AN EXAMPLE OF THE MYSTICAL AVICENNISM IN OTTOMAN THOUGHT
Jamāl al-Khalwatī’s Interpretation of Ibn Sinā’s Risāla ʿilā Abī Saʿīd ibn Abī l-Khayr

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Abstract
In the face of growing scholarship on the classical period of Islamic thought, it is becoming more apparent that Ibn Sinā owes much to the philosophical and theological traditions that precede him in matters that were once regarded as original stances of al-Sheikb al-Raʾis. Undoubtedly, Ibn Sinā still deserves to be regarded as a key figure who potentiated one of the turning points in Islamic thought. His influence is demonstrated by the fact that a time came, especially for Muslim theologians who represented the main theological tendencies in Muslim society, when they could not ignore his writings anymore. Al-Ghazālī’s well-known Incoherence of Philosophers was a result of this inevitable case. In this regard, Ibn Sinā’s influential writings led the way to different interpretations of his ideas being incorporated within different traditions of Islamic thought, such as falsafa, kalām, and taṣawwuf. This article addresses a particular case in which some of his ideas, or to put it more correctly, ideas attributed to him, were conveyed in the Ottoman mystical environs, a situation that leads us to explore the concept of “mystical Avicennism.” Rather than constructing an overall theory on the influence of Ibn Sinā in Ottoman thought, this article is a modest attempt to make sense of a text written by one of the mystical figures of Ottoman times, a sample that can be addressed in the context of the Avicennian corpus.
The history of Ottoman thought is a history that portrays an eclectic and thus selective character in every aspect of its progress. The best known and the most available text on the genealogy of Ottoman scholars al-Shaqāʾiq al-Nuʿmāniyya fī ‘ulamāʿ al-Dawla al-ʿUthmāniyya by Ṭāshkuprīzāda (d. 968/1561) presents ten generations (ṭabaqāt) of the Ottoman elite, all of which are categorized according to the particular reign of the Ottoman Sultans they lived during. The tone of the political concerns in the book is so powerful and immanent that the author himself, early in the book, acknowledges that he is compiling a biographical work and taking into consideration the Ottoman lineage of sultanate, as it was completed in the shadow (fī zilāb) of a state upon which God bestowed forceful (qābirā) rulers;¹ even he is inevitably in a position to gladly express these feelings. To understand the general character of Ottoman thought from the beginning, it is necessary to note that the Ottoman cultural atmosphere was always immersed with mystical tendencies under different names. This, of course, may give us clues as to why “mystical Avicennism,” as I call it, endured through the ages in the Ottoman lands, together with the other aspects of the philosophy of al-Sheikh al-Raʾis, i.e., Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037), and particularly in our example, in the form of the thought of another respected figure in the Ottoman times, i.e., Ibn ʿArabī (d. 638/1240).

The first lineage of the Ottoman scholars represented in al-Shaqāʾiq are, reasonably, nothing more than “founding father” personalities who undoubtedly played roles in shaping the scientific atmosphere of a new-born state. It is not until the second generation that we find scholars whose scientific activities can be considered to be within the scope of the traditional Islamic curricula. Among these first three generations, there are two figures that interest us because of their scientific mission to determine the basic tendencies in the history of Ottoman thought. One of them, Dāwūd al-Qaṣṣārī (d.

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751/1350), belongs to the second generation, i.e., from the time of Orkhân Ghâzî. The author of a commentary on Ibn ‘Arabi’s famous work, Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam, Dāwūd al-Qayṣarî is known for being a loyal follower of Ibn ‘Arabi’s school of thought, especially after he personally met and spent time with ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Kâshânî (d. 736/1335). One generation after al-Qayṣarî, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Aqsarāyî (d. 791/1388?) arises as an eminent personality, as evidenced by his being subject to the direct interest of the Sultan after he (al-Aqsarāyî) was commissioned to compile a work on morality (Akhlāq-i Jamāli) and after he supplied an “authoritative environment” to some prominent scholars who are not pleased with the status quo in some madrasas. The authority of him undoubtedly comes from as well, his blood relation to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209), a polymath who was respected as “the leader” (al-imām) in any scholarly circle of Ottoman thought, so much so that the general character of Ottoman religious thought is often defined as “the school of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī” (tr. “Fahreddîn Râzî Mektebi”).

A descendent of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Aqsarāyî, the subject of the article, Jamāl al-Khalwâtî (d. 899/1494?), comes to the fore as a typical Ottoman scholar who is not only trained in the Ottoman madrasa system in the traditional way, like his other Ottoman colleagues, but also has a strong mystical orientation. He is the founder of one of the main branches in the Khalwatiyya order, Jamâliyya. According to sources, Jamāl al-Khalwâtî’s appetite for the Sufi society developed when he

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4 The first Ottoman Sheikh al-Islâm Mullâ Fanârî, during his education, took refuge in his circle, when he disliked ‘Alâ’ al-Dīn al-Aswad, who held the official chair in the Madrasa of Iznik [Nicaea], see Țâshkuprizâda, al-Shaqîq, 9.

