MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION OF SHEIKH BADR AL-DIN IBN QĀDİ SAMĀWNĀ’S CONTROVERSIAL IDEAS

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Abstract
An important factor that affected political, religious, and social life during the period of Ottoman history called the “Ottoman Interregnum” was Sheikh Badr al-Din ibn Qādzi Samāwnā’s (d. 823/1420) ideas and activities that resulted in a rebellion. Sheikh Badr al-Din, who managed to come to prominence in each position that he held, received the highest level of education. In addition to his scholarly identity, he officially served as qādī ʿaskar (judge of the army), an important bureaucratic rank for the state. Finally, as a Sufi, he attracted many supporters in a short time. Although several studies have examined his life and ideas, a considerable number of these studies were written for ideological purposes. A Sufi scholar, Sheikh Badr al-Din has been unrighteously and incorrectly accused of being a pioneer of atheism, pantheism, anarchism, communism, and materialism in Ottoman times. The main reason for these inaccurate accusations is that his work al-Wāridāt has not been regarded as a mystical text. In this paper, I will attempt to address his controversial ideas at the mystical level, demonstrating the similarities and differences between his thoughts and those of earlier Sufis. The first commentaries written on al-Wāridāt are the main sources for the paper.

Key Terms: Sheikh Badr al-Din Ibn Qādzi Samāwnā, al-Wāridāt, Mullā ʿAbd Allāh Ilāhī, the Judgment Day, resurrection, the eternity of the world, mushābāhā
Sources state that because of his authority especially in the field of Islamic jurisprudence, Sheikh Badr al-Dîn’s scholarly identity and the prestige he gained were well received in academic circles during the period in which he lived and in later centuries. His influence was not limited to Anatolia and Rumelia but spread throughout the Islamic Middle East, especially Egypt. Hence, the famous scholar al-Sayyid al-Sharif al-Jurjâni (d. 816/1413), whose company the Sheikh enjoyed in Cairo, praised his scholarly personality. Ibn ‘Arabshâh, who had the opportunity to talk to Sheikh Badr al-Dîn, mentioned his authority in the field of fiqh. Ibn ‘Arabshâh also wrote that the Sheikh’s academic proficiency was so high that he disagreed with one of the major works of the Hanafi fiqh, the al-Hidayâ with one thousand and ninety questions. Even the 16th century Idrîs al-Bidîlî, who identified him as a “mulhid and zindiq (heretic)” due to his mystical thoughts, could not help commenting that the Sheikh was one of the leading scholars and jurists in religious and rational sciences. Undoubtedly, what established Sheikh Badr al-Dîn’s scholarly authority was that he wrote such works in the field of fiqh as Jami’ al-fuṣûlayn when he served as qaḍî ʿaskar of Mûsâ Chalabî for ten years in Edirne. These works would be studied in Ottoman madrasas even after his execution.¹

How was such a scholar, whose scholarly competency was accepted in nearly all circles, accused of blasphemy because of some words he said as a Sufi? The common opinion in studies on Sheikh Badr al-Dîn is that the reason was his work al-Wâridât and the ideas expressed therein. In fact, before we address these ideas and the context in which we interpret them, we must examine the issue of the authenticity of al-Wâridât. This little treatise is a collection of lectures given to the Sheikh’s disciples when he was under house arrest in Iznik [Nicaea] or, according to a more reliable source, after he fled from Iznik to Rumelia in search of the Sultan Chalabî Meḥmed around 820-823/1417-1420. Judging from the fact that the subjects of the treatise are not addressed systematically, it has been claimed that the treatise as it appears today was not written by Sheikh Badr al-Dîn. It has been argued that one of his disciples collected the Sheikh’s ideas, to the best of his recollection, after the Sheikh’s death. It has also

