammad Nūr was not a beneficiary of a *waqf* but dependent on the contributions of wealthy followers, such as Ḥifzī and Selīm Pasha, governors of Skopje, and his son-in-law ʿAbdūrrahīm el-Fedāʾī (d. 1885).<sup>19</sup> Muḥammad Nūr al-ʿArabī wrote numerous treatises dealing with cosmology, eschatology and Sufi exercises. Oddly, there is no lithograph printing of a single work by Muḥammad Nūr. He wrote exclusively for his followers, who copied his writings by hand. Non-initiates had no access to his writings. His works comprise about 48 texts of different lengths, some in Arabic, some in Turkish. There is no major work among them. His longer treatises are commentaries on Sufi works related to *waḥdat al-wujūd*, while his shorter treatises are original writings.<sup>20</sup>

---

16 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 33 ff.

17 On ash-Shawkānī, see Bernard Haykel, *Revival and Reform in Islam: The Legacy of Muhammad al-Shawkānī*, Cambridge 2003; Barbara Eisenberger, *Muḥammad b. ʿAlī aš-Šawkānī (gest. 1255/1834): der große jemenitische Reformier; seine rechtlichen, ideologischen und pädagogischen Vorstellungen*, Berlin 2011.

18 Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi (DIA), “*Melamiyye*”, in: TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, URL: <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/melamiyye#1> (accessed January 26, 2024).

19 Cf. Yıldırım, *Die Melāmiyye*, pp. 95 f., 123.

20 For an overview of the entire oeuvre, see Yıldırım, *Die Melāmiyye*, pp. 189 ff.

## The *Risāle-i Saʿīdiyye*

### The Manuscripts

This essay is based on three manuscripts of the *Risāle-i Saʿīdiyye*, all of them without an autograph. In each, designated for our purposes here A, B, and C,<sup>21</sup> the *Risāle-i Saʿīdiyye* is part of a collection of treatises, probably compiled by a *ṭarīqa* follower. Most of the other texts in the collections are short writings by Muḥammad Nūr.

The absence of any information on the origin of the manuscripts, such as the name of the compiler and the date of the copy, makes it impossible to date them with any precision. Two collections were in the possession of Osman Ergin (d. 1961), a founding member of the Atatürk Library in Istanbul and a private practising Melāmī. Most likely, Ergin's participation in the Istanbul Melāmī circle around Abdülaziz Mecdi Tolun (d. 1941) facilitated his acquisition of the two collections.<sup>22</sup>

The word *vampir* appears in two places in A, but in only one of those two places in B, while it does not appear in C at all. Common variants indicate the relationship between the three manuscripts. B and C have numerous variants in common and differ from A in many places. The differences from A are largely linguistic. The wording in BC is simpler and easier to understand. However, AB also have a few variants in common and thus reveal differences from C. For example, C presents a Ḥadīth Qudsī in its well-known form. AB have the same mistake (*enzeldir* instead of *eżalldır*). The fact that C presents a correct and linguistically better reading points to the copyist's interventions. With its dialectical variants and the two vampire references, which accord to Muḥammad Nūr's Balkan background, A probably comes closest to the original text. Due to a few common variants of AB, B can be considered a middle reading of the *Risāle-i Saʿīdiyye*.

It cannot be established with certainty that Muḥammad Nūr wrote the *Risāle-i Saʿīdiyye*. The text probably goes back to a lecture transcribed by a follower. Ḥarīrīzāde (d. 1882) and Bursalı Mehmed Ṭāhīr (d. 1925), the two earliest authors of the shaykh's bibliography, make no mention of such a work.<sup>23</sup> The opening of the *Risāle-i Saʿīdiyye* does not refer to the person or audience in response to whose request Muḥammad Nūr wrote the treatise. It is likely, however, that the name Saʿīd, to which the title *Risāle-i Saʿīdiyye* refers, is the name of a questioner. Indeed,

21 For the three manuscripts, see the Critical Edition below.

22 On Ergin's Melāmī background and the Tolun circle, see Rüya Kılıç, "Osmanlıdan Cumhuriyete Son Dönem Melamileri: Geleneğin Taşınması ve Uyum Meselesi", in: Ahmet Yaşar Ocak (ed.), *Osmanlı Toplumunda Tasavvuf ve Sufiler: Kaynaklar – Doktrin – Ayin ve Erkan – Tarikatlar – Edebiyat – Mimari – İkonografi – Modernizm*, Ankara 2014, pp. 750–761.

23 Bursalı once confirmed in front of a German scholar that he owns all of Muḥammad Nūr's works; see Yıldırım, *Die Melāmīyye*, p. 189. For Bursalı's list of Muḥammad Nūr's works, see Bursalı Mehmed Ṭāhīr Bey, *Menâkıb-ı Şeyh Seyyid Hâce Muhammad Nûru'l-Arabî: Beyân-ı Melâmet ve Ahvâl-i Melâmīyye*, Mustafa Tatcı and Burak Anılır (eds.), Istanbul 2014, pp. 21–24. For Ḥarīrīzāde's list, see Yıldırım, *Die Melāmīyye*, p. 211.

Muḥammad Nūr wrote another treatise, the *Risāle-i Şālihiyye*, for a certain Şāliḥ. The *Risāle-i Sa'īdiyye* is not the only instance in which someone wrote down a lecture by Muḥammad Nūr and attributes the text to him.<sup>24</sup> In addition, the praise of God and the blessing dedicated to the Prophet Muḥammad at the beginning are modest in style, whereas other writings begin with eloquent praise of God and blessings for the Prophet. The language of the *Risāla* is clear, due to its didactic function, and contains examples of spoken language that are typical of the Balkan Turks (e.g. *bilmiyān* instead of *bilmeyen*).

