Early Islamic Sufism and *Sharī’ah* Sciences: Status and Inter-relationships

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Abstract:
The early Islamic Sufism has long been subject to fierce criticism. Some argue that it is completely non-Islamic, philosophical fantasy, powerlessness, total isolation or escaping from the real life and the struggle therein. Besides, some other researchers separate Sufism from other disciplines of Sharī‘ah knowledge, namely Fiqh, Ḥadīth and Qur’ānic Exegesis, arguing that Sufism and Sufis were both rejected and degraded by scholars of these Sharī‘ah disciplines. In tracking the historical sources, books of biographies and classes, this paper investigates these assumptions and discusses the position and the status of the early Islamic Sufism (from 1st to the 5th century of Hijrah) compared to other disciplines of Sharī‘ah knowledge. It also provides examples of the Sufi scholars’ contributions in these disciplines of Sharī‘ah knowledge. Moreover, it investigates the inter-relationships between the Sufi masters and the scholars of Fiqh, Ḥadīth and Qur’ānic Exegesis.

Keywords: Sufism, Fiqh, Ḥadīth, Qur’ān, Sharī‘ah

قصة التصوف الإسلامي: موقعه من علوم الشريعة وصلة رجاله ببقية العلماء
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الملخص:
تعددت الكتابات والدراسات التي تناولت التصوف الإسلامي، إلا أن هذه الكتابات والدراسات جعلت من أصل التصوف وتطوره تأثر بالعوامل الأجنبية أو أصله في الإسلام محورًا مهمًا ورئيسيًا لها. وعلى الرغم من أهمية هذه الجوانب في ميدان البحث العلمي، إلا أن مسألة أثر الحركة الصوفية في الميدان العلمي، وارتباط رجال هذا العلم بغیرهم من علماء الأمة، لم يحظ بكثير من الاهتمام من قبل الباحثين؛ بل إن بعض الدراسات عن تعثم أو غيره قلت أن الأثر الفكري والسلوكي للتصوف الإسلامي إلى تلك الدرجة التي كونت حاجزًا بين ذلك التراث العظيم واستفادة الإنسان منه. وهذا البحث هو محاولة لفهم موقع التصوف الإسلامي من علوم الشريعة مبرزًا اهتمام الصوفية بتعلم تلك العلوم كالفقه والحديث والتفسير، وحرصهم على التماسك بأحكامها وأدابها. كما لقي الفصل ضوءًا أيضًا على انخراط كثير من الصوفية في تدريس تلك العلوم والتأليف فيها إلى أن حسب كثير منهم على أهل هذه العلوم وادرج بعضًا منهم في طبقات الفقهاء والمحدثين والمفسرين. وببين الفصل كذلك مدى ارتباط رجال التصوف الإسلامي وشيوعه في غيرهم من علماء الأمة لا سيما الأمية الأربعة والحفاظ والمحدثين. ويدرك هذا الفصل الفرضية القائلة إن الصوفية لم يكونوا بعيدين عن علماء الأمة، وأنهم حرموا على تعلم علوم الشريعة المختلفة، وأن الروابط بينهم وبين غيرهم من علماء الفقه والحديث والتفسير كانت قوية، وأن منهم محدثون ومفسرون وفقهاء برعوا في تلك العلوم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التصوف، الفقه، الحديث، القرآن، الشريعة
The Arabic word *Tašawwuf* literally means “to become a Sufi,” and it is generally translated as Sufism. The etymologies for the term are various and researchers have greatly differed concerning the source word of this term and the etymological derivations to which the “Sufi” is attributed. Some researchers connect the term *Ṣafā* (Purity), a moral trait and quality which Sufis are always contending with themselves to attain. Others refer the term *Tašawwuf* to the root word *Ṣaff* (line), emphasizing the excellence of Sufis in devotion and piety. A third opinion, however, links the term to *Ṣuﬄah*, i.e. the long, covered portico or vestibule which formed part of the Mosque of the Prophet (ﷺ) at Medina and which the Prophet built for the poor people who later on came to be identified as *ahl al-Ṣuﬄah* (People of the Bench). For Sufis, those people are typifying the ideal of asceticism and piety.

With these suggestions, which all denote attributes and qualities assumingly culminated in the character of the Sufis, into consideration, the opinion that connects the term *Tašawwuf* to the etymological derivation *Ṣūf* (wool or the woolen cloth) has found a wide acceptance among researchers of Sufism, past and present. It is noted that this opinion is more accurate from a morphological point of view. Besides it is supported given the history of Sufis and their well-known practice of wearing the woolen cloths in the early times of evolution.

Having discussed all the aforementioned suggestions, al-Qushayrī (d. 465 A.H.) -who authored “*Al-Risālah al-Qushayrīyah*” which is held by Sufis as the most authoritative source in Sufism— took a unique direction when he noted that the term *Tašawwuf* has no root word neither linguistically nor etymologically. He

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1 Carl W. Ernst “Tašawwuf”, in: *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim world*, Edited by Richard C. Martin (New York: Gale Group, 2004), Vol. 2, p. 684.
2 Al-Ṭūsī (Abū Naṣr ‘Abdillāh ibn ‘Alī al-Sarrāj), *Al-Lūma‘ fī Ṭarrīkh al-Tašawwuf al-Islāmī*, ed. ‘Imād Zakī al-Bārūdī (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Tawfīqīyah, undated), p. 31; Al-Kalābādhī (Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn ʿĪbrāhīm), *Al-Ta‘arruf li-Madh-hab Aḥl al-Tašawwuf*, ed. Nağāh ‘Awād Șiyām (Cairo: Dār al-Muqaṭṭam li-al-Naṣhr wa-al-Tażwī, 1st edition, 2009), p. 13; Muḥammad Kamāl Ja‘far, *Al-Tašawwuf: Ṭarīqān wa-Tagrubatan wa-Madh-habān* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Jāmi‘īyah, 1970), p. 2.
3 ‘Abd al-Qādir Ḥaqqā i‘iq ‘an al-Tašawwuf (Cairo: Dār al-Muqaṭṭam li-al-Naṣhr wa-al-Tażwī, 5th edition, 2013), p. 25.
4 Al-Kalābādhī, *Al-Ta‘arruf li-Madh-hab Aḥl al-Tašawwuf*, PP. 13–14; Shihāb al-Dīn ‘Umar ibn Muḥammad al-Suhrawardī, ‘Awārīf al-Ma‘ārif, ed. Nağāh ‘Awād Șiyām (Cairo: Dār al-Muqaṭṭam li-al-Naṣhr wa-al-Tażwī, 1st edition, 2009) p. 76.
5 W. Montgomery Watt “Ahl Al-Suﬃa”, in: *The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition*, Edited by H. A. R. GIBB and others (Leiden: E. J. Brill, New Edition, 1986), Vol. I, p. 266.
6 ʻAbd al-Karīm al-Taḵrīrī, “Risālah fī Ta‘rif al-Tašawwuf wa-ʻIshtiqāq al-Ṣūfīyah”, *Majallat al-Buḥūth wa-al-Dīrāsāt al-Ṣūfīyah* (Cairo: al-Markaz al-‘Ilmī al-Ṣūfī bi-al-ʻAshīrah al-Muḥammadīyyah, 2nd edition, 2006), p. 351s.
concluded that *Taṣawwuf* is rather a name which has been originated to describe this specific category of people.\(^8\)