5 İsmail Hakki Uzunçarşılı, Osmanlı Devletinin İlimye Teşkilatı [Educational Organization of Ottoman State] (3rd edn., Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basmevi, 1988), 75-77. Uzunçarşılı adds that in the scientific circles of the 13th century, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Râzî was being called sheikh al-‘ulamâ’ (the chief of the scholars) as well.
became bored studying the standard text of the madrasa curricula, *Mukbtaşar al-Talkbîş*, a work written in the field of Arabic rhetoric as a commentary by Saʿđ al-Dîn al-Taftâzânî on al-Qazwînî’s *Talkbîs al-Miftâh*. In the biographical sources, al-Khalwatî is generally portrayed as a Turkish Sufi poet; however, the fact that he chose to write many of his works in Arabic might be interpreted as a desire to be regarded as a contributor to the Akbarî (related to Ibn ʿArabî) literature. This attitude, as shown in the example of his commentary on Ibn Sinâ’s letter, may be regarded as his personal contribution to influencing Avicennian thought in Ottoman times and promoting its “political survival” in the guise of Islamic mysticism, a situation that allegorically reminds us of Ibn Sinâ’s setting for İsfahân when he had political troubles and disguised himself in Sufi dress.

II

There have always been discussions among researchers as to whether Ibn Sinâ has mystical inclinations in his writings. Although some categorically deny any mental or physical engagement between him and taṣawwûf or Sufi circles, there still remains the basic fact that at least some of Ibn Sinâ’s major writings, such as *al-Ishârât wa-l-tanbîhât* (esp. the ninth *nama* titled “Maqâmât al-ʿarîfîn”), have allusions to the Sufi vocabulary. Several manuscript collections of Ibn Sinâ we have today in different libraries, bear witness to correspondence between Ibn Sinâ and the contemporary Sufi, Abû Saʿîd ibn Abî l-Khayr (d. 440/1049) of Khurâsân. In this regard, it is not surprising to find some researchers who tend to label the correspondence as forgery, as the correspondence would otherwise supply direct evi-

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8 See, especially, observations by David C. Reisman in his notable study on Avicenna research: David C. Reisman, “A New Standard for Avicenna Studies,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 122/3 (2002), 567 ff. At first instance, he states that the correspondence “consists of some *authentic* Avicennian letters to Bahmanyâr and Ibn Zayla related in different ways to … *Mubâhathât* and outright *forgeries* that emerged from the hagiographical tradition connected to Abû Saʿîd ibn Abî l-Khayr begun in the seventh/thirteenth century…” (p. 567, the italic-
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dence for Ibn Sinâ’s actual contact with mystics. In this article, I am not in a position to delve into the authentication of this correspondence. Given that the title proposes nothing but a general concept called “Avicennism,” the fact that it was taken as a work belonging to the Ibn Sinâ corpus by Ottomans and by others as well, is adequate for us to evaluate it in a context that aims at describing the impact of Ibn Sinâ’s scholarly heritage.

The letters that I have selected as the subject of our article display an intriguing and brief correspondence (Text 1). The first letter by Abû Sa‘îd, which may not be regarded as a conventional letter because of its brevity, consists of a single appeal by Abû Sa‘îd to Ibn Sinâ. In essence, it consists of the phrase *arshidnî* (“guide me!,” in some MSs, “show me the evidence!”). Ibn Sinâ’s answer to that appeal seemingly reveals tempting aspects of his overall theological stance, as even the message is not totally clear to readers like us who want to interfere in the correspondence between two great “mystics.” As the overall meaning in the *Risâla* indicates, according to Ibn Sinâ, to enter the literal unbelief (*kufr*) and quit the figurative belief (*islâm*), one must only look beyond “the three personalities” (i.e., *muslim* [*mu‘min*], *kâfîr*, and *mushrik*). If someone is beyond (*warâ‘*) this, there is not any label such as “believer” or “unbeliever” therein; but if under (*taḥt*) this, then he/she is a polytheist (*mushrik*) and a believer at the same time. Aside from these two positions described as *beyond* and *under*, if someone is totally ignorant, then he/she has no way other than to be excluded from the two existences, and thus, be-
comes priceless.\textsuperscript{9}

Now, if the whole Avicennian corpus is taken into consideration, it is very unusual to come across such vocabulary as “believer” and “unbeliever” in their religious sense in his writings. In a way, this can be explained by the fact that Ibn Sīnā avoided using terms that related to the juridical/theological area in the classical Islamic literature that was called “names and judgments” (\textit{al-asmā’ wa-l-aḥkām}). This area, which addresses what basic religious nominations such as \textit{muslim}, \textit{kāfir}, and \textit{fāsiq} theologically and socially mean, is not a concern of a philosopher in its true meaning, namely, one who is after universal truth. This brings to the question whether Ibn Sīnā, as a \textit{Muslim} philosopher, wrote any work on Muslim catechism (\textit{’aqīda}), which might satisfy his contemporaries by defending his true religion, as expected from someone who adheres to Islam. The closest to that among his works is his \textit{al-Risāla al-‘arshiyya},\textsuperscript{10} a work written in

\textsuperscript{9} For a translation and a different evaluation of the correspondence in comparison with al-Ghazālī’s thoughts, see Frank Griffel, \textit{Al-Ghazālī’s Philosophical Theology} (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009), 84-85.