### Content<sup>25</sup>

The treatise begins with an introduction that corresponds to Muḥammad Nūr's Sufi background. He states that, unless a person attains spiritual perfection in this world, he/she is not perfect in the eyes of God. There are two principles that lead to perfection. First, know where you come from. This is the knowledge of the origin (*mabda'*). Second, know where you are going, which is knowledge of the return (*ma'ād*). Whoever does not know these two things is lower than animals. For Muḥammad Nūr, it is knowledge that is decisive, not action. He hints that perfection is about recognising that only God truly exists and that human beings cannot be separated from God's essence. Everything other than God is connected with the primal divine essence. He bases this statement on a Ḥadīth Qudsī popular among Sufis. [43a-A 44a]

The text continues by illustrating the journey of the original human substance. Everything begins with God's essence, which manifests the first being, and which is the Light of Muḥammad or the First Intellect. Everything else comes into being from this entity. Muḥammad Nūr quotes another Ḥadīth Qudsī, according to which the Prophet Muhammad is the reason why God created everything. The cosmic journey of the human substance ends at the level of Humanity with the manifestation of the corporeal individual. If this journey takes place without any obstacle for the human substance, the individual will reach perfection with no difficulties, that is to say, no ascetism will be needed. Alternatively, it is possible that the human substance dwells at the stage of minerals, plants or animals. This may be because nutrition expires before it is consumed and thus cannot lead to reproduction, or one potential parent eats something and then dies without sexual intercourse. The human substance is thus prevented from flowing and resides, depending on the exact cause, with the mineral, the plant, or the animal, and while reaching the level of Humanity, it does so without perfection. The nature of the mineral, plant, or animal determines the

---

24 For example his commentary on the Divān (collection of poems) of Niyāzī Mıṣrī. Cf. Yıldırım, *Die Melāmiyye*, p. 128.

25 The folio numbers in brackets refer to Ms. Istanbul Süleymaniye Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, Yazma Bağışlar 2526. See also the Critical Edition section below.

character of the person in question. In such a case, extreme ascetism may be needed to reach perfection. [44a-b]

A person acting out their bad qualities is transforming themselves, in this world or the Hereafter. Muḥammad Nūr explains that the bad character turns inside out and shows itself as an animal. If greed was dominant, the person would then turn into a pig, if envy into an ape, if arrogance into an elephant, if hypocrisy into a snake, if vengefulness into a camel, if anger into a dog, and if lying into a devil. As proof of this, he refers to the Qur'ānic verse telling of how God turned a group of Jews who violated the Sabbath into apes and pigs. He emphasises that this verse does not refer to incarnation (*tanāsukh*), which is a heresy in accordance with established teachings of Islam. [A 44b-45a]

Some of the most evil and mendacious spirits take the form of devils after death because of their mischief on earth and, known as vampires, [continue to] harm the world.<sup>26</sup>

For the damned who have taken on the shape of devils on earth, a second transformation can occur after death. These are the same creatures, Muhammad Nūr explains, that laypeople call vampires. In order to stop their terror, he advises killing them and supports his recommendation with an unspecified authoritative saying. Muḥammad Nūr adds that those most evil spirits are bound to the elements, which they cannot transcend. [45b-46a]

Just as vampires, i.e. evil spirits, can cause harm, the people of Allah are able to bring benefits [after their bodily death].<sup>27</sup>

Muḥammad Nūr juxtaposes vampires and the friends of God. Both groups have an effect on the world after their corporeal death, though in opposite ways. While vampires harm the living, prophets and God's friends fulfil wishes and prayers. Both can change their appearance. The perfect spirits of the saints and prophets are free from any limitation after bodily death. For instance, he mentions Jesus, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, and the prophet Idris, whom God raised to the heavens and then returned to the world as the prophet Elyas four thousand years later. [46a-b]

### Intertextual Context

The content of Muḥammad Nūr's Arabic treatise, *Risāla fī l-mabda' wa-l-ma'ād*, is similar to the *Risāle-i Sa'ādiyye*. In the former, however, the shaykh explains that after death most evil spirits become devils, not vampires.

26 Muḥammad Nūr al-'Arabī, *Risāle-i Sa'ādiyye*, Ms. Istanbul Süleymaniye Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, Yazma Bağışlar 2526, fol. 45a-b: "Ve ba'zı ervāh-ı ḥabişe kezzāb-ı eṣerr ve 'āleme ziyān etmek ile ba'de'l-mevt şeytānlar şüretinde olub ismi vāmpīr namiyle tesmiye olub 'āleme ziyānkār olub. Kullu muḍirrin yuḡtal fehvāsıyle giderüb ḳatıl <olunurlar>."

27 Al-'Arabī, *Risāle-i Sa'ādiyye*, fol. 46a: "Ervāh-ı ḥabişe olan vāmpīr zarar eylediği gibi ehlullah daḥī menfa'at ederler."

In this way, the people of paradise project goodness and beauty day by day, due to their inner truth, until they finally become angels. By contrast, the ugliness and cruelty, which is the inner truth of the people of fire, shines day by day until they become devils.<sup>28</sup>

The idea of post-mortem transformation (*maskh*) in the *Risāle-i Sa'īdiyye* and in the *Risāla fī l-mabda' wa-l-ma'ād* has strong parallels in the *Hikmat al-Ishrāq* of the Persian Muslim philosopher as-Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl (d. 587/1191).<sup>29</sup> At the beginning of the chapter on resurrection, prophecy, and dreams, as-Suhrawardī explores the ideas of the Greek sages and the so-called Eastern philosophers regarding the state of the human soul after death.<sup>30</sup> He does not deny the possibility of the survival of imperfect souls after death in a form corresponding to their moral qualities, although this is close to the idea of transmigration (*tanāsukh*), which he declares impossible on the grounds that a single human cannot have two identities.<sup>31</sup> According to as-Suhrawardī, however, there are, ontologically, four worlds, one of which is the place where the tormented souls become devils, while in another perfect souls become angels.<sup>32</sup>

Later illuminationists understood as-Suhrawardī's uncertainty on whether a soul can take a form after death that corresponds to its former moral behaviour to be an encouragement. Shams ad-Dīn ash-Shahrazūrī (d. > 688/1288) and Ibn Abī Jumhūr (d. > 906/1501) held that imperfect human souls take the form of animals after death.<sup>33</sup> According to Sabine Schmidtke, this doctrine, which can be found among some of as-Suhrawardī's disciples, was "without lasting impact".<sup>34</sup> This statement is disputable in light of the findings presented here. Although as-Suhrawardī is not one of Muḥammad Nūr's references, it seems that certain ideas which did not exert any direct scholarly influence on later generations were however recycled in different contexts, leading to a new synthesis. Thus, searching for a direct source of Nur al-Arabis approach could prove misleading; it is more likely that he created a synthesis from ideas circulating within the wider scholarly context or folk tradition, where the direct source is not identifiable. One of these sources could be the ideas of the Indian scholar and reformist thinker Shāh Walī Allāh ad-Dihlawī (d. 1176/1762), who was a Naqshbandī like Muḥammad Nūr. Although Muḥammad