As far as the technical meaning of the term *Taṣawwuf* is concerned, scores of definitions are also offered. Sufism, al-Sarrāj, al-Suhrawardī and others argue, has been defined with more than a hundred definitions.\(^9\) In his book “*ʿAwārif al-Maʿārif*”, al-Suhrawardī even concluded that the Sufi masters’ statements defining Sufism exceed a thousand.\(^10\)

With such multiplicity of definitions, many researchers concluded it is not as easy task to reach a comprehensive technical definition which would give a general overview of Sufism.\(^11\) Al-Qushayrī included in his “*Risālah*” (Epistle) many of the early Sufis’ definitions of Sufism.\(^12\) Reviewing the definitions he quoted and the other definitions quoted by other Sufi researchers are not within the scope of this paper. Yet, there is a need to spot light on a definition with a much wider scope for Sufism, and the the definition of Ibn ‘Ajibah (d. 1224 A.H) is suggested here; it tells “Sufism is the knowledge through which one can know how travelling (*sulūk*) [in Allah’s path] is commenced, how the inwards are cleansed [from the whims and evils] and how they are then adorned with the various kinds of good moral traits. Its beginning stage is knowledge, its middle stage is practice and its final stage is the bestowed miracle”.\(^13\)

With this definition of Ibn ‘Ajibah in mind, some of the collective efforts that have been exerted by the Sufi scholars and masters in thought, knowledge and practice will be discussed in this paper.

**The Sufis' Encouragement to master the Disciplines of *Sharī'ah* Knowledge**

Evidently, Sufis were very much keen to learn the other sciences of *Sharī'ah*. They confirmed that learning these sciences before setting out on the spiritual path of Sufism forms a protective shield for the Sufi novices and pupils against misconceptions and pernicious innovations. Therefore, many Sufi scholars made it

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\(^8\) Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, *Al-Qushayrī’s Epistle on Sufism*, Trans. professor Alexander D. Knysh (UK: Garnet Publishing Limited, 1st edition, 2007), p. 288.

\(^9\) Al-Ṭūsī, *Al-Luma’ī fi Tārīkh al-Taṣawwuf*, p. 33.

\(^10\) Al-Suhrawardī, *Awārif al-Maʿārif*, 72.

\(^11\) Abū al-ʿIlā ‘Affī, *Fī al-Taṣawwuf al-Islāmī wa-Tārīkhīh: Translated studies of Reynold Alleyne Nicholson* (Cairo: Lagnat al-Ta’līf wa-al-Nashr, University of Fārūq I, undated), pp. 27-41.

\(^12\) Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, *Al-Qushayrī’s Epistle on Sufism*, Trans. Alexander D. Knysh, p. 23; 73; 289; 290; 291.

\(^13\) ‘Abdullāh Ahmad ibn ‘Ajibah, *Miʿrāj al-Tashawwuf ila Haqq ‘īq al-Taṣawwuf*, ed. ‘Abd al-Majīd khayyālī (Casablanca: Markaz al-Turāth al-Thaqāfī al-Maghribī, undated), p. 25.
a condition for the Sufi novice (mūrīd)\(^\text{14}\) to learn *Sharī'ah* sciences such as *Fiqh*, *Tafsīr* and *Ḥadīth* first. Sufis also consider that adherence to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet (ṣa) and abidance by the rulings of *Sharī'ah* are prerequisites for commencing their Path and a threshold to polishing the heart and purifying the soul.

This is made crystal clear by Al-Junayd, who says: “In this affair [of ours] one must not follow anyone who has not learned by heart the Qur’ān and written down the reports of the Prophet, because our knowledge is bound by the [Holy] Book and by the [Prophet’s] custom.”\(^\text{15}\) In his twenties, al-Junayd – who is known as the master of the community of Sufis – used to study the *Sharī'ah* sciences under the renowned scholars of his time. Al-Qushayrī emphasized that he mastered the principal sciences of the Qur’ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet (ṣa) and that he was a well established jurist in the *fiqh* school of Abū Thawr.\(^\text{16}\)

Moreover, Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī in his book “*Qūt al-Qulūb*” reported that al-Junayd used to hear his maternal uncle al-Sarrī al-Saqāf praying for him every time he left his assembly: “May Allah make you a qualified person in Ḥadīth (Muḥaddith) who, afterwards, becomes a Sufi and may He not make you a Sufī who, afterwards, becomes a qualified person in Ḥadīth.”\(^\text{17}\) Commenting on al-Sarrī’s saying, al-Makkī explained:

He means that if you start with (learning) the science of Ḥadīth and Reports (Āthār), and, then, you commence the spiritual way of renunciation and devotion, you will excel in Sufism and attain the status of the [Divine] Gnostics (al-‘Ārifīn). But, if you start with devotion and Sufism, you will be entirely preoccupied with that and as a result you will neglect [the learning of] the Sunnah and consequently [you will get used to] uttering paradoxical or blasphemous sayings (*shath*)\(^\text{18}\) or committing mistakes.\(^\text{19}\)

\(^{14}\) *Murīd* (pl. *Murīdūn*) literally means “seeker” or “aspirant”, followers of a Sufi master. The word is derived from “desire” (*irādah*), as mūrīd is the one who desires. According to the usage of Sufis, the mūrīd is someone who has no desire; he who has not stripped himself from desire, cannot be counted among murīdīn; See Al-Qushayrī, *Al-Qushayrī’s Epistle on Sufism*, pp. 213-214.

\(^{15}\) Al-Qushayrī, *Al-Qushayrī’s Epistle on Sufism*, Trans. Alexander D. Knyshh, p. 44.

\(^{16}\) Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, *Qūt al-Qulūb fī Muʿāmalat al-Māhbūb wa-Waṣf Tariq al-Qawm ilā Maqām al-Tawḥīd*, ed. Maḥmūd al-Riḍwānī (Cairo: Maktabat Dār al-Tūrāth, 1st ed. 2001), vol. 1, p. 437.

\(^{17}\) Ibid., p. 43.

\(^{18}\) The original meaning of *shath* (pl. *Shataḥāt*) in Arabic is “overflow of a pot.” In Sufi terminology, *Shataḥāt* are “seemingly blasphemous words and expressions uttered by Sufis who often in the state of ecstasy.”