\textsuperscript{10} Reisman, again, raises his doubt about the authenticity of \textit{al-Risāla al-‘arshiyya} and comments that the \textit{Risāla} should be added to the pseudo-Avicennian works; Reisman, “Stealing Avicenna’s Books: A Study of the Historical Sources for the Life and Times of Avicenna,” in Reisman and Ahmed H. Al-Rahim (eds.), \textit{Before and After Avicenna: Proceedings of the First Conference of the Avicenna Study Group} (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 125 (n. 102). However, I see no reason to exclude the \textit{Risāla} from the Avicenna corpus since the ideas demonstrated therein perfectly coincide with the general philosophical attitudes of Ibn Sīnā in his other works. Furthermore, after some specific studies of the \textit{Risāla} in the framework of my ongoing PhD thesis (\textit{Ibn Sīnā’s Influence on Islamic Theology}), my hunch is that the \textit{Risāla} is suitable to be linked to the proper \textit{kalāmic} background of Ibn Sīnā’s established oppositions, as is seen in his other writings such as \textit{al-Najāt} and \textit{al-Shīfā’}. Yet, I am totally aware that this cannot be established without elaborate examination of all items, a task that exceeds the limits of this article.

However, this does not mean that the printed editions of the \textit{Risāla} do not have some serious problems. For instance, the printed versions attributed to him naming the Muʿtazila as \textit{Ṣifātiyya}, although it is utterly strange and unusual to refer to Muʿtazila in this way (see Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Sīnā, \textit{al-Risāla al-‘arshiyya} [ed. Ibrāhīm Hilāl; Cairo: Jāmiʿat al-Azhar, 1980], 23; idem., \textit{al-Risāla al-‘arshiyya fī tawḥīdīn taʿālā wa-sifātīn}, in \textit{Majmūʿ rasāʾil al-Shiikh al-Raʾīs} [Hyderabad: Dāʿirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyya, 1354 H], 7). This would have only been interpreted by the grave ignorance of either the author (Ibn Sīnā) or the editors about the general history of Islamic theology. Thankfully, it is determined
accordance with one of his followers’ wishes to learn the realities (ḥaqā‘iq) of the science of God’s unity (‘ilm al-tawḥīd). Nevertheless, the overall methodological viewpoint drawn therein by Ibn Sinā is but a perfect summary of his philosophical stance, which derives its framework from the dichotomy of necessary and possible beings and the distinction between existence and essence. Thus, the ‘Arshiyya does not offer any criterion for judging what makes a believer or an unbeliever or for what final case awaits these two persons in the hereafter.

Be that as it may, in an epistle called al-‘Adhawiyya fi l-ma‘ād, which intentionally uses the religious vocabulary, Ibn Sinā more clearly emphasizes the belief matters (al-umūr al-‘tiqādīyya) in the theological sense and asserts that, from the religious perspective (sharī‘a), one must express (iqrā‘) that the creator is one and that far from any material attributes insofar as to fulfill the Islamic creed (‘aqīda), God has no partners with Him. Ibn Sinā also reports that, according to some of those who believe in the hereafter, there are three types of people: (1) the good-doing believer, whose rewards will be endless, (2) the sinful believer, whose final fate is in the hands of God, and (3) the unbeliever, whose punishment is endless. In general, Ibn Sinā attributes only the conventional meanings of “believer,” “unbeliever,” etc., to religious nominations as they are fun-

that it is due to a misreading because there is no such word as Ṣifātiyya in the well-known MSs of the Ibn Sinā’s epistles. Cf. al-Risāla al-‘Arshiyya (MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Nuruosmaniye, 4894), 446a; (MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya, 4849), 35a.

11 It must be noted here that Ibn Sinā undeniably sees an essential overlap between the subject matters of metaphysics and theology. Accordingly, it is tempting to note that the major issues he enumerates as being dealt within the science of metaphysics, such as the demonstration of the existence of God, the unity of God, and the attributes of God, were also the preliminary topics the contemporary kālām aims at: idem., Fi aqsām al-‘ulūm al-aqliyya, in Tis‘ rasā‘il fi l-ḥikma wa-l-ṭabī‘iyyāt (2nd ed., Cairo: Dār al-‘Arab, n.d.), 112-113. In doing so, Ibn Sinā is following his predecessor al-Fārābī, as it can be seen in the latter’s Ḯṣā‘ al-‘ulūm (see the section on “‘Ilm al-Kalām”). Therefore, later theologians’ distinctive effort to equalize kālām and falsafā in terms of their scopes, has interestingly its roots in the works of these prominent Muslim philosophers.


13 Ibid., 92.
damental to the Islamic disciplines. Furthermore, in another less-known epistle of Ibn Sinā (Text IV), where interestingly, he searches for the answers to major philosophical questions such as “What is the reason of man’s existence in this world?” Ibn Sinā explains that this world, as it pertains to human beings, can be regarded as the place of deeds, while the hereafter is the place of God’s judgment, thus making an ontological distinction between “this world (bādhā l-ʿālam)” and “that world (dbālika l-ʿālam).” Accordingly, the eschatological circle for a believer (muʿmin) operates as “Heaven-That World-This World-Barzakh-That World-Heaven,” consequently, ending in the rewards of God, whereas the circle is inevitably broken for the unbelievers, thus they face the punishment of God. Referencing a saying attributed to the Prophet “the world life is jail for the believer,” Ibn Sinā strikingly summarizes his position that man was forcibly brought into the world, he is forcibly being kept in the world and he will forcibly be taken out of the world. Consequently, from that perspective, there is no other way to gain the eternal salvation – one must believe.