---

28 Muḥammad Nūr al-'Arabī, *Risāla fī l-mabda' wa-l-ma'ād*, Ms. Konya Mevlana Müzesi, 1630, fol. 66a: "*Wa-min hādihā l-qabīli burūzu ahli l-jannati bi-l-ḥusni wa-l-jamāli yawman fa-yawman bi-mā fihim mina l-ḥaqāyiqi ḥattā yabruzūna malā'ikatan wa-ahlu n-nāri yabruzūna bi-mā fihim mina l-qubḥi wa-l-jalāli yawman fa-yawman ḥattā yakūnūna ṣayāṭīn.*"

29 Shihāb ad-Dīn Yahyā b. Ḥabash, not to be confused with the Sufi Shihāb ad-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar as-Suhrawardī (d. 632/1234), author of *'Awārif al-ma'ārif*.

30 Cf. as-Suhrawardī, *The Philosophy of Illumination*, translated by John Walbridge and Hossein Zial, Provo/Utah 2000, pp. 141 ff.

31 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 142.

32 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 149 ff.

33 Cf. Sabine Schmidtke, "*The Doctrine of the Transmigration of Soul According to Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (Killed 587/1191) and his Followers*", in: *Studia Iranica* 28 (1999), pp. 247 f., 250 f.

34 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 251.

Nūr does not quote ad-Dihlawī in any of his works, the Indian's opus magnum *Ḥujjat Allāh al-bāligha* reveals parallels regarding life after death, not only in meaning but also in the very wording.

For ad-Dihlawī, every form must be connected with a kind of matter that ensures its existence. The human reasoning soul (*nafs nāṭiqa*) is a form that is bound to matter. Indeed, it has two matters: one essential, the other accidental. The former is the life-breath (*nasama*), the latter the body that is bound to the earth. When a human dies, the body bound to the earth disappears. But the life-breath, which is the essential part of the soul, continues to exist with its matter. At the same time, the angelic faculty (*malakiyya*) of the soul, which has access to the hidden knowledge of God, learns about the deeds of the soul, which is why the soul feels either pain or joy. For ad-Dihlawī, these are states of the grave, an intermediate space (*barzakh*) between the world, and the place of resurrection.<sup>35</sup> Accordingly, people in the grave are divided into four classes. Each class has opposite states, that is, good as well as bad, depending on whether the deeds that the soul knows correspond to its self or not. In one class, souls are in a dream state in which the unconscious manifests itself figuratively. "Perhaps here," ad-Dihlawī says, "the soul of a violent person sees a predator in front of him, tearing his body apart, or a miser sees a snake or a scorpion, biting him."<sup>36</sup> In a third class, according to ad-Dihlawī, there are souls that become angels or devils.

Unlike these [people with angelic faculties], there is a group [of people] who are close to the state of the devils [on the one hand] due to their disposition: Because their temperament is corrupt, they express views that are both contrary to truth and inconsistent with generally accepted opinions, as well as far from noble manners. [On the other hand, these people] are close [to the devils] by acquisition (*kasb<sup>an</sup>*): Their views combine with inferior appearances, acquire corrupt thoughts and obey the whispers of devils. For this reason, the curse [of God] surrounds them [due to the devilish presence]. When these people die, they are taken up by the devils [to join them] and clothed in dark garments.<sup>37</sup>

In another class again are those souls in which the animalistic outweighs the angelic quality. When their bodies die, a brief light, which contains an image, flashes in front of the souls. In the case of those whose bad deeds outweighed the good ones during their lifetimes, a sinister fearsome angel or an animal corresponding to their character appears. For example, a rabbit appears to the coward.<sup>38</sup>

35 Cf. Shāh Walī Allāh Aḥmad b. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ad-Dihlawī, *Ḥujjat Allāh al-Bāligha*, 2 vols., as-Sayyid Sābiq (ed.), Beirut 1426/2005, pp. 75 f.

36 Ibid., p. 77.

37 Ibid., p. 78; text: "*Wa-bi-izā'i hā'ulā'i qawmun qarībū l-ma'khadhi mina sh-shayāfīni jibillatan bi-an kāna mizājūhum fāsīdan yastawjibu ārā'a munāqīdatan li-l-ḥaqqi munāfiratan li-r-ra'iyyi l-kulliyi 'alā tarāfīn shāsi'in min maḥāsīni l-akhlāqi wa-kasban bi-an lābasat hay'ātin khasāsatan wa-afkārān fāsīdatan wa-nqādat li-waswasati sh-shayāfīni wa-aḥāṭa bi-himu l-la'nu fa-idā mātū ulhiqū bi-sh-shayāfīni wa-ulbisū libāsān ḡulmāniyyān.*"

38 Cf. ibid., p. 79.

## Conclusion

Long before the *Risāle-i Sa'īdiyye*, learned Muslims discussed an eschatological model that explains the deceased's effect on worldly affairs after death. According to this model, the essence of human beings survives after physical death. Because form cannot exist without matter, the soul, which is the matter of the human body, must always take on a form. This hylomorphism, the Aristotelian idea that every being is composed of matter and form, was a premise of classical Muslim thought and generally accepted among scholars. The dogma of resurrection, for example, entails the idea that the souls of the deceased are reunited with their bodies. According to Sunnis, after death, the souls exist in the grave without their bodies until they are resurrected. The grave marks an intermediate sphere, called *barzakh*, between the world and the place of resurrection. According to a Ḥadīth, the souls of the faithful will become birds flying around in paradise and eating from its fruits. This Ḥadīth is an example of the widespread acceptance of hylomorphism in classical Muslim thought: even for a disembodied state, a form is necessary.<sup>39</sup>

The origin of the idea that after death people take on a form corresponding to their character is unclear, but according to Schmidtke, its mention in as-Suhrawardī's *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq* probably had a great impact on later Muslim philosophers and theologians. For the much later Shāh Walī Allāh ad-Dihlawī, an eschatological conception similar to as-Suhrawardī's is found in the idea of the intermediate sphere or *barzakh*. Both as-Suhrawardī and ad-Dihlawī shared the idea that the souls with the vilest qualities become devils after death, while those with the best characters become angels. As devils or angels, these beings have an effect on worldly affairs after death. The eschatological model on which as-Suhrawardī's and ad-Dihlawī's ideas are based does not have one established terminology. This is why the Eastern European vampire could be easily adapted. The Egyptian Muḥammad Nūr translated the Islamic eschatology into Balkan vampirism. However, it is unlikely that Muḥammad Nūr knew the relevant works of the two Muslim thinkers. It is more likely that those ideas about the afterlife originated with as-Suhrawardī, but that they had undergone modifications by the time they reached ad-Dihlawī and then Muḥammad Nūr. The exact manner in which those ideas reached him remains obscure.