\(^{19}\) Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, *Qūt al-Qulūb*, Vol. 1, p. 437.
According to al-Sarrī al-Saqaṭī and Abū Ṭalīb al-Makkī, it is better not to tread on the Sufi Path without having studied the sciences of Sharī‘ah as this is the foundation upon which worship and devotion are built.

**The Status of Sufism Compared to other Disciplines of Sharī‘ah Knowledge**

In the course of Islamic history, different Sharī‘ah sciences have come under severe attacks. Attempts to distort Fiqh, Tafseer and Hadīth and their respective, specialized scholars were relentlessly made, and Islamic Sufism was not an exception. Some have tried to isolate and separate Sufism and Sufi scholars from other branches of Islamic knowledge and competent scholars, arguing that Sufism was something alien to and unaccepted by the scholars of Sharī‘ah. Therefore, the need arises for investigating the position and status of Islamic Sufism compared to Sharī‘ah fields of inquiry, namely Fiqh, Tafsīr and Hadīth and the inter-relationships between the Sufi scholars and the scholars of those Sharī‘ah disciplines.

The relationship of Sufism to other Islamic sciences has long been the subject of many discussions. Since Sufism is considered by some as the science that is mainly concerned with correcting the intentions and adhering to sincerity (ikhlāṣ) in all deeds, some scholars, like Aḥmad ibn ‘Ajbah in his introduction to the book al-Ḥikam al-‘Aṭā ‘iyah, hold the opinion that it is a condition for the perfectness and acceptance of all other sciences. Ibn ‘Ajbah also quoted al-Siyūṭī as saying: “Sufism to other Islamic sciences is as important as the science of eloquence (‘ilm al-bayān) to Arabic Grammar,” meaning that it perfects and improves it.

Moreover, Zarrūq is reported to have been exemplifying the relationship of Sufism to Islamic faith as the relationship of the soul to the body. Although these opinions suggest the importance of Sufism to other Islamic sciences theoretically, the need arises to probe the inter-relationship developed between Sufism and these sciences and the link that connects scholars of both sides. For the purpose of investigating this, the following part explores the inter-relationships between Sufism and Sufis on one hand, and Fiqh, Tafsīr, and Hadīth and their competent scholars on the other hand.

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20 ‘Abd al-Hafīdh al-Makkī, Mawqif A‘imat al-Ḥarakah al-Salafiyyah min al-Taṣawwuf wa-al-Ṣūfiyyah; ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Wakīl, Hādhiḥi Ḥiyya al-Ṣūfiyyah; Ḥusayn Ilāhī Zāhir, Al-Taṣawwuf: Al-Mansha’ wa-al-Maṣādir; Sa‘īd ‘Abd al-‘Azīz and Muḥammad Jamīl Ghāzī, Al-Ṣūfiyyah: Al-Wajh al-Ākhar.

21 Ḥādhiḥi Ḥiyya al-Ṣūfiyyah, pp. 22-23.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.
Sufism and Fiqh

The word “Fiqh” was originally used as a comprehensive term referring to a number of sciences, such as jurisprudence, doctrines of theology, morality, ethics etc. This is concluded by Šiddīq Ḥasan Khān in his encyclopedic book *Abjad al-ʿUlūm*. Khān also quoted Abū Ḥanīfah as saying: “Fiqh is the science that was originally concerned with the soul and spirituality”. Al-Ghazālī also suggested that the term *Fiqh* was originally put to denote the knowledge of the Hereafter and the principles of diagnosing the subtle faults of one’s self (*āfāt al-nafs*); and in the course of time, the originally intended meaning of the term has been expanded to become connotative of the knowledge of issuing *Fatwas* (non-binding legal rulings).

Although both disciplines became distinctive from each other, they are considered interrelated and complementary to each other. Some Sufi scholars even argue that Sufism complements the study of Fiqh as it helps Muslims to fulfill Allah’s Commands in a way that allows them to taste the sweetness of belief and that would lead them to a stronger commitment to following Allah’s commands. This explains Zarrūq’s statement: “Jurisprudence and Sufism are partners in guiding people to Allah, His Rulings and His Commands.”

Zarrūq’s previous statement can be understood in the context that both Fiqh and Sufism deal in most cases with the same rulings, yet the former deals with the principles and conditions of perfecting the deeds, while the later, however, details the principles and conditions which lead to the acceptance of these deeds and therefore attaining the pleasure of Allah and drawing nearer to Him.

For example, books of Fiqh usually begin with a chapter entitled “purification” (*al-ṭahārah*), but rarely do they dwell upon its inner aspects and spiritual dimensions the same way Sufism tackles it. By the same token, the books of Fiqh expounds on the rulings related to performing prayer: its prerequisites, pillars, required actions, recommended actions, disliked actions, actions that invalidate it, etc.; but they usually do not discuss internal states that should be adhered to during observing prayers and they also lack discussions on how one can attain humility before Allah (*khushūʿ*) in prayer, and what actions lead to its realization. As such, Sufism and Fiqh complement each other.

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24 *Abjad al-ʿUlūm* (Damascus: Publications of Culture and National Guidance Ministry, 1978), Vol. 2, p. 400.
25 Ibid.
26 *Qwāʿid al-Taṣawwuf*, p. 16.
Practically speaking, many Sufis learned *Fiqh* and became well established in its rulings and principles. Many of them were even reported to have studied under the renowned scholars of four famous schools of *Fiqh* and have attained advanced levels in their learning circles. As a way to examine and explore the involvement of Sufis in the circles of *Fiqh* and the inter-relationships between Jurists and Sufis, this paper presents the following examples, highlighting, first and foremost, the relationships which the early Sufis developed with the founders of the four famous schools of *Fiqh*; and the opinions of the four *Imāms* of the famous *Fiqhi madh-habs* concerning Sufism and the Sufis.

It is a noteworthy to find that the major Sufi biographical works, such as “Ḥilāyat al-Awliyā’”, “al-Kawākib al-Durrīyāh”, “al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā’”, “Kashf al-Mahjūb” and many others include entries for the four founding *Imāms* of the famous *Fiqhi* schools, thus counting them among the early masters of Sufism given their embodiment of the principles of the sound and authentic Sufism that is basically defined as *khuluq* (good moral traits). In addition, the early Sufi encyclopedic works, like “Qūt al-Qulūb”, “Ihya’ Ulūm al-Dīn”, and “al-Risālah al-Qushayrīyah” are ample with reports and anecdotes about their moral traits. These Sufi sources also included their statements, virtues and actions.