Accordingly, Ibn Sinā himself sees no harm in occasionally applying the traditional Islamic names such as muslim, kāfir, etc. and relates them to the issue of the eternal salvation. With respect to this particular point, our epistle adds another aspect, because as understood from the text, it praises what it calls the literal unbelief (al-kufr al-Ĝaqūt) while criticizing what it calls the figurative belief (al-islām al-majāzi). In this case, the consequence may be that while Ibn Sinā still adheres to the major tenet for accepting the eternal bliss of the believers, he takes the liberty to deviate from the “al-sawād al-aʿẓam” and re-defines religious categories such as muslim and kāfir. Thus, it is highly conceivable that one may find some Ismāʿīlī/Bāṭinī roots, thus giving ground to Ibn Sinā’s stance. Regardless, what escapes doubt is that it is this Avicennian aspect that some commentators wanted to see, as in the example of the Ottoman scholars such as Jamāl al-Khalwatī.

III

Ibn ʿArabī is certainly one of the most exceptional figures the Islamic world has ever seen. The works he produced were so well-received by his followers that we come across some efforts which

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14 Ibn Sinā himself uses this term to render the majority of believers. See ibid., 91.
strive to perceive Islamic heritage from the viewpoint that he adopted and the terminology that he introduced. Obvious enough to be dealt with in a specific study, the epitome of this situation is evidenced in Majd al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb al-Firūzābādī’s (d. 817/1415) attempt to write a voluminous commentary on major religious sources such as al-Ǧāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī, which drew upon the many quotations from Ibn ʿArabi’s al-Futūḥāt al-Makhkiyya. Hence, Jamāl al-Khalwātī’s gloss on the correspondence evidently belongs to this genre, as it additionally proposes an amalgamation of the Avicennian influence into Ibn ʿArabi literature.

We know that in addition to al-Khalwātī, there are other attempts to solve the puzzle regarding the correspondence, one of which is from a certain Saʿd al-Dīn al-Kālūnī (?). This particular interpretation is worth dealing with in a special study due to its interesting references, although it does not restrict its scope to an Ibn ʿArabīan framework. Jamāl al-Khalwātī’s short gloss has two direct references to Ibn ʿArabi’s works (one without mentioning the book), Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam, a foremost text particularly in the Ottoman tradition. The reader of this interpretation is not in a position to miss the vocabulary of Ibn ʿArabī, which is noticeably evident in the explanations of al-Khalwātī. These include very apparent terms such as al-ḥāniyya, tajallī l-dbāt, żubūr al-asmā, aḥadiyyat al-jamā, among others.


There is a tradition of writing commentaries on Ibn ʿArabī’s Fuṣūṣ. This mainly starts with the first mudarrīs in the first official Ottoman university (the Madrasa of Iznik), Dāwūd al-Qaysāri and intriguingly continues with some “enemy of the state” personalities such as Badr al-Dīn Ibn Qāḍī Samāwān.

This is a very common term which Ibn ʿArabī generally uses as an adjective. However, there are some occasions when he refers to it as an independent entity. See for example Fuṣūṣ, 97: “we know that Zayd is the same with ʿAmr in human-ness (al-ḥāniyya) …”.


Ibid., I, 125: “Man is … the place where the divine names occur.” For the importance of divine names in the philosophy of Ibn ʿArabī, see a very helpful
According to al-Khalwatî’s interpretation, Abû Sa‘îd ibn Abî l-Khayr’s request, “guide me!,” is in fact an inquiry about the reality of the secret of humanness, a reality that, as he states, is the very reason for the purpose of the creation of the world. Thus, “entering the real unbelief” provides someone with the explanation of this reality. The terms “belief” and “unbelief” are no more than different manifestations (tajallî) of the divine attributes, in accordance with the mystic’s personal states. Al-Khalwatî has two definitions for the term kufr, both of which have positive connotations in contradiction to the orthodox perception. Although the general character of the letter fully bears Ibn ʿArabi’s tone, his interpretation regarding the key term of the letter, “three persons (al-shukbûṣ al-thalâtha),” is hopefully one of the instances where he comes close to Ibn Sînà’s philosophy. In one alternative explanation, he holds that the three persons mentioned in the letter represent the three stages of God’s unity: the unity in His actions, the unity in His attributes, and the unity in His essence.

At this particular point, it is appropriate to deal with al-Khalwatî’s stance with respect to one of the most complex problems in classical Islamic theology, i.e., whether the attributes of God are identical to his Essence or different from his Essence, in a context that can be called “Avicennian.” First, “the orthodox point of view” on God’s unity, as represented in a standard text of the Ottoman madrasa curricula,22 Matn al-ʿaqâʾîd by ʿUmar al-Nasafî and its commentary by al-Taftâzânî is as follows: The attributes are neither identical to, nor different from Him (lâ huwa wa-lâ ghayruh).23 According to the Sunni perspective, because the Muʿtazilites hold that any identity besides God would lead to the multitude of eternal beings (taʿaddud al-
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qudam – a notion contrary to the Islamic creed of the unity of God – they are labeled as the deniers of God’s attributes. In fact, this placed them in a very dangerous position from a religious standpoint because in the classical fatwā collections, the verdict for those who hold that God is the knower without the attribute of knowledge, namely the position of Mu’tazila, is to strip them of the name of Muslim.