The *Risāle-i Sa'īdiyye* has a legal dimension. Muḥammad Nūr advises, with regard to vampires, to kill what causes harm. Whether knowingly or not, he was thus confirming an Ottoman tradition and practice in dealing with vampirism. As mentioned, the fatwa attributed to Ebū's-Su'ūd Efendi requires the elimination of vampires that harm Muslims.

Whether or not Muḥammad Nūr intended to communicate these contents in the form of a *risāla*—the text may originally have been a lecture—is irrelevant, since a text entitled *Risāle-i Sa'īdiyye* did in fact circulate among followers of the Melāmiyye.

---

39 For a discussion of the relevant Ḥadīth, see Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Kitāb al-Rūḥ*, Bakr b. 'Abdallāh Abū Zayd (ed.), Makka 1432, pp. 283–298.

More than any other form of writing, a *risāla* is a statement on a current theological or social problem. The statement about killing vampires probably served to legitimise the desecration of graves. This, in turn, may have helped to stabilise social relations in a community in a way that clearly separated good from bad people. Muḥammad Nūr's openness to this context may reflect his willingness to spread his *ḥarīqa* and to consolidate his status as a charismatic religious leader.

### Critical Edition

#### Source Texts:

**A:** Istanbul Süleymaniye Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, Yazma Bağışlar 2526.

**B:** Istanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Atatürk Kütüphanesi, Osman Ergin Yazmaları 580.

**C:** Istanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Atatürk Kütüphanesi, Osman Ergin Yazmaları 1612.

A 43a / B 6b / C 90b

*Risālat aş-Şa ʿīdiyya*  
*li-sh-shaykh<sup>40</sup> as-sayyid<sup>41</sup> kh<sup>w</sup>āja*  
*Muḥammad Nūr al- ʿArabī al-Malāmī<sup>42</sup>*  
*raḍiy Allāh ʿanh<sup>43</sup>*

*Bismi llāhi r-raḥmāni r-raḥīm.*

*Al-ḥamdu li-llāhi rabbi l- ʿālamīn<sup>a</sup> wa-ş-şalātu ʿalā rasūlihī Muḥammadīn wa- ʿalā ālihī ajma ʿīn.*

*Wa-ba ʿd:*

Maʿlūm ola ki insān kāmīl olmayınca Ḥaḥḥ katında kemāl kabūl olmaz. İmdi insānıñ kemālī<sup>44</sup> mebdēʿi bilmekliğiyle olur. Aslı neden<sup>45</sup> ḥāşıl oldı<sup>46</sup> ve ne keyfiyetle<sup>47</sup> ḥāşıl oldı? Daḥi<sup>48</sup> me ʿādīnı bilmekliğiyle olur. Ya ʿni nihāyeti ne olur? Ve ḥāli nedir?

40 Li-l-shaykh: missing in B. C: li-l-shaykhinā.

41 B: sayyid. Missing in C.

42 {al-Malāmī} Missing in BC.

43 {raḍiya llāhu ʿanh} Missing in B. C: ḥuddise sirruhū.

44 B: kemā.

45 B: andan.

46 B: olur.

47 B: keyfiyet ile.

48 Missing in B.

İnsânîñ kemâlî bu iki aşla tevaqquf édêr<sup>49</sup>. Bilmek lâzım olur.<sup>50</sup> Zîrâ bu iki aşlı bil-meyüb vâkıf olmayan hayvândan <enzeldir><sup>51</sup>.

Ey 'âşık-ı Hâkık! Allâhu te'âla<sup>52</sup> Qur'an-ı 'azîmde *kullu shay'in hâlikun illâ waj-hahu* buyurdi. Ve hadîş-i qudsîde *kâna llâhu wa-lâ shay'un ma'ahû* buyurdi. Ya'ni Allâhu te'âla vardır anîñ ile bir şey yokdır<sup>53</sup>. Şimdi dañı böyledir. Lâkin bu sırrı bilmek mebdê'i bilmek ile<sup>54</sup> olur.

Ey<sup>55</sup> 'âşık-ı Hâkık! Aşl-ı zât-ı Hâkıkîñ ğayri değilsin. Lâkin bu sırrı bilmiyan a'mâ ağyâr görür<sup>56</sup>.

*Wa-man kâna fî hâdhihî a'mâ fa-huwa fî l-âkhirati a'mâ wa-ađallu sabîlâ'n*. Ya'ni bu dâr-ı [A 43b] dünyada kalbi a'mâ olanıñ<sup>57</sup> dâr-ı âhîrinde<sup>58</sup> dañı kalbi a'mâ olur. Ya'ni dünyada Hâkıkı bir vech ile<sup>59</sup> idrâk étmiyan dâr-ı âhîrinde<sup>60</sup> dañı bir vech ile müdrîk olmaz<sup>61</sup>. A'mâ gibi. Belki eşeddir. Zîrâ a'mâ [gibi]<sup>62</sup> güneşi idrâk étmez ise harârinden idrâk édêr.