**First: Imām Abū Ḥanīfah (d. 150 A.H/767 A.D):** He was known for his asceticism and piety. Most of his students were proven to be symbols and masters of Sufism. The most prominent among them were ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak, Dāwūd al-Ṭā’ī, al-Fuḍayl ibn ‘Iāḍ and Shaqīq al-Balkhī. It is reported that the Sufis’ peculiar way of worship, devotion and asceticism really appealed to Abū Ḥanīfah and that he used to advise those who tread on this path to seek *Sharī’ah* knowledge first before they commence their spiritual journey.

One time, he reportedly met Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham and said to him: “O’ Ibrāhīm, you have been bestowed a good manner in devotion and dedication to worship, yet I advise you to pay attention to seeking knowledge as it is the principal of worship and the support of things.”27

Moreover, Sufi masters and scholars boast that their link of transmission (*sanad*) in Sufism goes all the way back to him. Ibn ‘Abīdīn stated in his book “al-Durr al-Mukhtār” reported a chain of transmission proving that the Sufi master Abu ‘Alī al-Daqqāq received the knowledge of the spiritual path from Abū al-Qāsim al-Naṣrābādhī, who received it from al-Shiblī, who received it from al-Sarrī al-Saqāfī who received it from Ma’rūf al-Karkhī, who received it from Dāwūd al-

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27 Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Ḥajar al-Ḥaytamī, *Al-Khayrāt al-Hisān fi Manāqib al-Imām al-ʿAzam Abī Ḥanīfah al-Nuʿmān* (Beirut: Dār al-Arqam, undated), p. 115.
Ta‘ī, who took from Abū Ḥanīfah. Based on this, it is clear that Imām Abū Ḥanīfah was so close to the circles of Sufism and that the early Sufi masters used to frequent him for receiving knowledge in both Fiqh and Sufism.

**Second: Imām Mālik (d. 179 A.H/795 A.D):** The renowned Sufi shaykh ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak was one of Imām Malik’s studious disciples and he related some of Mālik’s spiritual states (ahwāl). Moreover, there is a well-known statement attributed to Imām Mālik in which he refers to the correlation between Sufism and Fiqh: “He who follows the path of Sufism while neglecting jurisprudence is a heretic; and he who learns jurisprudence while neglecting the Path commits transgression. But he who combines both has attained the Truth.”

**Third: Imām al-Shāfi‘ī (d. 204 A.H/819 A.D):** Al-Shāfi‘ī confirmed the Sufis’ steadfastness in devotion. It is reported that al-Shāfi‘ī accompanied some of the Sufis of his time and benefited from them. In his book “Maḍārij al-Sāliḥin”, ibn al-Qayyīm (d. 571 A.H.) quoted al-Shāfi‘ī’s famous statement: “I accompanied the Sufis and received from them but two statements: ‘Time is as a sword. If you do not cut it, it cuts you’; and ‘if you do not keep yourself busy with truth, it will keep you busy with falsehood’.”

Al-Shāfi‘ī has also been quoted as saying: “Three things in this world have been made beloved to me: avoiding affectation, treating people kindly, and following the ways of the people of Taṣawwuf”.

**Fourth: Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241 A.H/855 A.D):** Imām Aḥmad was known for his vast knowledge of the mystical facts and realities, and he used to discuss the subtle matters of Sufism with Sufis. It is even argued that his fame in asceticism (zuhd) is as great as his fame in the sciences of Ḥadīth and Fiqh. He had been reported as saying about Sufis: “I do not know people on earth better than them.”

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28 Ibn ‘Abidīn (Muḥammad Amīr, Radd al-Muḥtar ‘alā al-Durr al-Mukhtār Shahr Tanwīr al-Absār, ed. ‘Ādīl ‘Abd al-Mawjūd and ‘Āli Muḥammad Mu‘awwaḏ (Riyadh: Dār ‘Alam al-kutub, 2003), Vol. 1, pp. 156-157.

29 This statement of Imām Mālik is found in many sources, including: Zarrūq, Qwā‘id al-Taṣawwuf, p. 7; Mullā ‘Āli al-Qārī, Sharh ‘Ayn al-‘Ilm wa-Zayn al-Ḥilm (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfah al-Dīniyyah, undated), Vol. 1, p. 33.

30 Al-Siyūṭī (Jalāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr), Ta‘īd al-Ḥaqiqah al-‘Alīyah wa-Tashiyd al-Ṭārīqah al-Shāhdu‘iyah, ed. ‘Āṣim al-Kayyālī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1st ed., 2006), p. 12.

31 Al-‘Ajlūnī (Islamīl ibn Muḥammad), Kashf al-Khaṣfā’ wa-Muzīl al-Ilbās ‘ammā ushtuhiyah min al-Aḥādīth ‘alā Aṣīnata al-Nās (Cairo: Maktabat al-Quds, 1351 A.H.) Vol. 1, p. 341.

32 Muṣṭafā Ḥamdū (Aḥyān al-Ḥanbalī, Al-Ḥanābīlah wa-Ikhtilāfīhimma ‘a al-Salafīyah al-Mu‘āṣirah (Oman: Dār al-Nūr al-Mubīn, 1st edition, 2014), p. 678.

33 Ibid.
Moreover, *Imām* Aḥmad wrote a book entitled “al-Zuhd” (asceticism) in which he included the statements of the Prophet’s companions and their followers and the masters of Sufism, like Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham, Mālik ibn Dīnār, al-Fuḍayl ibn ‘Iyāḍ and many others. Some scholars consider this book as the earliest authenticated source on Sufism in its early stages.\(^{34}\)

In addition, *Imām* Aḥmad was a contemporary of a group of Sufi scholars and masters, and his relationship with them was evidently based on mutual respect, appreciation and veneration. He lived at the time of the Sufi master Bishr ibn al-Hārith (d. 227 A.H.). When he was asked about him, Aḥmad said: “He is the fourth of the seven substitutes\(^{35}\) (abdāl)”.\(^{36}\) Moreover, when Bishr died, Aḥmad said: “He, may Allah be pleased with him, died and there is nobody equal to him in this nation (ummah) but ‘Āmir ibn ‘Abd Qays, for both of them died and left nothing behind them, and he continued, ‘Had he (Bishr) got married, he would have been achieved a loftier status.’”\(^{37}\)

Another case in point indicating the good relationship between *Imām* Ahmad and the Sufi masters is when ‘Abdullāh, the son of *Imām* Aḥmad, asked his father about the Sufi master Maʿrūf al-Karkhī (d. 200 A.H.): “Did Maʿrūf have something of knowledge?” To which *Imām* Aḥmad replied: “He had the head of knowledge, and it is the fear of Allah’s wrath (khasyat Allah)”.\(^{38}\) It is even said that Maʿrūf al-Karkhī was one of Aḥmad’s masters (shuyūkh) in sulūk (spiritual journey of Sufism) as Aḥmad used to frequent him and ask him\(^{39}\) on matters related to sulūk, and this could explain why Maʿrūf al-Karkhī has entry in Ibn Abī Yaʿlā’s biographical work of the Ḥanbalis, as he considered him one of Aḥmad’s masters or shuyūkh.\(^{40}\)

It is even related that *Imām* Aḥmad frequently met with many Sufi masters like al-Sarrī al-Saqatī (d. 253 A.H.) and Abū Ḥamzah al-Ṣūfī (d. 269 A.H.) as *Imām* Aḥmad used to refer to the latter concerning the juristic issues and he would say to

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\(^{34}\) Hasan al-Shafi’i, *Fusūl fi al-Taṣawwuf*, p. 133.

