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Cüneyd-i Bağdâdî

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Ibn al-'Arabî and the Sufis

Binyamin Abrahamov

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Al-Junayd

830-910

Al-Junayd was the head of Baghdad's mystical school. His only extant works are his epistles (*Rasā'il al-Junayd*), published by Ali Hassan Abdel-Kader.¹ He deals mainly with God's unity (*tawhīd*), which he describes as being attained only through passing away from one's consciousness (*fanā'*) and being present in God. After this process takes place, the mystic returns to his consciousness and to sobriety. The doctrines of God's unity and human sobriety (*sahw*) make up the principles of al-Junayd's system of mysticism.² To declare God's unity means to detach the Everlasting, His essence, attributes and acts, from all else which is produced in time (*ifrād al-qadīm 'an al-muḥdath*).³ The mystic's *fanā'* does not mean total annihilation in God, but submissiveness to God's will. Hence when the mystic returns to his consciousness, his personality is entirely altered to such a degree that he can influence others to imitate his moral traits and mystical behaviour.⁴

Al-Junayd discourses on two systems of attaining knowledge; the first is discursive and the second intuitive. Reason leads the mystic to God's unification; however, when he loses his individuality he no longer needs his intellect, because he now feels God's unity.⁵

After this very brief exposition of al-Junayd's mystical principles I now turn to his appearance in Ibn al-'Arabî's *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyya* and other writings. Al-Junayd belongs to the class of saints Ibn al-'Arabî calls the prophets among the saints (*anbiyā' al-*

1. A.H. Abdel-Kader (ed. and trans.), *The Life, Personality and Writings of al-Junayd*.
2. Ibid. pp.66f.
3. Ibid. p.70.
4. Ibid. pp.88-91.
5. Ibid. pp.99-102.

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