İmdi zât-ı Hâkık mu'tlakdır. Bir cilve ile mu'kayyed olmadığından her ma'şûsda ve ma'külde cilvekâr oldı<sup>63</sup>. Ma'kül olan 'âlem-i ğaybdır. Ma'şûs olan 'âlem-i<sup>64</sup> şehâdetdir. Ve ğayb olan zühürdan evvel şıfatdır. Ve zühürdan soñra esmâdir. Meşelâ çakmak taşından<sup>65</sup> âteş olmak şıfatdır. [B 7a] Çakmak ile âteş zühûra gelmesi esmâdir. Ve kıs 'alâ hâza<sup>66</sup>. Kezâlik meşelâ<sup>67</sup> kudret zühürdan evvel şıfatdır. Ba'de'z-zuhûr kâdir isimdir. Ma'külât olan şıfat ve esmâ me'anîdir. Ancak mu'kayyedde zühûrları vardır. 'Âlem-i ğaybdır. Kenz-i ma'fî olan budır. Hadîş-i qudsîde *kuntu kanzan makhfiyyan fa-ahbabbtu an*<sup>68</sup> u *rafa fa-khalaqtu l-khalqa [C 91a] li-u'rafa* vârid oldı.

49 {aşla tevaqquf édêr} BC: aşlı bilmekle olur.

50 {bilmek lâzım olur} Missing in BC.

51 AB: enzeldir. C: ezalldır.

52 {ey 'âşık-ı Hâkık! Allâhu te'âla} C: Ey 'âşık-ı Hâkık te'âla.

53 {Allâhu te'âla vardır. Anîñ ile bir şey yokdır} C: Allâhu te'âla var ve anîñla bir şey yokdır.

54 C: bilmekle.

55 Missing in C.

56 B: kördür.

57 BC: olan.

58 BC: âhîretde.

59 BC: vechle.

60 BC: âhîretde.

61 bir vech ile müdrîk olmaz} BC: bu vechle idrâk étmez.

62 Added in C.

63 B: olur.

64 'âlem-i: missing in BC.

65 C: taşında.

66 C: hâzihî.

67 Meşelâ: missing in BC.

68 an: missing in B.

Halk lûgat-ı ‘arabda bâlî ve fânî olana dërler. Ya’ni gizli<sup>69</sup> genc-i şābitim<sup>70</sup> ya’ni zāt-ı muṭlakım<sup>71</sup> ismim ve resmim idrāk olunamaz. Halkı ya’ni fānî olanı yaradım ya’ni zuhūra getirdim. Esmā’-i ‘ulyālarım [A 44a] cilve kıldım. Zuhūra gelen cilveyi<sup>72</sup> kimi delil ile kimi zevk ile kimi şühüd ile bilsunlar<sup>73</sup>. Bu bilmek ile bilmiyan a’ mādır<sup>74</sup>.

İmdi esmānın cilvesi olan halkıñ evveli akl-ı evveldır. Nūr-ı Muḥammed’dir. Ve cümle mevcūdāt andan zuhūra geldiler. [Nitekim]<sup>75</sup> *Awwalu mā khalaqa llāhu nūrī* hadişiñde<sup>76</sup> vārid oldı. Ve nūr-ı Muḥammed nefsi-i küll ile peydā oldı. Ve ṭabī’at ve heyülā ve şekil ve cisim ve ‘arş ve cümle felek ve melek ve cin ve ḥayvān ve nebāt ve insān bu tertīb üzere nūr-ı Muḥammed’den biri birinden peydā oldılar. *Law lā-ka [law lā-ka]<sup>77</sup> lamā khalaqtu <l-aflāk><sup>78</sup>* hadişi-i qudsīde vārid oldı.

Lākin insān māddeşi ya’ni andan halk olundığı aşl-ı ḥusūl zātdan şıfāta ve şıfāt-dan esmāya ve esmādan nūr-ı Muḥammed’e ve nūr-ı Muḥammed’den nefsi-i küll’e şümme ve şümme bu tertīb üzere ta<sup>79</sup> mertebe’-i insāna gelinceye kadar<sup>80</sup>. <Wa- ><sup>81</sup> ya ‘lamu mustaqarra-hā wa-mustawda ‘a-hā’ āyet-i kerimesi buña şāhiddir. İstikrār me’ānīde ve istīdā’-i ecsāmda olur. İmdi bu yürüyüşle<sup>82</sup> mertebe’-i insāna gelen insān kāmildir. Ve isti’dādı tāmdir. Mücāhedesiz ve riyāzetsiz kemāl taḥşil eder. [B 7b] Yol āna āsān olur. Bu yürüyüşle<sup>83</sup> mertebe’-i insāna gelmeyüb belki ‘ālem-i nebātda ve ‘ālem-i ḥayvānda bir mānī’ [A 44b] sebebiyle eğlenür ise – meşelā nebāt bir āfet ile fāsıd olub ebeveyniñ birisi ol nebātı yemededen yāḥūd müşmir olmadan<sup>84</sup> ya nefl-i rūḥ olmazdan evvel ya meni iken ebeveyniñ birisi fāsıd olub ya<sup>85</sup> yenilmıyan nebātda<sup>86</sup> veya ḥayvānda<sup>87</sup> ḥāşıl olub ya ḥayvānda iken ol hayvana bir āfet ‘arız olub veya ḡayri mānī’ gibi. Velḥāşıl kaḡı nebātda veya ḥayvānda veya ma’dende eğlenirse<sup>88</sup> ol şıfatı kesb eder. Ve isti’dādı ba’id olur. Kimi

69 BC: gizli.

70 {genc-i şābitim} C: ve şābitim.

71 C: muṭlak.

72 B: cilve.

73 B: bilsun.

74 BC: a’ mā budur.

75 Added in BC.

76 Missing in BC.

77 Added in C.

78 AB: l-’ ālam.

79 Missing in BC.

80 Missing in BC.

81 ABC: Wa-llāhu.

82 B: böyle.

83 B: nitekim böyle.

84 {müşmir olmadan} B: fāsıd oldı meni olmadan.