It is tempting to argue that Ibn ‘Arabian notion of God’s attributes deviated from the orthodox theory, while such intense opposition from the Sunnī/Ḥanafī side still aroused hostility against any unorthodox ideas regarding the issue. According to ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jāmī’s (d. 898/1492) al-Durra al-fākhira, a work that was written at the request of the Ottoman Emperor Meḥmed II, to contrast the tenets of the three major groups (philosophers, theologians, and mystics) with respect to the basic theological issues, Ibn ‘Arabī, when defending his position on the attributes of God, goes so far as to argue that the idea that “God’s attributes are different from his Essence” is tantamount to pure disbelief and polytheism. Not surprisingly, Ibn ‘Arabī’s Ottoman followers preserved this general stance of their al-Sheikb al-Akbar, in spite of the fact that some nuances were likely to be found from one author to another. In his commentary on Ibn


25 Abū Muhammad Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn al-Gumushkhānawī, Jāmī’ al-mutūn (Istanbul: Dar al-Ṭibā’āl-al-Āmira, 1856), 32 (on the margin). According to an excerpt from the famous fatwā collection Tātārkhāniyya “those who say that God is knower without the attribute of knowledge, and they are Muʿtazilites and philosophers, since they hold that all attributes of God is identical to Him (‘ayn dhāṭib), must be denounced as unbelievers (yuḥkam bi-kufrībhīm).”


27 One might argue that there is the issue of how one can make sense of the era (i.e., the Ottoman period) in which the legal Sunnī stances were strictly applied on the one hand, and the followers of mystic tendencies that departed from the Sunnī view accepted on official grounds on the other hand. Maybe, the fact that Ottoman atmosphere was a melting pot of different authoritative discourses based on the different religious fields in Islamic culture, mainly fiqh, kalām, and taṣawwuf can be taken as a starting point for an easy yet insufficient explanation.
‘Arabi’s *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, Dāwūd al-Qaṣṣārī meticulously applies the terminology of the Ibn ‘Arabi to the issue of attributes. There are two levels (‘*martaba*’) with regard to the essence of God. At the level of *ahādiyya*, there is but the essence and entity of God, without any attributes or names. The level of *wāḥidiyya* talks about the attributes and the names of God. However, there is one condition, which is that the distinction between *ṣifā* (attribute) and *mawṣūf* (attributed) only occurs in the human mind. In reality, there is nothing but One Existent. In this regard, *Amīr al-mu‘minīn* ‘Alī said, “The perfect devotion to God is to negate all attributes attached to his Essence.”

Hence, the deviation of Ibn ‘Arabi and his followers from the Sunnī understanding of attributes was to serve the ultimate goal of preserving the unity of God (*tawḥīd, waḥida*), a notion that fully coincides with Ibn Sīnā’s ideas. While it surely has its background in the Sufi literature, al-Khalwatī’s three-fold understanding of God’s oneness, as mentioned herein, is also a philosophical stance that is adapted by Ibn Sīnā as well. In another instance, al-Khalwatī comments on the Qur’ānic chapter *al-Ikhlās* (*Text IV*) and once again mentions this three-fold unity in the identical terms, providing more clues about his understanding of God’s attributes such that the attributes of God must be identical to His essence, not distinct from it (*ṣifāt al-dhāt ‘ayn dhātih laysat bi-zā’ida*); only in this way does He gains the true meaning of unity.

It is also of interest that al-Khalwatī’s clear philosophical position particularly came under his commentary on *sūrat al-Ikhlās*, since, in his commentary on the chapter *al-Ikhlās*, Ibn Sīnā himself took the chance to stress his neo-Platonic idea of God’s absolute unity in a tone that much resembles that of the Sufis. In the first place, a careful reader would not miss some of the central vocabulary that Ibn Sīnā used, especially *wāḥidiyya* and *ahādiyya*, considering how much

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29 Ibn Sīnā’s outline in his *al-Risāla al-‘arsbiyya* relies on the unity of the essence, attributes, and actions of God. See especially (Ibrāhīm Hīlāl’s edition), 36.


Ibn ‘Arabî and his followers rely on these two terms when explaining the unity of God and His attributes.\textsuperscript{32} It would be anachronistic to assume that Ibn Sînâ utilized these terms to render the same notions in the school of Ibn ‘Arabî. However, there is no doubt that Ibn Sînâ’s whole point in the commentary is the absolute unity of God’s essence (\textit{dhât}) and that there is not any sign of plurality (\textit{kathra}) in Him. With that in mind, there is no way to know his Essence except through negations (\textit{sulûb}) and nominal additions (\textit{idâfât}).

