

SUFI ASCETICISM AND THE SUNNA OF THE PROPHET IN AL-JUNAYD'S ADAB AL-MUFTAQIR ILĀ ALLĀH

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One of the central claims of early Sufis was the harmony of the Sufi path with the *sunna* of the Prophet Muḥammad. This belonged to the broader claim that Sufis lived in accordance with the revealed law, even as they attained knowledge of and intimacy with God beyond that offered by mere conformity to the law. The Sufi manuals and biographical compilations of the fourth and fifth centuries insist upon these points.¹ Even as early as the third century, several foundational Sufi figures, such as Abū Sa'īd al-Kharrāz (d. ca. 286/899) and Abū l-Qāsim al-Junayd (d. 298/910–11), affirmed the centrality of the Prophet's *sunna* to their belief and practice.² Their insistence reflected the increasing importance in the third century of the Prophet's words and deeds as sources of authority and of

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¹ For example, al-Sarrāj, *The Kitāb al-Luma' fi'l-taṣawwuf* (ed. Reynold Alleyne Nicholson; Leiden: Brill, 1914), 93–104 (Arabic); al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya* (ed. Ahmad Hāshim al-Salmī; Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 2013), 11, 21. For scholarly treatment of this emphasis, see Alexander Knysch, *Sufism: A New History of Islamic Mysticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), 15, 66–7; Jawid A. Mojaddedi, *The Biographical Tradition in Sufism: The ṭabaqāt Genre from al-Sulamī to Jāmī* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2001), 111; Jawid A. Mojaddedi, 'Legitimizing Sufism in al-Qushayrī's 'Risala'', *Studia Islamica*, 90 (2000): 37–50, esp. 46–9; Bernd Radtke, 'Warum ist der Sufi orthodox?', *Der Islam*, 71/2 (1994): 302–07.

² For attention to this theme in secondary scholarship, see Arin Shawkat Salamah-Qudsi, *Sufism and Early Islamic Piety: Personal and Communal Dynamics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 136; Nile Green, *Sufism: A Global History* (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 36–39; Ahmet Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 2, 21; Christopher Melchert, 'The transition from asceticism to mysticism at the middle of the ninth Century C.E.', *Studia Islamica*, 83 (1996): 51–70, at 56.

Arin Showkat Salama h-Quds, Sufism and Early Islamic Piety: Personal and Communal Dynamics, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2019, s. 126-151.

ABŪ AL-QĀSİM AL-JUNAYD (D. 298/910-911): A MAN OF
CHARISMA AND LENIENCY

The character of Junayd launched many scholarly endeavours in recent decades.⁶ The main focus has been put on Junayd's doctrine of 'unification' (*tawhīd*), as well as the origins of his position as the typical representative and leader of what is traditionally known as the School of Baghdad, or the School of Sobriety. In spite of the differences between the teachings of the major representatives of this school, which were not negligible, the overall image of the School of Baghdad is by all means a direct outcome of the teachings of Junayd and of his close circle of disciples. The works of Josef van Ess, Ali Hassan Abdel-Kader, David Ludwig Martin, Elsayed M. H. Omran and Shams C. Inati are among the most outspoken scholarly attempts to thoroughly examine this unique figure who stood at the helm of the Sufi movement in Islam and who successfully left his mark on its development from the third/ninth century until today.

I do not seek here to refer again to Junayd's doctrines, as these are displayed in the body of statements and fragments ascribed to him in the Sufi compendia. Instead, I seek to look into Junayd's dynamic relationships with his Sufi contemporaries, the nature of his position as a consensually acclaimed Sufi leader and the ways in which this position fits together with Junayd's practical agenda in treating novices leniently.

