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## Dreams and Visions as Diagnosis in Medieval Sufism

*The Emergence of Kubrawī Oneirology*

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### Abstract

In recent scholarship the notion that dreams and visions in Islamic societies are phenomena with no relevance to historic events or societal concerns has been challenged and overturned. However, the theoretical underpinnings of Sufi oneirology in the medieval period have yet to receive a full exposition. Furthermore, the relevance of such seemingly abstract texts to Sufi organisational and institutional structures has not been realised. This article argues that understanding the development of Kubrawī oneirology offers important insights into Islamic thought and society. Focusing on the first generation of Kubrawī Sufi thinkers, this article accounts for the emergence of diagnostic oneirology in the sixth/twelfth and seventh/thirteenth centuries in two steps. Firstly, by detailing the systematisation of oneiric theory which occurs in early Kubrawī thought. And secondly, by demonstrating that this systematisation crafted a close relation between Sufi theory and the communal and institutional bonds that allowed the Sufi community to adapt to changing socio-political circumstances.

### Keywords

dreams – Kubrawiyya – Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī – Najm al-Dīn Kubrā – oneirology – psychology – Sufism – visions