\textbf{IV}

In what sense do we talk about Avicennism in Ottoman thought in general? There is no doubt that Ottoman scholars are well aware of the philosophy and the thought of Ibn Sînâ as they are loyal disciples of the school of Fakhr al-Dîn al-Râzî and his followers, such as Quṭb al-Dîn al-Râzî al-Taḥtânî, Sirâj al-Dîn al-Urmawî, Sa‘d al-Dîn al-Taftâzânî, Jalâl al-Dîn al-Dawânî, and al-Sayyid al-Sharîf al-Jurjânî, all of whom were “immersed” in the Avicennian corpus as adherents to a period called “the later \textit{kalam}.” It must be noted, however, that the early encounters of the Ottoman circles with Ibn Sînâ were mainly through the works of the followers of Ibn ‘Arabî, not through works of the major theologians listed above. If we take the example of a monumental figure of the early Ottoman times, i.e., Mullâ Fanârî, who was seen as a towering personality of his time for representing the “true” stance in religious sciences,\textsuperscript{33} it can be observed that his “Avicennism” is coming from such Akbarian tendencies, mainly from Şadr al-Dîn al-Qûnawî (d. 672/1273).\textsuperscript{34} In the meantime, there is the thought-provoking fact that it is rare to come across any separate commentary on one of Ibn Sînâ’s major works, such as \textit{al-Shifâ}, \textit{al-}

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\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{32} To follow the two terms in Badr al-Dîn Ibn Qâṭî Samâwnâ, see his \textit{al-Wâridât} (MS Bursa, Înebey Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, Ulucami, 1698, dated 920 H), 18a.
\textsuperscript{33} Tâshkuprizâda, \textit{Mawsâ‘et muştalağât miftâh al-sa‘âda wa-miṣbâh al-siyâda fi mawḍû‘at al-‘ulûm} (ed. ‘Ali Dałrûj; Beirut: Maktabat Lubnân Nâshirûn, 1998), 251 (article: “\textit{al-ilm al-ilâbî}”).
\end{flushright}
Ishārāt wa-l-tanbihāt,\textsuperscript{35} or al-Najāt. One can argue that this situation is meaningful, if we consider the fact that we are talking about a period in Islamic thought in which any philosophical or theological stance was being developed in the form of commentaries and glosses on some major works. However, Jamāl al-Khalwatī’s commentary on Ibn Șinā’i’s letter can still be regarded as a rare example of commentaries on Ibn Șinā’i’s own works.

Notes on the Arabic Texts

Text I

As for the correspondence between Ibn Șinā’i and Abū Sa’īd ibn Abī l-Khayr, I took the MS Bursa, İnebey Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, Genel, 1460, 14b-15a (ب) as the base text, for it has the interpretation of al-Khalwatī as well. Other versions of the correspondence include: ‘Abd al-Amīr Shams al-Dīn, al-Madhhab al-tarbawī ‘inda Ibn Șinā’i min khalīl falsafatih l-ilmīyya (Beirut: al-Sharika al-‘Ālamiyya li-l-Kitāb, 1988), 398 (ش); MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Nuruosmaniye, 4894, 247a, (under the heading “Kalām lī-l-Sheikh Abī ʕAlī Ibn Șinā’i ‘alā ṯāriqat al-taṣawwuf”) (ن). The editing begins with Ibn Șinā’i’s response.

Text II


Text III

The interpretation of Sa’īd al-Dīn al-Kālūnī (?) on the correspondence: MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Nuruosmaniye, 4894, 247a.

Text IV


\textsuperscript{35} One exception is Kamālpashazāda’s Sbarḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbihāt.
**Text V**

Text I

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم و بِسْلَامٍ. و صلى الله على سيدنا محمد و آله أجمعين.

كتب الشيخ أبو سعيد بن أبي الخير قدرس سره العزيز إلى الشيخ الرئيس أبي علي بن عبد الله بن سينا. فقال في كتابه: "أرشدني". فكتب الرئيس في جوابه: "الدخول في الكفر الحقيقي و الخروج عن الإسلام المجاذي أن لا تلتقت إلا إلى ما وراء الشخوص الثلاثة حتى تكون مسلمًا و كافرا، و إن كنت وراء هذا فليس مؤمنًا ولا كافرا، و إن كنت تحت هذا فأنت مشرك و المسلم. إن كنت جاهلا فإنك لا قيمة للك و لا تعد من جملة الوجودين." فلما وصل جوابه إلى الشيخ أبو سعيد استحسنوه حتى ذكر في كتابه المسبي بالمصاحبة: "أوصلي هذه الكلمات إلى ما أوصله إليه ألف سنة من العبادة."

Text II

 قوله "أرشدني" طلب عن بيان حقيقة سر الإنسانية و هو مقصود أصلي من إيجاد العالم. قوله الرئيس: "الدخول في الكفر الحقيقي و الخروج عن الإسلام المجاذي" بيان عن هذه الحقيقة. و الكفر عبارة عن تجلي الذات بطريق الصفات الجلالية، و هو إما على طريق النزول، و هو خفاء الذات بظهور الأسماء على مظاهرها بحسب استعداداتهم.
وقوله "و الخروج عن الإسلام المجاز" أي تنبيه الذات عن التجلبات الخاصة كما قال الشيخ في الفصول إلا الإصدقاء المعتقدات تأخذ الحدود وهو الإله الذي وسعه قلب عبده. فإن الإله المطلق لا يسعه شيء.