\(^{35}\) Abdāl (Sing. Badal), literally means "substitute", one of the degrees in the Sufi hierarchical order of saints. See Goldziher, I. and H. J. Kissling, “Abdāl”, in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Béjina, C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W. P. Heirichs. Consulted online on 28 March 2019 [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_0132](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_0132)

\(^{36}\) Al-Khaṭṭāb al-Baghdādī (Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī), *Tārikh Baghdād aw Madiḥat al-Salām*, ed. Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Aṭā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmīyā, 2nd edition, 2004), Vol. 7, p. 76; ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghudhah, *Al-Ulamāʾ al-‘Uzzāb alladhīna ātharū al-‘Ilam ‘alā al-Zawāj* (Beirut: Maktubat al-Maṭbūʿāt al-Islāmīyā, 1st edition, 1982), pp. 33-34.

\(^{37}\) Al-Khaṭṭāb al-Baghdādī, *Tārikh Baghdād*, Vol. 7, p. 76.

\(^{38}\) Ibid, vol. 13, p. 202.

\(^{39}\) Muṣṭafā Ḥamdū ‘Aliān al-Ḥanbalī, *Al-Hanābilah wa-Ilkhtilāfihimmaʿa al-Salaftiyah al-Muʿāṣirah*, p. 692.

\(^{40}\) Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah*, Vol. 1, p. 381.
him: “What would you say concerning such and such matter O’ Sufi?”\textsuperscript{41} Moreover, al-Zirikly, in his biographical work “Al-
\textit{A}-lām”, argued that \textit{Imām} ʿAḥmad met with Abū Turāb al-Nakshabādī (d. 245 A.H.), Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī (d. 246 A.H.) and Abū Ja‘far al-
\textit{Tūsī} (d. 254 A.H.) and benefited from them.\textsuperscript{42}

Based on the aforementioned discussion, it becomes clear that mutual respect
and veneration were the normal case with regard to the relationship between the Sufi masters and the founders of both sides, i.e. the Sufis and the
Jurists, a careful investigation is needed for examining if this has also been the case
with the scholars of later generations and classes. This paper made a careful review
of the biographical books of Jurists to investigate the inter-relationships between
both sides and found that the books of the Jurists’ classes and biographies are
replete with the Sufis who were proven to excel in the study of Jurisprudence. The
following is a quick review of some cases:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{The Ḥanafī Sufis:}
  \begin{itemize}
    \item Al-Balkhī (Shaqqī ibn Ibrāhīm Abū ‘Alī) (d. 194 A.H/810 A.D): He was a
Sufi master of Khurasan and one of the Sufis whom al-Qushayrī included in his
Epistle on Sufism.\textsuperscript{43} He was well known for his much elucidation on the mystical
station of Trust in God (\textit{tawakkul}). He was also one of the teachers of the Sufi
maser Ḥātim al-Aṣamm (d. 237 A.H/851 A.D). Besides, he was one of the masters of
\textit{Ḥanafī} school of \textit{Fiqh}, and he accompanied the famous jurist Ya‘qūb ibn
Ibrāhīm al-Anṣārī, better known as Abū Yusuf (d. 182 A.H/798 A.D), who was a
direct student of Abū Ḥanīfah and who served as the Chief Judge (\textit{qādī al-quḍāḥ})
during the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd. Shaqqī learned under Abū Yusuf and read
some books on the \textit{Ḥanafī Fiqh} to him.\textsuperscript{44}
  \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{41} Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, \textit{Tārīkh Baghdād}, Vol. 1, p. 407.

\textsuperscript{42} Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, \textit{Al-
\textit{A}-lām} (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 15\textsuperscript{th} edition, 2002), Vol. 4, p.
233.

\textsuperscript{43} “He is one of the men of al-Qushayrī’s Risālah” (\textit{min Rijāl al-Risālah}) is a phrase researches of
Sufism usually use to denote the authenticity and authority of the person quoted. Al-Risālah al-
Qushayrīyah has long been accorded a high esteem among the researchers of Sufism, some
even called it “the constitution of Sufism” as a way to convey that the status it commands to
Sufism is just like the status al-Ṣāḥīḥ’s \textit{al-Risālah} commands to the science of Principles of
\textit{Fiqh}. From this, the Sufi masters mentioned in al-Risālah derives their authority and
authenticity.

\textsuperscript{44} Al-Qushayrī, \textit{Al-Qushayrī’s Epistle on Sufism}, p. 30; Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulāmī, \textit{Ṭabaqāt al-
Ṣūfiyyah}, p. 61; ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣrullāh al-Qurashī, \textit{Al-Jawāhir al-Mudīyah}
\textit{fi Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanafīyah} (Karachi: Mīr Muḥammad Kutub Khānāf, undated), Vol. 1, p. 258;
Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ‘Uṭmān ibn Qāyāmẓāz al-Dḥahabī, \textit{Ṣiyār A-
lām al-Nubālā}, ed. Shu‘ayb al-Arnāʾūt (Beirut: Muʿasasat al-Risālah, 3\textsuperscript{rd} edition, 1405 A.H.), Vol. 9, p. 313.
• Al-Sulamī (Aḥmad ibn Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Alī) (d. 409 A.H/1018 A.D): He was a well known Sufi and ascetic who authored the famous biographical book “Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣāfiyyah”. He is counted as one of the Ḥanafī scholars and his biography is founded in the biographical books of Ḥanafī Jurists.\(^{45}\)

b. The Mālikī Sufis

• Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī (Abū al-Fayḍ Thawbān ibn Ibrāhīm al-Miṣrī) (d. 245 A.H./1053 A.D): On the one hand, he was one of the Sufi masters whom al-Qushayrī included in his al-Risālah; and on the other hand, he was a Mālikī Jurist and one of the famous narrators of the renowned book “Mwaṭṭa’ al-Imam Mālik”. His teacher and master in Sufism was Shaqraḥ al-Qayrawānī, in addition, Sahl ibn ‘Abdillāh al-Tustarrī was one of his disciples and students.\(^{46}\)