It is interesting to note, further, that the consensual veneration of Junayd in early Sufi and non-Sufi sources was challenged in Persian Sufi

⁶ See Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Daylamī, *A Treatise on Mystical Love*, trans. by Joseph Norment Bell and Hassan Maḥmūd al-Shāfi'ī (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), the editors' *introduction*, lix. Cf. A. J. Arberry, 'al-Djunayd', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, second edition, ed. by P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W. P. Heinrichs, consulted online on 9 October 2017 http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_2117. Most recently, Ahmet Karamustafa, 'Walāya According to al-Junayd (d. 298/910)', in *Reason and Inspiration in Islam: Theology, Philosophy and Mysticism in Muslim Thought: Essays in Honour of Hermann Landolt*, ed. by Todd Lawson (London: Tauris, 2005), 64-70; idem, *Sufism*, 15-18; Josef Dreher, 'Comment un Homme Peut-il Perdre plus qu'il ne Possède? Essais d'Explication d'une Sentence Énigmatique d'al-Junayd (m. 298/910) Concernant les Progrès et les Dangers sur le Chemin vers Dieu', *Institut Dominicain d'Études Orientales du Caire: Mélanges (MIDEO)*, vol. 27 (2008), 413-422; Jawid Mojaddedi, 'Getting Drunk with Abū Yazīd or Staying Sober with Junayd: The Creation of a Popular Typology of Sufism', in *Sufism, Volume I: Origins and Development*, ed. by Lloyd Ridgeon (London: Routledge, 2008), 171-187; idem, 'Junayd in the *Hilyat al-awliyā'* and the *Nafahāt al-uns*', in *Tales of God's Friends: Islamic Hagiography in Translation*, ed. by John Renard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 79-91.

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hagiographical works. Attempts to defame Junayd's image began with the early fourth/tenth century biographer 'Abd Allāh Anṣārī of Herāt and continued with his successor 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī in the later ninth/fifteenth century. Some of the negative references to Junayd in Jāmī's *Nafahāt al-uns* will be raised in Chapters 7 and 8. Both Anṣārī and Jāmī tell that 'one hair of Ruwaym [b. Aḥmad, al-Junayd's contemporary!] is better than a hundred Junayds.' Besides, Junayd was portrayed in the biography of Ruwaym in the works of these two authors as the one who tried to harm his companion by forbidding novices to visit him. In Chapter 8, I will show how the character of Junayd appears in early anecdotes about Sufis who fall into the fault of the illegal gaze. In the majority of these anecdotes, Junayd is mentioned to have warned his fellow of the negative consequence of the fault he committed. He is usually portrayed there as the perfect Sufi sheikh that knows everything and can predict the consequences of certain forms of behaviour that do not fit with the 'ideal' and 'high' Sufi ethos, of which he himself was a main founder. The reasonable nature of Junayd was not approached positively by all Sufi authors. A critical approach towards his reasonability and 'scientism' is documented in both Anṣārī's and Jāmī's works.⁷ However, this critique did not manage to affect Junayd's image as a consensual figure, or even as the most consensually acclaimed figure in the history of early Sufism.

The study of Junayd's personality should be shifted to new arenas, where his image is portrayed in different, less sympathetic, tones. His tense relationships with certain figures of his time are difficult for the modern scholar to approach. In order to reveal more of such tensions, I suggest treating his *Rasā'il* not only as a document of his secret teachings but also as a source of many implied nuances of the nature of his relationships with his contemporary Sufis. At the very basis of writing his *Rasā'il* lies Junayd's doctrine, according to which the secret Sufi theories should be kept as the elect's estate. The discourse of this work leaves no doubt that Junayd addressed it to those who he was sure would understand it. His *Rasā'il* are by all means 'the personal documents of a great mystic of the third century A.H.', as Abdel-Kader phrases it.⁸

⁷ See Anṣārī Haravī, *Ṭabaqāt al-sūfiyya*, 49; Jāmī, *Nafahāt al-uns*, 74.

⁸ Ali Hassan Abdel-Kader, *The Life, Personality and Writings of al-Junayd: A Study of a Third/Ninth Century Mystic with an Edition and Translation of His Writings* (London: Luzac & Company, 1962), *introduction*, xvii.