85 Missing in B.

86 B: nebātın.

87 B: ya ḥayvāndan.

88 B: eğlenursa.

az [C 91b] mücâhede ile ve kimi mücâhede-i keşire ile yola gelir<sup>89</sup>. Ve kimi aślâ bir dürlü yola gelmez. Müřşid-i kâmilî fark eylemez. Velhâşıl kaŋğı müvellidde ne kadar eğlenirse<sup>90</sup> ol kadar isti'dādı ba'îd olur. Velhâşıl mertebe-'i insân olmadan mevâlid-i selâşede devr eder. Ammâ rûh-i insânî nefh olundıkda devr yokdur. Zîrâ hilkat-ı insân ahsen-i takvîm olub<sup>91</sup> ahsen-i<sup>92</sup> takvîm olmiyan ma'den ve<sup>93</sup> nebât ve hayvâna rücû' edub devr étmez. *La-qad khalaqnâ l-insâna fi ahsani taqwîm* âyet-i kerîmesi buna şâhiddir<sup>94</sup>. Ve illâ rûh bir bedenden hurûc édub ğayri bedene sârî olub deyü bu bařıldır<sup>95</sup>. Faķat mesh' ya'ni tebdîl-i şüret gerek 'âlem-i dünyada ve gerek 'âlem-i âhiretde vâki' olur. Ervâh-ı habîşe şâhibleri [A 45a] tebdîl olundıkları gibi. Benî İsrâ'îl maymûn ve hînzîre tebdîl olundıkları<sup>96</sup> gibi. Ba'zîlarına vâki' oldı. Ğayâtlarında<sup>97</sup> tebdîl olmiyanlar<sup>98</sup>. Âyet-i kerime'i *aw nal'ana-hum kamâ la'annâ aşhâba s-sabt* buna<sup>99</sup> şâhiddir. Tebdîl cismânîdir. Ammâ ba'de'l-mevt tebdîl vâki' olur. Ervâh-ı habîşeye göre. Lâkin tenâsuĥ tarîķiyle deĝil. Belki kaŋğı hayvân tabî'atı ĝâlib [B 8a] olurası<sup>100</sup> ol hayvân şüretinde<sup>101</sup> Ğaşr olsa gerekdir. Zîrâ me'ânî şuver olsa gerekdir.<sup>102</sup> Meşelâ ŧamaĥ hînzîr ve<sup>103</sup> Ğased maymûn ve kibîr fîl ve<sup>104</sup> nifâķ Ğayye ve kin deve ve ĝazab kelb ve kezbe şeyħân ve kısı 'alâ hâzâ<sup>105</sup>. İnsân aĥlâķında olmiyan her bir ĥalk ol hayvânî şüretinde olsa gerekdir. Ve ol şüret ile<sup>106</sup> mu'azzeb olsa gerekdir. Nitekim *fata'tûna afwâjâ'* vârid oldı. Ve a'mâl-i seyyi'e zinâ ve livâĥa ve ĝayrileri gibi kötü<sup>107</sup> şüret olub şâhibini 'azâb eylese<sup>108</sup> gerekdir. A'mâl-i Ğasene ĥûb şüret olub enîs oldıĝı gibi. Belki cenet ni'metleri ve cehennem 'azâbları cümle a'mâldendir. *Inna-mâ hiyya a'mâlahum ruddat 'alayhim* vârid oldı.

89 B: gelur.

90 B: eğlenürse.

91 B: ve.

92 B: ĥüsn-i.

93 Missing in B.

94 B: bu âyet-i kerîmesi şâhiddir.

95 {olub deyü bu bařıldır} B: olur demek bāřıldır.

96 BC: oldukları.

97 B: Ğayâtında.

98 BC: oldılar.

99 BC: âyeti.

100 BC: olur.

101 B: -dir.

102 {Zîrâ me'ânî şuver olsa gerekdir} Missing in C.

103 Missing in B.

104 Missing in B.

105 C: hâzîhî.

106 BC: şüretle.

107 C: kötü.

108 B: étse.

Lâkin ba‘de’l-mevt [olan]<sup>109</sup> tebeddül rûhânîdir. İnsan anı görmez. Sâ‘ir-i maḥlûqât anı görürler.<sup>110</sup> Meğer<sup>111</sup> ehl-i keşf ola. Ve ba‘zı ervâḥ-ı ḥabîse kezzâb-ı [A 45b] eşer [C 92a] ve ‘âleme ziyân etmek ile ba‘de’l-mevt şeytânlar<sup>112</sup> şuretinde olub ismi vâmpîr namıyla tesmiye olub ‘âleme ziyânkâr olur.<sup>113</sup> *Kullu muḍirrin*<sup>114</sup> *yuq-tal* fehvâsiyle giderüb<sup>115</sup> katl <olunurlar><sup>116</sup>. Velḥâşil ervâḥ-ı ḥabîse gerek dünyada ve gerek âhirette ‘anâşîrdan münfekk olmaz. Zîrâ ceennem dârü’l-‘anâşîrdır. Ammâ rûḥ-ı<sup>117</sup> mü‘min eğer kemâl taḥşîl etmedilerse<sup>118</sup> ervâḥları dâr-ı na‘îmle muḳayyed olur<sup>119</sup>. Meğer ba‘zı ‘âşî olanları ilâ mâşâ’ Allâh ceennemle muḳayyed olurlar. Lâkin<sup>120</sup> du‘â ve şadaḳa ve Ḳur‘ân ve mevlüd ve tesbîḥ ve sâ‘ir ḥay-rât ü ḥasenât [gibiler]<sup>121</sup> ervâḥ-ı ‘aşâne ‘afv olmağa<sup>122</sup> sebebdir. Ceḥîm ḳaydından fekk olub na‘îm ile muḳayyed olurlar. Ebû Ṭâlib Resûlullâh ş. ‘a.v. du‘âları berekâtıyla iḥyâ olub imân etmek gibi. Ve zamân-ı <fetrede><sup>123</sup> ebeveyn-i mükerremîn Hz. ‘Abdullâh ve Hz. Âmine vefat eylediler. [Ba‘dehü]<sup>124</sup> Du‘â-i Resûlullâh ş.a.v. berekâtıyla iḥyâ olub risâletine imân getürdiler. Ve ammâ kümmel-i enbiyâ ve evliyâlar<sup>125</sup> gibi âhirete intikâl etmediler. Hz. ‘İsâ ve İdrîs [B 8b] ve Hz. İlyâs ve ‘Alî b. Ebî Ṭâlib<sup>126</sup> gibi<sup>127</sup> semâda [A 46a] olanlar<sup>128</sup> nüzül ederler. Ve kimi kendi<sup>129</sup> ismiyle meşhûr olur<sup>130</sup>. ‘İsâ ‘aleyhi’s-selâm gibi. Ve kimi ḡayri ismiyle tesmiye olunur<sup>131</sup>. İdrîs ‘a.s. gibi. Zîrâ İdrîs ‘a.s. Ba‘albek ḳaryesine İlyâs namıyla nebî oldı<sup>132</sup>. Dört biñ seneden soñra.<sup>133</sup> Hz. ‘Alî âhirete intikâl etmedi. Hz. ‘İsâ gibi.<sup>134</sup> *Wa-mâ qatalū-hu wa-mâ şalabū-hu wa-lâkin shubbiha lahum* [sırrına mazhar oldı]<sup>135</sup>. Nûḥ

109 Added in B.

110 {Sâ‘ir-i maḥlûqât anı görürler} Missing in B.