¹ For remarks on Sheikh Badr al-Dîn’s different identities, see Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, Osmanî Toplumunda Zindiklar ve Mülhidler (15.-17. Yüzyıllar) [Zindiqs and Mulubs in Ottoman Community (15th-17th Centuries)] (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayını, 1998), 152-160.
been said that although the treatise most likely was not written by the Sheikh himself, he saw the treatise after it was compiled and translated into Arabic. Others hold that it may be the Sheikh himself who translated the work into Arabic, so the last version of the treatise was probably checked by the Sheikh. All of these approaches claim that al-Wāridāt does not present Sheikh Badr al-Dīn’s original ideas and thus cannot be accepted as a reliable document.² I argue that these claims based on the unsystematic character of the work or the discrepancies between the ideas expressed therein and those expressed in his other works can be appraised from two angles. First, the disconnection of opinions and witnessings (mushāhadas) and the lack of chapter headings and sections in the book is specific to this type of literature, i.e., wāridāt literature. With regard to the content of his Sufi interpretations, if we consider his mystical connection to Sheikh al-Ḥusayn al-Akhlaṭī in Egypt, his affiliation with the Akbarī School and his writing of a gloss on Dāwūd al-Qayṣārī’s commentary on Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam, the source of his mystical opinions and witnessings about the issue of mabda’ and maʿād is revealed.³

Muslim theologians hold that because scriptural texts about the afterlife fall into the category of mutashāhib (unclear in meaning), they can have figurative meanings in addition to their literal meanings. This is because the other world cannot be conceived with the five senses, so reason, which depends on data provided by the senses, cannot be used for its perception. In his al-Wāridāt, Sheikh Badr al-Dīn provides esoteric meanings instead of exoteric meanings to such eschatological issues as the Apocalypse, Judgment Day, Heaven, Hell, the rewards of Heaven, the punishment of Hell; to unseen crea-


³ Sheikh Badr al-Dīn’s grandson Ḥāfiz Khalīl ibn Ismāʿīl, in his Manāqibnâma of his grandfather written in 1460, says that al-Wāridāt is the last work by the Sheikh himself (Khalīl ibn Ismāʿīl, ibid., 131-132). However, it is intriguing that he does not say that the work does not belong to him to vindicate his grandfather, who was executed because of his views in al-Wāridāt.
tutes like angels, *jinns*, satan, and the other controversial issues such as soul-body connection, the problem of good and evil, the eternity of the world, the relation between master and disciple, the reality of dreams, and the knowledge of the essences of things (*maʿrifah*). He attempts to explain these concepts based on the principle of the unity of being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*). These issues, which constitute the subject of our paper, can be addressed under the following headings.

1. **The Nature of the Ḥasbr**

The ḥasbr, i.e., the gathering of all those who are going to be resurrected on the Last Day in a place to be judged, constitutes a second eschatological stage after the resurrection (*baʿth*). The belief in both gathering and resurrection rely on the Qur’ānic text, the prophetic traditions, and the consensus of believers. Thus, these concepts constitute a creed for Muslims, and those who reject this creed are regarded as unbelievers. Almost all sects, with the exception of some non-Islamic sects, such as al-Manṣūriyya and al-Janāḥiyya, accept that the gathering and the resurrection will occur. Discussions about the topic fall into three categories:

a. Those who accept that the material body in the Hereafter will be the same as in this world.

b. Those who claim that the resurrection will only be spiritual.

c. Those who accept the resurrection and believe that re-creation in the Hereafter will be in a similar body, not in the same body as in this world.

Almost all Muslim scholars hold that the resurrection will be bodily, judging by the relevant Qur’ānic verses and prophetic traditions. According to them, descriptions in the Qur’ānic verses and prophetic traditions about Heaven and Hell, the people of Heaven, the rewards in Heaven, the people of Hell, and the punishment of Hell are clear proof that the resurrection will be bodily. A Naqshbandī sheikh, Mullā ‘Abd Allāh Ilāhī (d. 896/1491), who was one of the first commentators of Sheikh Badr al-Dīn’s thoughts, accepted that resurrec-

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tion will be bodily, however, this body could be the same with the one in this world as well as a new body created from different elements.  