• Abū Ṭālīb al-Makkī (Abū Muḥammad Makkī ibn Abī Ṭālīb) (d. 386 A.H./996 A.D): He was a Mālikī scholar, Ḥāfīdḥ (i.e. one of the grades of the scholars of Ḥadīth) and Muqrī’ (the one who teaches people to recite Qur’ān). He authored the voluminous book of Sufism “Qūṭ al-Qulūb”.\(^{47}\)

c. The Shāfī‘ī Sufis

• Al-Muḥāsibī (Abū ‘Abdillāh al-Ḥārīth ibn Asad al-Baghdādī) (d. 243 A.H./857 A.D): He is one of the Sufi Masters whose biographies are included in al-Qushayrī’s Epistle. He has many books in asceticism and Sufism. He is one of the early disciples and students of Imām al-Shāfī‘ī and one of the renowned Shāfī‘ī Jurists.\(^{48}\)

• Al-Qushayrī (Abu al-Qāsim ‘Abd al-Karīm ibn Hawāzin al-Naysābūrī) (d. 465 A.H./1072 A.D): He was a renowned Shāfī‘ī Jurist and a Sufi master. He

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\(^{45}\) Al-Qurashī, Al-Jawāhir al-Muḏīyāt fi Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanāfiyyah, Vol. 1, p. 92; Abū Is-haqq Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Azhār al-Ṣaḥrīfīnī, Al-Muntakhab min Kitāb al-Siyāq li-Tārīkh Naysābūr, ed. Khālid Ḥaydar (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1414 A.H.), p. 87.

\(^{46}\) Makhūf, Shagarat al-Nūr al-Zakīyāh, Vol. 1, P. 90; Al-Qushayrī, Al-Qushayrī’s Epistle on Sufism, p. 40.

\(^{47}\) Makhūf, Shagarat al-Nūr al-Zakīyāh, Vol. 1, p. 160; Al-Dhahābī, Sīyār A‘lām al-Nubalā‘, Vol. 17, p. 591; Abū al-‘Abbās Ahmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Abī Bakr ibn Khallīkān, Wafayāt al-Aʿyān, ed. Ḥūsān ‘Abbās (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1st ed. 1994), p. 274.

\(^{48}\) Al-Qushayrī, Al-Qushayrī’s Epistle on Sufism, p. 51; Al-Sulamī, Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣāfiyyah, p. 56; al-Dhahābī, Sīyār A‘lām al-Nubalā‘, Vol. 12, p. 110; Ibrāhīm ibn Ṣaḥlāḥ, Abū ‘Amr Uthmān ibn ‘Abd al-Rahmān, Ṭabaqāt Fughā’ al-Shāfī‘īyyah, ed. Muḥyī al-Dīn ‘Alī ‘Afifī (Beirut: Dār al-Bashā’ir al-İslāmīyyah, 1st ed. 1992), Vol. 1, p. 438; Abū Naṣr ‘Abd al-Wahāb ibn ‘Alī al-Subkī, Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfī‘īyyah al-Kubrā, ed. Muḥammad al-Tanāḥī and ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Ḥilw (Giza: Hagar li-al-Ţībā‘ah wa-al-Nashr, 2nd ed., 1992), Vol. 2, 275.
compiled his famous book “al-Risālah al-Qushayrīyah” which is held among the researchers of Sufism as the “constitution of Sufism”.49

- Al-Ghazālī (Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥammad al-Ṭūsī) (d. 505 A.H/1111 A.D): He was described as the Second great Shafi‘ī scholar right after Imām al-Sha‘fī‘ī. He fame in both sciences, namely, Fiqh and Sufism were so considerable. Moreover he authored and compiled voluminous books in both sciences.50


d. The Ḥanbalī Sufis

- Abū Ḥamzah al-Ṣūfī (d. 289 A.H/1095 A.D): He was one of the disciples and companions of Imām Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal and he used to accompany him and attend his classes. Imām Ahmad is reported to had frequently asked him about Fiqh issues saying: “what is your opinion in such and such O’ Ṣūfī”. He was one of the Sufi masters whose biography was included by Imām al-Qushayrī. He was also well-learned and deeply established in the science of Qirā’āt (the variant modes of recitations of the Qur‘ān).51

- Abū Ismā‘īl ‘Abdullāh ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Ja‘far ibn Ma‘nṣūr al-Anṣārī al-Harawī (d. 481 A.H/1088 A.D): He authored the famous book “Manāzīl al-Sā‘irīn” which is considered one of the early and authoritative books in Sufism. He was also a Ḥanbalī scholar.52

The examples mentioned above are selective and connotative. This paper is not indented to, and practically cannot, be inclusive and comprehensive. It nevertheless aims at indicating that Sufism has never been away from or alien to Fiqh nor Fiqh was opposing to Sufism. Both sides used to show respect and to attend to one another, and in this way, the sciences of Islam were emerged interdependent, correlated and harmonized. These were some glimpses and examples that would provoke thinking and drive other researchers to delve deep into this topic.

49 Al-Subkī, Ṭabaqāt al-Shafi‘īyyah al-‘Ilm al-Kubrā, Vol. 5, P. 153; Abū al-Fidā‘ Ikṣā‘īl ibn ‘Umar ibn Kāthīr, Ṭabaqāt al-Shafi‘īyyin, ed. Ahmad ‘Umar Ḥāshim and Muḥammad Zinhum (Cairo: Maktubat al-Thaqāfah al-Diniyyah, 1413 A.H.), p. 451.

50 Al-Subkī, Ṭabaqāt al-Shafi‘īyyah al-Kubrā, Vol. 6, PP. 201-2017; Ibn Kāthīr, Ṭabaqāt al-Shafi‘īyyin, p. 533.

51 Al-Qushayrī, Al-Qushayrī’s Epistle on Sufism, 88; Ibn Abī Ya‘lā, Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah, Vol. 1, p. 268; Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Tārikh Baghdādī aw Madinat al-Salām, Vol. 1, p. 407.

52 Al-Dhahabi, Siyār Aḥlām al-Nubalā‘, Vol. 18, p. 503; Al-Salāmī, Dhayl Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah, Vol. 1, p. 115; Abū ‘Abdullāh Muḥammad ibn Ḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Hādī al-Dimashqī, Ṭabaqāt ‘Ulamā‘ al-Ḥadīth (Beirut: Mu’asasat al-Risālah, 2nd ed., 1417 A.H.) Vol. 3, p. 376.
Sufism and Ḥadīth

Sufis gave a special and tremendous care to the science of Ḥadīth. Their keen advice to their disciples to learn Ḥadīth and involve themselves in recording and preserving the Prophetic traditions was evident many sources. Besides, many pieces of advice found in the books of Sufism prove that Sufis held the science of Ḥadīth and its scholars in a high esteem.

A quick look into the books of classes and biographies of both Ḥadīth and Sufi scholars clearly demonstrate how Sufis were very much engaged in this field, and would also gauge the degree of respect and appreciation that scholars of both sides used to show to one another.