111 Missing in B.

112 B: şeyâfîn.

113 C: oldı. {ismi vâmpîr namıyla tesmiye olunub ‘âleme ziyânkâr olur} missing in B.

114 B: ?

115 Missing in B.

116 AC: ederler.

117 C: ervâḥ.

118 BC: etmediler ise.

119 BC: olurlar.

120 Missing in C.

121 Added in B.

122 {‘afv olmağa} B: ‘afve.

123 ABC: fîtratde.

124 Added in BC.

125 BC: evliyâ.

126 {ve ‘Alî b. Ebî Ṭâlib} missing in BC.

127 Missing in C.

128 B: olan zevât sırrı min ...?

129 Missing in BC.

130 BC: olub.

131 BC: olub.

132 {nebî oldı} B: ba‘ş olunmuş.

133 {Dört biñ seneden soñra} missing in BC.

134 {Hz. ‘Alî âhirete intikâl etmedi. Hz. ‘İsâ gibi} BC: Ve Hz. ‘Alî de min vech Hz. ‘İsâ gibi.

135 Added in B.

‘a.s. sefinesi tırdığı vaķit ‘Alī b. Ebī Tālib ismiyle bir taħta āliķoyub ķudretiyle hıfz olındı. Ve ol taħta  zerine ‘Alī semāya ‘ur c eyledi. Āħır zamānda nām-ı āħarla n z l  der. İdrīs ‘a.s. gibi. Vallāhu a‘lem.<sup>136</sup> Ammā āħirete intikāl  den k mmel n aŗlā bir mekān ile ve<sup>137</sup> bir kevn ile muķayyed olmazlar. Muŗlaklardır. Her mekanda haŗırlardır. Vāŗıllardır. Ba‘zen laţif olurlar. Ba‘zen<sup>138</sup> keŗife<sup>139</sup> temeŗs l  derler. Bundan [nāŗı]<sup>140</sup> ziyāret-i ķub r meŗr ‘ oldı ki eēer meyyit ģayr-i kāmil ise du‘ā ile menfa‘atı<sup>141</sup> olur. Ve eēer kāmil ise menfa‘at  der. Z rā hācet bitirir. Ervāh-ı habiŗe olan vāmp r zarar eylediēi gibi ehlullah daħı menfa‘at  derler.<sup>142</sup> *Idhā tahay-yartum [A 46b] f  l-‘um ri fa-sta‘in  min ahli l-qub r ŗāhiddir. Z rā [C 92b] vel  āħirete intikāl  tmesiyle taŗarrufdan m nķaŗı‘ olmaz.*

*Wa-llāhu ģasb  wa-ni‘ma l-wak l.*

*Tammat ar-Risāla aŗ-ŗa ‘ıdiyya  
bi-‘awn Allāh<sup>143</sup>*

### Translation

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, and blessings upon His Messenger Muħammad and upon all his kinsmen.

To the matter:

Know that if a human being does not become perfect, his/her perfection before God [*ħaqq*] is not recognised. Now, human perfection is the result of knowledge of the beginning. From what did the [human] essence evolve, and how did it come into being? It is also the result of knowledge of the return. In other words, what is its end and what is its state?

Human perfection is dependent on [knowledge] of these two principles. Both are necessary. Whoever does not know these two principles is lower than animals.

O lover of God! Allah, the Exalted, says in His glorious Qur‘ān (28:88): “Everything will perish save His countenance.”<sup>144</sup> In addition, the Ĥad th Quds  says: “In the beginning was Allah and nothing was with him.” That is to say, Allah, the Exalted, exists, and there is nothing with Him. This state [that nothing exists, but Allah,]

136 {N h ‘a.s. sefinesi tırdığı vaķit ... İdrīs ‘a.s. gibi. Vallāhu a‘lem} missing in BC.

137 BC: veya.

138 B: ve -.

139 B: keŗif olarak. C: keŗif.

140 Added in B.

141 C: m ntefi‘.

142 {Ervāh-ı habiŗe ... daħı menfa‘at  derler} missing in BC.

143 {bi-‘awni llāh} missing in BC.

144 The translations from the Quran are all taken from Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran: An Explanatory Translation*, New York 1930.

has not changed. However, one understands this mystery [only] with knowledge of the origin.

O lover of God! You are not different from God's primal essence. However, the fool who does not know this secret sees different things.

"Whoso is blind here will be blind in the hereafter, and yet further from the road."  
(Q 17:72)

Therefore, if a person's heart is blind in this world, his heart will also be blind in the hereafter. Whoever does not perceive God in this world, will not perceive him in the hereafter either—like a blind man. Perhaps worse. Because, even if a blind man does not perceive the sun [with his eyes], he perceives its heat.

Now, the essence of God is absolute. With a disclosure, He unveils Himself in every object of sense and reason, without becoming dependent on them. What is recognisable by reason is the Unseen World; what is recognisable by the senses is the Visible World. Before its appearance, the unseen is an attribute. After its appearance, it is a name. For example, becoming fire is an attribute of the flint-stone. The appearance of fire along with flint is a name. Compare this [to the relation between God's attributes and names]! In this way, for example, the omnipotence [of God] is an attribute before its appearance. After its appearance, it is the name 'the Almighty'. The objects of reason, which are attributes and names of God, are meanings. They manifest only in dependent things. This is the Unseen World. This is the Unknown Treasure. The Ḥadīth Qudsī says: "I was an unknown treasure, and then I wished to be known. Then I created creation."