The starting point for Muslim Peripatetic philosophers, who deny the bodily resurrection, is their view that the *i‘āda* (resurrection) of *ma‘dūm* (the non-existent) as it was is impossible. This view suggests that it is not possible for the body that decayed and became non-existent to be resurrected in the Hereafter. The soul is permanent and does not change. Even though God is able to create a new body and connect it to the soul, the connection of the same soul to different bodies entails incarnation. Thus, resurrection and gathering are relevant to souls, not bodies. Bodily depictions in Qur‘ānic verses and prophetic traditions are only symbols that are applied to help people understand the realities of life in the Hereafter, encouraging them to do good and discouraging them from doing evil.  

Among Muslim philosophers, al-Fārābī,  

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Ibn Sinā, and Ibn Rushd explain happiness in the Hereafter as the achievement of intellectual pleasure and explain punishment and pain as the lack of this pleasure. Thus, they claim that the Judgment Day will be spiritual rather than bodily.⁸

Sheikh Badr al-Dīn, who was regarded by Mullā ʿAbd Allāh Ilāhī as among muḥaqiq Sufis, stated his views on the resurrection and the gathering in his famous al-Wāridāt as follows:

The permanence of the body and the gathering of its parts together are not possible, after it dismembers and ceases to exist, as it was before. The resurrection of the dead does not mean that.⁹ The judgment of the bodies is not the way ordinary people assume. However, it is possible that a time comes that there is not any single human being. After that, a human being comes to the existence just like in Adam being without parents out of soil, then through reproduction (bi-l-tanāsul).¹⁰

It can be understood from the above statements of the Sheikh that creation in the Hereafter will only be of the soul, not of the body; even if it is bodily, the body there will not be the same as the body of this world. According to ʿAbd Allāh Ilāhī, Sheikh Badr al-Dīn intended the second meaning and did not deny bodily resurrection. The point Sheikh Badr al-Dīn makes is as follows: the body consists of four elements that bear the character of dismemberment and destruction. Although the soul is in contact with the body through divine will, the connection of the soul with the body does not make the body eternal. For that reason, the elements that constitute the body change to their real character, i.e., the character of mortality after death, and the body dismembers and vanishes. If human beings are


¹⁰ Sheikh Badr al-Dīn, al-Wāridāt, 35a, 36b.
to be created in the Hereafter in their bodies, even if their bodies resemble the shapes of those in this world, they differ in their characteristics. It is not possible to think of corruptible elements in the eschatological body because there will be eternity in the Hereafter. Thus, as stated in the Qur'anic verses and the prophetic traditions about the resurrection, the differences in the structure of eschatological bodies, including not feeling exhaustion and boredom, not needing sleep, not getting sick, and not getting old, indicate this situation. Hence, Sheikh Badr al-Dîn does not oppose bodily resurrection; he only disagrees with people’s incorrect understandings about the nature of the resurrection. Referring to Ibn ‘Arabî’s statements, Ābd Allâh Ilâhî tries to prove Sheikh Badr al-Dîn’s position that the resurrection happens with the blow of the soul and reproduction, as in the case of Adam after he was created from soil.\footnote{See Ilâhî, Kashf al-Wâridât, 9b-11a; 35a-36b; Abû ‘Abd Allâh Muḥyî al-Dîn Muḥammad ibn ‘Ali Ibn ‘Arabî, Fuṣûṣ al-ḥikam (ed. Abû l-‘Alâ ‘Afiﬁ; Beirut: Dâr al-Kitâb al-‘Arabî, n.d.), 67; idem., Fusûsu’l-Hikem Tercüme ve Şerhi [Translation and Commentary of Fuṣûṣ al-ḥikam] (translated into Turkish with a commentary by Ahmed Avni Konuk, eds. Mustafa Tahraî and Selçuk Eraydın; 4th edn., İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Yayınları, 2005), I, 246-249.}