It should be emphasized that not only the Sufis were keen to learn the science of Ḥadīth, scholars of Ḥadīth were also very much encouraged to adhere to Sufism and engage themselves in the Sufis’ spiritual exercises that lead to purity and attainment of sublime moral traits. This is quite clear from al-Dhahabī’s statement in which he concluded that the qualified scholar must feature both sciences, i.e. Ḥadīth and Sufism, for when a scholar of Ḥadīth lacks Sufism, on the one hand, his dedication to Allah may not be complete, and when the Sufi, on the other hand, is ignorant of the science of Ḥadīth, he might fall into errors and deviate from what is right.53

Many famous Ḥadīth scholars narrated ḥadiths from Sufis. Furthermore, statements of praise and appreciation were reciprocally released from the scholars of both sciences. On the one side, al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī (d. 405 A.H/1014 A.D) narrated some ḥadiths in his book “al-Mustadrak” from the Sufi master Ja’far ibn Muḥammad ibn Nuṣayr al-Khaladī (d. 348 A.H/959 A.D) and he used to describe him as “the master of Sufism of his time” (Shaykh al-Taṣawwuf fī ‘Aṣrīhi).54 Moreover, Al-Ḥākim argued that Sufis following the footsteps of Ahl al-Suffah and actualize their conditions in every time given their way in asceticism and dedication to Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ).55

On the one side, the famous scholar of Ḥadīth and Ḥāfīz Abū Nu‘aym al-Aṣfāhānī (d. 430 A.H/1038 A.D) who enjoys a considerable fame as a scholar of Ḥadīth, was a Sufi. He wrote the voluminous book “Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’” in which he collected the biographies of the Sufī masters, men and women, with a special focus on the manifestations of Sufism in the personality of every scholar he mentions.

53 Al-Dhahabī, Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’, Vol. 15, p. 410 (Ibn al-‘Arābī’s entry).
54 Abū ‘Abdillāh Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdillāh al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, Al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Ṣaḥāḥayn, ed. Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Aṭā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2nd ed., 1422 A.H.), Vol. 3, p. 18.
55 Ibid.
After each biography, he used to mention a definition of Sufism that fits most to the spiritual and mystical status of the person in question.56

Another example that demonstrates the engagement of scholars of Hadith in Sufism is the book written by the Abū Bakr ibn al-‘Arabī al-Ishbīlī al-Mālikī (d. 453 A.H/1148 A.D) entitled “Sirāj al-Muridīn” which Zarrūq argued to be a book on Sufism.57 Moreover, al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī (d. 320 A.H/869 A.D) was a well-known Sufi and scholar of Hadith, who authored valuable books in both sciences. In Sufism, he authored “Al-Akyās wa-al-Mughtarrīn,” “Riyādat al-Nafs,” and “al-Kash.” And in Ḥadīth, he wrote his renowned book “Nwādir al-Uṣūl fi Ma’rifat Akhbār al-Rasūl.”58

Also, Ibn al-A‘rābī (d. 340 A.H/951 A.D) authored “Tabaqāt al-Nasā‘ī,” and “Ṭārīkh al-Baṣraḥ” in the science of Ḥadīth and, in Sufism, he wrote “Manāqib al-Ṣūfīyah”.59 In addition, al-Kalābādhi’s (d. 384 A.H/994 A.D) works in Sufism and Ḥadīth are very popular. In Ḥadīth, he wrote “al-Arba‘ūn fī al-Ḥadīth”; and, in Sufism, he authored “al-Ta‘arruf li-Madh-hab Ahl al-Ṭṣawwuf”. Besides, he was known for his attentive and unique memory, and al-Siyūṭī described him as having the most attentive memory in Transoxiana. Al-Ḥākim and al-Dāraquṭnī furthermore praised him for his vast knowledge and attentive memory.60

Based on the aforementioned, it can be said that Sufism-related topics (ethics and morality) were the preoccupation of many scholars of different branches of Islamic knowledge and this, again, indicates the importance of Sufism and its subject matter, namely ethics.

**Sufism and Tafsīr**

Mostly all Islamic schools of knowledge have contributed their share in the service of the Qur’ān through Tafsīr or Ta‘wil, and Sufism was not an exception.

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56 Abū Nu‘aym al-Aṣḥābī, Hilyat al-Awlyā’, for example pages 27; 35; 37; 103; 318.
57 Zarrūq, Qvā’id al-Ṭṣawwuf, p. 40.
58 Al-Dhahabī, Siyār A‘lām al-Nubalā‘, Vol. 13, p. 439; Ḥājjī Khalīfah, Sullamal-Wusūl ilā Ṭabaqāt al-Fuhūl, Vol. 3, p. 195; Al-Dimashqī, Ṭabaqāt ‘Ulamā‘ al-Ḥadīth, Vol. 2, p. 352; Kaḥlāḥah, Mu‘jam al-Mu‘ālifīn, Vol. 10, p. 315; Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq al-Dhahabī, Ṭārīkh al-Islām wa-Wafayāt al-Mashāḥīr wa-al-A‘lām, ed. ‘Umar Tadmūr (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1st ed., 1991), Vol. 21, p. 176; Jalāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAbī Bakr al-Ṣiyūṭī, Ṭabaqāt al-Huffāẓ (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmīyah, 2nd ed., 1994), p. 286.
59 Al-Dhahabī, Siyār A‘lām al-Nubalā‘, Vol. 15, p. 407; Al-Sulamī, Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfīyah, p. 320; Kaḥlāḥah, Mu‘jam al-Mu‘ālifīn, Vol. 2, p. 1.3; Ibn Nuqṭah, Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Ghānī, Al-Taqyīd il-Ma‘rifat Rawāt al-Sunan wa-al-Masānīd, ed. Kamāl Yūsuf al-Ḥūt (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmīyah, 1st ed.; 1988) p. 166.
60 Al-Dhahabī, Siyār A‘lām al-Nubalā‘, Vol. 13, p. 439; Al-Siyūṭī, Ṭabaqāt al-Huffāẓ, p. 286; al-Dhahabī, Ṭārīkh al-Islām, Vol. 6, p. 814; al-Dimashqī, Ṭabaqāt ‘Ulamā‘ al-Ḥadīth, Vol. 2, p. 352.
Sufis started interpreting the Qurʾān according to their religious experience and their general view of faith. As mentioned earlier, Sufis always liken religion to a seed composed of a kernel and a husk or shell, and their way in approaching the Qurʾān was not so far from this conviction as they believe that every verse of the Qurʾān features an outer meaning and inner meaning as well. This view is usually substantiated by a Prophetic ḥadīth in which the Prophet (ﷺ) states that the Quran has an inner meaning, and that this inner meaning conceals a yet deeper inner meaning, and so on (up to seven successive levels of deeper meaning).