وقوله "ان لا تقلق" أي لا تصل إلى هذا السر إلا بالتحرير عن الشخص الثلاثة أي توحيد الأفعال و الصفات والذات. وفي هذه الجملة كان الإنسان سر الله و بالمآورات الرد إلى الحضرة العبودية لأن الله تعالى سر للعبد فيه.

قلوه "حتى تكون مسلما" اية (10) وافقا على سر التجليات و هي شهود أحسية.

الجمع بين الأسماء كلهن.

وقوله "كفارا" أي لا ترى في كل شيء غير الله.

وقوله "و إن كنت وراء هذا" أي و إن كنت مستويا في هذا و لست مؤمنا و لا كافرا، لأن الاعتبارات مسقولة فيه، كما قبل "إذا تم الفقر فهو الله".

وقوله "و إن كنت تحت هذا" أي و إن كنت مقيدا فآتى مشرك، لأن عبد الله ليس بعد الرحمن، كما قال الشيخ إن صاحب هذا المععود الخاص جاهل بلا شك.

وقوله "و إن كنت جاهلا الح" أي و إن لم يكن استعدادك في العلم لم يوجد في غيره و يجوز أن يراد بالشخوص السير إلى الله من منازل النفس إلى نهاية مقام القلب، والسير مع الله بالانتصاف بصفائه و التحقق بأسمائه، و السير في الله و هو عين الجمع و نهاية الولاية و بال добро السير على الله عن الله و هو مقام البقاء بعد البقاء، و الله يقول الحق و هو يهدي السبيل. تم بعون الله الملك الجليل.

Text III

(247) هذا و قد حل الإمام العلامة سعد الدين الكلاوني كلمات الشيخ الرئيس فقال: و ما توقفي إلا بالله، عليه توكلت و إليه أتبت. أعلم أيها الحائض في لجج هذه الحجج أنه لا يتبصر؟!؟؟ لك هذه الطريقة إلا بالدخول في الكفر الحقيقي المثير إليه قوله

53 في الأصل: الكونين
54 في الأصل: و
55 في الأصل: التوحيد الأفعال
Text IV

(القرآن الكريم، سورة الإخلاص، الآية 59) "فل هو الله أحد" فل أمر من عين الجماع وارد على مظهر التفصيل عند آه الله تعالى، هو عبارة عن الحقيقة الأحادية المحضة أي الذات من حيث هي بلا اعتبار صفة لا يعرفها إلا هو. "الله" بدلاً منه وهو اسم الذات المستجع بجميع الصفات و علم من كونه بدلا أن صفات الله عين ذاته ليست بزيادة بل هي عينه، لا فرق إلا بالاعتبار العقلي. و لهذا سميت سورة الإخلاص لأن الإخلاص تحض الحقيقة الأحادية عن شانة الكثرة، كما قال أمير المؤمنين علي رضي الله عنه: "كمال الإخلاص نفي الصفات بشهادة كل صفة أتها غير موصوف بشهادة موصوف غير صفة. "أحد" خبر المبدأ و الفرق بين الأوحد والواحد ظاهر. لأن الأحاد هو الذات بلا اعتبار الصفات والواحد هو الذات مع جميع الصفات وهي الحضرة الأسمانية. "الله الصمد" أي الملجأ المطلق لكل الشيء لا أفقارها في وجوهاتها وما يتعلق بها و ذات الله تعالى غني عن العالمين "لم يلد" أي لا شريك له في ذاته "لم يولد" أي لم يكن لصفاته احتياج إلى شيء في الموجود ولم يكن له كفوا أحد. أي منزه عن النظر.

و يجوز أن يراد من قوله تعالى "قل هو" أنه رد لمن أكثر وجود الحق وقال إنه ليس بموجود و قوله تعالى "أحد" أنه رد لمن قال إن الخالق إثنتان أي خالق النور غير خالق الظلمة، و قوله تعالى "الله الصمد" أنه رد لمن قال إنه يأكل و يشرب، و قوله "لم يلد ولم يولد" أنه رد لمن قال إن الملائكة بنات الله تعالى و عزيز ابن الله، و قوله "لم يكن له" في الأصل: لا قيمة له ولا لك من جميع الموجودين.

56 في الأصل: لا قيمة له ولا لك من جميع الموجودين.

57 في الأصل: ذوات.
An Example of the Mystical Avicennism in Ottoman Thought

Kifwa ahd" anh red alqul al-mishieeha wa al-majisima abshaneh wa talalii uma yaqul al-ajallan alwa kibray.

Way jiyoz an yarad min qulhe "qal oo al lahah ahd" al-tuwijid al-dzatii wa qulhe 10 (160) "al-lah asmad"

al-tuwijid al-safani, wa qulhe "lilm yelde wa lilm yulad wa li wyn ken le kifwa ahd" al-tuwijid al-afualii.

Way aayum an min qulhe "w" sheari'ah ila an al-lah al-muqaddan jah wa al-ahroo jah, lan luhay

min aqshi al-khalq wa muntehii al-muxarrij fafeem.