In the Arabic language, 'creation' refers to everything that decays and perishes. In other words, [the Ḥadīth] says I am an unknown, enduring treasure, i.e. I am the Absolute Being whose name and image is not perceivable. The creation, that is, the transitory, I have created, that is, I made it appear. I have disclosed myself in my highly Exalted Name. The appearance, which becomes visible, is recognisable sometimes by proof, sometimes by taste, and sometimes by sight. Whoever does not recognise [God's visibility] in one of these ways is blind.

Now, as the manifestation of [God's] Names, the first creature is the First Intellect. That is the Light of Muḥammad. All beings emerge from it. Because the Ḥadīth says: "The first thing that Allah created was my light." The Light of Muḥammad emerged together with the Universal Soul. In this way, Nature, Universal Matter, Form, Body, [God's] Throne, all spheres of the heaven, angels, jinns, animals, plants, and man came forth one after another from the Light of Muḥammad. The Ḥadīth Qudsī says: "If it were not for you, I would not have created the spheres." The human substance, from which you are created, your origin, comes from the Essence [of God] to the Attributes, from the Attributes to the Names, from the Names to the Light of Muḥammad, from the Light of Muḥammad to the Universal Soul and so on and so forth, and finally reaches the level of Humanity, as proven by the noble verse (Q 11:6) "He knoweth its habitation and its repository."

Habitation happens with regard to meanings, and repository happens with regard to forms. Now, the human being who reaches the level of Humanity in this way

is perfect, and his disposition is complete. He acquires perfection without effort and self-discipline. The path [of perfection] is easy for him. In that movement [of the substance], the substance that does not reach the level of Humanity, perhaps because of an obstacle, remains in the sphere of plants and animals—for example, plants that decay because of a disease, or one parent does not eat the plant [that carries the substance], or bears no fruit from it [i.e. sperm], or before the breath of the spirit, when [the human substance] was sperm, one parent perishes or reaches an inedible plant or animal, which meets with a misfortune or another obstacle. In short, [the human substance] acquires the property of the one—plant, animal or mineral—with which it resides. In addition, its disposition will be far [from perfection]. Some people [with this disposition] will find the path [of perfection] with little effort, and others with much effort. Others never find it. [In the latter case] not even a perfect master can do anything. The state in which the [human] substance resides determines the degree of deviation from perfection. The substance circulates in the three lower states [minerals, plants, animals] without arriving at the human level. However, once the human spirit is breathed into him, there is no cycle. For the human creature is *of the best stature* and does not revert to [the level] of mineral, plant, and animal, which is not *of the best stature*, as attested by the Qur’ān verse 95:4 “Surely We created man of the best stature.”

To say that the spirit moves away from one body, to continue only in another, is wrong. However, transformation, that is, change of form, occurs both in this world and in the Hereafter, just as the Children of Israel changed into apes and pigs. This was true for some, as indicated by the Qur’ān verse 4:47 “or curse them as We cursed the Sabbath-breakers.” The change concerns form. For the evil spirits do not appear after death by way of incarnation. Rather, the evil spirit merges with the form of the beast whose nature is predominant, because meanings must be forms. For example, greed is a pig, envy a monkey, pride an elephant, hypocrisy a snake, revenge a camel, anger a dog, and lying a devil. Every creature that has no human character will take the form of that animal and be punished with that form. The Qur’ān says in 78:18, “and ye come in multitudes.” Evil acts such as adultery, homosexuality, and others are evil forms that punish the person concerned. Just as good actions take good forms and are friendly. Perhaps the pleasant things of paradise and the punishments of hell are all acts. It is said: “Their actions only turn against them.” However, after death, there is further a spiritual change. Man does not see this, but all other creatures do. One must be one of the people of unveiling [to see the change]. Some of the most evil and mendacious spirits take the form of devils after death because of their mischief on earth and, known as vampires, [continue to] harm the world. In accordance with the saying, “kill everything that harms,” they are to be killed. In short, the evil spirits are not separated from the elements, either in this world or in the hereafter. However, the spirit of the believer, if it has not attained perfection, is connected with the realm of pleasantness. Sinners [among the faithful], if God wills it, are connected with hell. Nothing but prayers, alms, Qur’ān [recitation], *mawlid* [recitation], praise, and other charitable and beautiful

works are means of forgiveness of disobedient spirits. Freed from hellfire, they will be connected with the paradise of pleasantness. Just as Abū Ṭālib came to life and believed through the blessing of the prayers of the Messenger of Allah—Allah bless him and grant him salvation! The noble parents [of the Prophet], ‘Abdallāh and Āmina, died in the time between two prophets [i.e. ‘Īsā and Muḥammad, when—according to many Muslim theologians—there was no true religion on earth]. Then they came to life through the blessing of the Prophet’s prayer and accepted his message. However, they—like the perfect among the prophets and friends of God—have not passed over into the Hereafter!

Like ‘Īsā, Idrīs, Ilyās, and ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, those who are in heaven descend [to the earth]. Some of them are known by their own name, like ‘Īsā—peace be upon him. Others are called by a different name, like Idrīs—peace be upon him. Because Idrīs—peace be upon him—became a prophet in the village of Baalbek under the name Ilyās, after 4000 years. Like ‘Īsā, ‘Alī has not passed over to the Afterlife. [The secret of] (Q 4:157) “They slew him not nor crucified, but it appeared so unto them” [was revealed to him]. When Nūḥ’s ark—peace be upon him—stopped, Nūḥ had a throne upon which the name ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib [was written], which he preserved with all his strength. Moreover, it was on this throne that ‘Alī ascended to heaven, and at the end of time, he will descend with it, like Idrīs—peace be upon him. Allah knows best. However, the perfect ones who have passed over into the Hereafter are never bound to any place or [mode of] being. They are absolute. They are present in every place. They are the uniting ones. Sometimes they are ethereal. Sometimes they resemble a dense form. For this reason, visiting graves is permitted, because the dead, if imperfect, benefit from the prayers [of the visitors]. If the dead person is one of the perfect ones, he brings benefit [to the living], for he can satisfy desires. The vampires, the evil spirits, are harmful, whereas the people of Allah are able to benefit [as good spirits]. [The saying] “If you are unsure about anything, turn to the people of the graves,” affirms this. For with the passing of a friend of God into the Hereafter, his involvement [in favour of the good] does not cease.

And Allah is sufficient for me, and what a good protector He is!