The Sufi’s intrinsic goal in approaching the Qurʾān is to manifest the inner dimension of it without being oblivious to the Sharī‘ah or the outer and apparent meaning of the text. Thus they were so concerned with discovering the hidden meanings of the Qurʾānic phrases as opposed to other scholars who directed their attention to the apparent meaning (al-Ẓāhir) of the verses. This inner method or esoteric interpretations of the Qurʾān does not usually contradict the conventional or exoteric interpretations; rather, it discusses the inner levels of meaning of the Quran.

With this in mind, Sufis usually affirm that their commentary of the Qurʾān is no more than “allusions” (ishārat) or “striking similitudes” (darb al-mithāl) that are bestowed to the perfectly devoted masters, and this does not necessarily mean averting the apparent meaning of the text because the exoteric meaning of the text is evident and well established and is not placed in contradiction with these allusions and illuminations. This is asserted by Ibn ʿAtaʾillāh al-Sakandarī in his book “Laṭāʾif al-Minan” and al-Siyūṭī in his book “al-Itqān”.

To illustrate, the following are few examples of the Sufis who contributed to the commentary of the Qurʾān. It is noteworthy to mention here that most of the Sufi commentaries of the Qurʾān are still manuscripts and have not been published yet:

- Abū Muḥammad Sahl ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Tustarī (d. 273 or 283 A.H/886 or 896 A.D): He was one of the students of the Sufi master Maʿrūf al-Kharkhī. His book in Tafsīr entitled “Tafsīr al-Tustarī” and it was printed in Egypt in a middle-

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61 The ḥadīth tells “No verse of the Qurʾān has been revealed which has not an external aspect and an inner aspect. Every letter has its definite sense (ḥadd) and every definition implies a place of ascent (matla’).” This hadith is related by ibn Ḥibbān and ibn ‘Abd al-Barr and al-Ṭabarānī and ibn Ḥazm and many others, and reported by ibn Masʿūd.

62 “TAFSIR”, in: The Qur’ān: An encyclopedia, Edited by Oliver Leaman (NY: Routledge, 2006), p. 632.

63 ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr al-Siyūṭī, Al-Itqān fī ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān, ed. Muhammad Abū al-Fadl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: General Egyptian Book Authority, 1974), Vol. 4, 224; Ibn ʿAtaʾillāh al-Sakandarī, Laṭāʾif al-Minan, p. 103.
sized volume under the name of “Tafsīr al-Qur‘ān al-‘Azīm” in 1908. This book includes al-Tustari’s teachings and commentaries compiled by Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Balḍī. Al-Tustari’s Tafsīr is held as the oldest completed Sufi commentary on the Qur‘ān. The book does not include the commentary of all the Qur‘ānic verses, but rather it deals with specific verses of the Qur‘ān. Apparently these commentaries were Sahl’s answers to questions he was asked.

- Al-Samarqandī (Abū al-Layth Naṣr ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm) (d. 372 A.H/983 A.D): He was a Sufi master and an exegete. He wrote in Sufism “Tā bipartisan al-Ghāfīlīn”, and in Tafsīr, he authored “Bahr al-‘Ulūm”.

- Al-Sulamī (Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Muḥammad ibn al-Hussayn) (d. 412 A.H/1021 A.D): He was a prolific writer. There are more than 100 books are attributed to him, with about 30 of which are extant. His Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣīfīyyah, the oldest extant Sufi hagiographical collection, and his two compilations of Sufi exegesis, “Ḥaqā‘iq al-Tafsīr” and “Ziyādat Ḥaqā‘iq al-Tafsīr” are invaluable because they preserve the oral and written teachings of the Sufis of his time. In the introduction to his Tafsīr, al-Sulamī states that he included two types of quotations in his compilation: Āyāt (verses), in which he included the interpretations of specific verses; and Aqwāl (statements), in which he included the Sufi sayings related to key Qur‘ānic terms.

- Al-Qushayrī (Abū al-Qāsim ‘Abd al-Karīm ibn Hawāzin al-Naysabūrī) (d. 465 A.H/1053 A.D): He authored al-Risālah al-Qushayrīyah which is considered by many as the classic formulation of the Sufi doctrine. As for the Qur‘ān commentary, he wrote “Lātā‘if al-Ishārāt” which includes al-Qushayrī’s own commentaries of the Qur‘ānic verses and the commentaries of other Sufis as well. He also wrote “al-Taysīr fī al-Tafsīr” and “al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr”.

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64 There are two editions of the book: One of them edited by Maḥmūd Jiratullāh and it was published by Dar al-Qāfiyyah li-al-Nashr in 2002; and the other edition was edited by Muḥammad Basīl ‘Yūn al-Sūd and was printed by Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah in Beirut, 2002.

65 Kristin Zahra Sands, Sufi Commentaries on the Qur‘an in Classical Islam (NY: Routledge, 2006), p. 68.

66 Al-Qurashi, Al-Jawāhir al-Muḍīyah, Vol. 2, p. 196; Hājjī Khālífah, Sullam al-Wusūl ilā Ṭabaqāt al-Fuhūl, Vol. 3, p. 3687; Nwayhiḍ, Mu‘jam al-Mufassirīn, Vol. 2, p. 700; Al-Dāwūdī, Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn, Vol. 2, p. 346.

67 Nwayhiḍ, Mu‘jam al-Mufassirīn, Vol. 2, p. 520; Sands, Sufi Commentaries on the Qur‘an in Classical Islam, p. 69.

68 Nwayhiḍ, Mu‘jam al-Mufassirīn, Vol. 1, p. 299; Al-Subkī, Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfī‘īyah al- Kubrā, Vol. 5, p. 153; Ibn Kāthīr, Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfī‘īyyah, Vol. 1, p. 451; Al-Ṣafadī, al-Wāfī bi-al-Wafayāt, Vol. 19, p. 63.
Conclusion

Throughout this research paper, the position and the status of Islamic Sufism compared to other branches of *Sharī‘ah* knowledge, namely *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence), *Ḥadīth* (Prophetic Traditions) and *Tafsīr* (Qur’ānic Exegesis) is established. Inter-relationships between the Sufi masters and scholars of *Fiqh*, *Ḥadīth* and *Qur’ānic Exegesis* have been put to investigation and selective, but connotative, examples of the Sufis’ involvement and contributions in these Islamic disciplines of knowledge have been provided.

Considering these inter-relationships and examples, the study concludes that Sufism has never been away from or alien to other disciplines of *Sharī‘ah* knowledge, nor the scholars of other disciplines of were opposing to Sufism and Sufis. Both sides have been proven to show respect and to attend to one another, and in this way, the sciences of Islam arguably emerged interdependent, correlated and harmonized.