Way yowde an wogufa al-lah talalii bayn al-emeen, lasn "w" "al-aheed" nilaan ulii

ejmal (al-ajmal?) wa ma wogu biinehuma yilal al-taftis.

Text V

435 (45) Rasaleet fil al-bada wa al-muwaad al-lashif al-rees abi alli biin saina. Bism al-

al-rahman al-raheem al-hamad al-shakri aw salwaatu wa salawati wa al-fath al-ahmiri wa


al-maslaah al-wally: ana min aay ma demet janta ila al-lah al-alam? al-jawab: aayum anin min al-
al-alam janta ila al-lah al-alam, wa hadd al-lah al-alam min fawq al-lakr al-jerjeha min al-falk al-

al-maslaah ila lhat marba al-qalem

al-dhi wuqal al-wally. Way monet al-lah al-alam inna wa min jenat al-lah talallii hi xastra

al-qaleem lahi baqal al-muqadd, wa al-lakr fawq al-lah al-alam. Fama al-
al-alam feer mar al-afa 60 wa al-alam dar hassab 61 wa jenat faw 62 dir zera al-muhsini.

Way min jenat min al-lah al-alam wa min al-lakr al-wally ila al-lah al-alam, wa min al-
al-alam nubah ila al-berjux, wa min al-berjux nhuq ila al-lah al-alam 63 al-lakr ha al-masla al-

al-lakr wa min al-masla al-nubah yirjam min hssn umma ila jenat al-lah talallii, wa byin min saye umma li-

al-tuffi wa ajoba fi jenam biidha ma damat al-ahmaraw wa al-aram ela ma shay raekin rik

fawal wa ma yirid. Way alhamkhalo ila al-alam biqir esradaan lihama liisawa ila al-sawar al-mawalsa

60: - wa hadd al-lah al-alam min fawq al-lakr al-jerjeha min al-falk al-maslaah ila lhat marba al-qalem

61: - fawq + min

62: - al-afa

63: - hassab

60: - al-afa

61: - jenat
Veysel Kaya

أزواجهم من الجنة، وهم 64 ينالون من تلك الصور التي هي في الطعام والشراب لذة، ويجدون سكوناً في الدنيا تحت الطعام والطبيعة. 65 في قيد الطبيعة يدخلون كاردين من غير إرادة تحت قيد العقل الذي يدركه؟ العقل العقلي الذي جاء به الرسول عليهم السلام مما يشهد به شرائهم حتى تأتي النفس. وتعتمد تلك الصور العلمية والعقلية، ويجد بها قراراً، لأن أصلها أيضاً هو من جنة الله تعالى، وتلك الاستفادة يسري لها طريق الاصطدام في عدادها ويفتح حسابها وتقل موازينها. فقد بين الآن أن البشر يتقدير الإبداء فوق العقل والطبع للكون اليوم محسوس تحت الطبع وقيدون بالعقل، وخلاصهم يكون حين يطلقون من قيد العقل ولس يطلقون من قيد العقل إلا حين يخرجون من سجن الطبع والطبيعة. و هذه معان مغولة 66 يفتحها الشرح للمستحقين إن شاء الله تعالى.

المسألة الثانية: لأي سبب جننا إلى هذا العالم؟ الجواب: أعلمنا أن مجيئنا إلى هذا العالم لم يكن باختيارنا وإنما لنا بلغير جهودنا وراء شهره نخرج، و إنما بقاءنا بالنمو والمظهر "ليمتحن الله الذين آمنوا ويهوي الكافرون" (آل عمران 141: 3) 67، وظاهرة النفس هو القرن بالعمل الشرعي والعلم الإلهي، ولهذا يتم الطاهرة التوجه إلى الجود. وكم أن طهارة الجسد من أنجاسه إنما تكون بالاء أو التراب عند عدم المادة، كذلك طهارة النفس بالعلم الذي هو منزلة العلماء أو التراب 68 الذي هو منزلة العالم فذين أن كل من أظى بالعلم الشرعي حتى يصل به إلى العالم الإلهي، فيعلم حقيقته وقيته. فإنه تخلص عند مفارقة هذه الدنيا التي هي سجن المؤمن، فاعرفه إن شاء الله.

المسألة الثالثة: أنا حين نخرج من هذا العالم إلى أين مرجعنا؟ الجواب: أعلمنا أن كل إنسان يخرج من هذا العالم لقاء ملاقاة (1366) الرحمة أو ملاقاة العذاب في حملها 69 إلى البرزخ، و البرزخ هو قبر النفس 70 فإن كانت مؤمنة فتح لها باب من الجنة وإن كانت كافرة 71 فتح لها باب من النار إلى ذلك القبر الذي هي فيه، وحد سلف البرزخ عن هذا.

64 و: - هم
65 و: يكون
66 و: مغولة
67 و: التراب
68 و: تعبئة
69 ن: يحملون
70 و: 79 ب
71 و: كافرا
لا يمكنني قراءة النص العربي.
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_____ *al-Risâla al-‘arsbiyya* (MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Nuruosmaniye, 4894), 445a-449a.


_____ *Risâla fî l-mabda‘ wa-l-maad* (MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Nuruosmaniye, 4894), 435b-436a.