One commentator, Sheikh Yâwşî (d. 920/1514), who was the father of Sheikh al-Islâm Abû l-Su‘ûd, holds the same views. He thinks that the body consists of elements, and every thing that consists of other things is temporal, not eternal. After the elements that form the body dismember and vanish, they do not come together; they return to their essential nature.\footnote{Muḥyî al-Dîn Muḥammad ibn Muṣṭafâ al-Iskilibî Yâwšî, Haqîqat al-ḥaqâiq fi sbarh Kashf asrâr al-daqaqîq (MS İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Hacî Mahmud Efendi, 2620), 4a, 22a-b.} Kamâl al-Dîn Ḥârîrizâda who wrote the first Turkish commentary on al-Wâridât under the name Futûḥât-i Ilâbiyya states that the collection of elements that constitute bodies in the Hereafter is not “elemental (‘unṣurî)” but an “imaginal (mithâlî)” way that is specific to that world. In other words, although the body supersedes the soul in the world, in the Hereafter, the soul supersedes the body.\footnote{Ḥârîrizâda holds that the bodies of prophets and saints do not vanish because their bodies are souls and their souls are bodies. See Mehmed Kamâl al-Dîn Ḥârîrizâda, Futûḥât-i Ilâbiyya Sbarh-i Wâridât-i Ilâbiyya (MS İstanbul, İstanbul Büyüksehir Belediye Kütüphanesi Atatürk Kitaplığı, Osman Ergin Yâzmaları, 507), 11b; 52a-57a.}

Criticizing Sheikh Badr al-Dîn’s thoughts, a 17th cen-
tury Khalwatî sheikh Nûr al-Dinzâda took a more deliberate approach. He suggests that if the author (the Sheikh) means that the body created in the Hereafter will be different from the one in the world, that can be accepted. However, if he means to deny the bodily resurrection and to support spiritual creation in the Hereafter, this meaning is contrary to the Qur'ān, the Sunna, and the consensus of believers and leads to blasphemy.\textsuperscript{14} Sheikh al-Islām Mūsā Kāzîm claims that Sheikh Badr al-Dîn was not interested in the material things because he was always occupied with spiritual things; thus, he denied bodily resurrection.\textsuperscript{15}

ʻAbd Allâh Ilâhî insists that Sheikh Badr al-Dîn did not deny bodily resurrection. According to him, those who are not prophets and God's friends cannot completely understand issues related to the Hereafter. Accordingly, judging from the literal meanings of the Sheikh’s words, some ignorant people supposed that he denied bodily resurrection and the material character of Heaven. However, the meaning meant by the pure (\textit{asfîyâ}) and the saints (\textit{awliyâ}) are far from the thoughts of ignorant people. Average people’s knowledge and assumptions about the Hereafter, Heaven, the houries, the trees, etc. are different from the perceptions of the \textit{muḥaqqiq} Sufis.\textsuperscript{16} Mullâ Ilâhî recommends the following to those who do not accept the words of the Sheikh:

\begin{quote}
Just and intelligent people should accept the words of the people of \textit{kashf} and \textit{shuhûd}. If they do not, at least they should not insist on their bigotry. However, to accept completely what \textit{awliyâ} \textit{Allâh} say is a more suitable way, if possible.\textsuperscript{17}
\end{quote}

In addition, quoting from Ibn ʻArabî to support his thought, Mullâ Ilâhî emphasizes that Ibn ʻArabî supported both bodily and spiritual


\textsuperscript{16} Ilâhî, \textit{Kashf al-Wâridât}, 9b-11b, 35a-36b, 74b; idem., \textit{Zâd al-mushtâqîn}, 45a-46a.

\textsuperscript{17} Ilâhî, \textit{Kashf al-Wâridât}, 11b-12a.
resurrection.\(^{18}\)

## 2. The Rewards of Heaven and the Torment of Hell

One of Sheikh Badr al-Dīn’s views that received criticism was that he saw the rewards of Heaven and the punishment of Hell as spiritual things. His statements in *al-Wāridāt* are as follows:

Do not doubt that Heaven, mansions [therein], trees, houries, dresses, rivers, fruits; the torment of Hell, fire, etc. – they are to be found in reports and [people’s sayings about them] have spread – are not limited to their literal meanings. They have other meanings that only *aṣfiyyā*\(^{19}\) of saints know.\(^ {19}\) ... Houries, mansions, rivers, trees, fruits, and the like exist in the imaginary world, not sensual world.\(^ {20}\) Heaven, Hell, and their details have meanings outside of the minds of ignorant people.\(^ {21}\) ... Houries, mansions, dresses, and gardens were compared [to their worldly names] to explain them to ignorant and half-wit people.\(^ {22}\) ... You should know that we can call every worldly/exoteric and other-worldly/esoteric state, rank, or station, which are precious, “Heaven.” Similarly, we can call every worthless state, material, and low station “Hell, snakes, scorpions, and *zaqqūm.*”\(^ {25}\) ... If the world, the Hereafter, houries, mansions, and Heaven are so, there is no need for [all] these strivings. [If anyone thinks so] they not only misguide themselves but also others.\(^ {24}\) ... Thus, you understand that there are other meanings of Heaven, houries, and Hell. Hence, I had mentioned this issue a couple of times before. The same applies to other verses in the issue. Accordingly, the Prophet said that the Qur’ān has one literal and up to seven figurative meanings.\(^ {25}\) ... Similarly, we had said that Heaven, mansions, fruits, and the like are not what the average people and the scholars of *zābir* assume. Hence, they compare all these to the visible world. They even claim that those other-


\(^{19}\) Sheikh Badr al-Dīn, *al-Wāridāt,* 4b.


\(^{22}\) *Ibid.*, 66b.


\(^{24}\) *Ibid.*, 72b.

worldly things consist of elements like these [worldly] trees, rivers, mansions, and houries.\textsuperscript{26}

If the above statements by Sheikh Badr al-Dīn are considered, at first glance, one can assume that he supported the idea that the descriptions in the Scripture about the rewards of Heaven and the torments of Hell are symbolic and are no more than sanctions that encourage good and discourage evil. However, ‘Abd Allāh Ilāhī asserts that this assumption is completely wrong. With these statements, the Sheikh intended to show that the Hereafter does not consist only of a material life but also has a spiritual aspect. Thus, judging from the fact that the Qur’ān has an esoteric meaning in addition to its exoteric meaning, the Sheikh sought to interpret the relevant verses in an esoteric way. Because the afterlife means the bodily and spiritual happiness, the meanings of Heaven and its rewards and Hell and its torments cannot be restricted to literal meanings. According to Mullā Ilāhī, Sheikh Badr al-Dīn notes these esoteric meanings about Heaven and Hell in addition to the literal meaning:

Heaven is divided into three parts, the heaven of essence (\textit{\textit{d}hāt}), the heaven of attribute (\textit{\textit{s}if\textit{a}}), and the heaven of act (\textit{\textit{fi}‘\textit{h}}). After the lower self (\textit{nafs}) escapes the curtains of corruption, achieves the attributes of perfection, and reaches the level of satisfaction, it reaches one of these heavens based on its level. When the soul separates from the body, the results of people’s virtues and righteous deeds are revealed as the rewards of Heaven. The meaning of Heaven and its rewards is tasting (\textit{dhawq}), unveiling (\textit{kashf}), and the sciences of \textit{tawḥīd}. The wine of Heaven and its fruits are luminous and spiritual attributes and are the nourishment of the spirit and the heart. Houries represent the self’s escape from lustful desires, its purification from natural dirt and the murkiness of the elements and, finally, the \textit{jamāli} manifestations achieved after these purifications. Rivers belong to the \textit{tawḥīd} of the Essence and its attributes. Mansions are spiritual contentment (\textit{ridā}) achieved by the soul. Trees are the trees of the perfect man (\textit{al-insān al-kāmil}) that have perfect attributes because in these trees, ‘\textit{aqli-qudsi} flowers blossom and the fruits of the Essence and manifestations of its attributes grow. Moreover, it is the witnessing of manifestations of divine beauty (\textit{jamāl}) and its lights in the rank of the soul.

\textsuperscript{26} \textit{Ibid.}, 102a.
Hell is the spiritual condition of pain after the soul is veiled from God because of poor character and unrighteous deeds.\textsuperscript{27}

However, these interpretations do not mean that literal facts about Heaven and Hell cannot be accepted. Furthermore, Sheikh Ilāhī states that Hell and its torments are everlasting. He also mentions the specific levels of Heaven and Hell to which each righteous and unrighteous deed corresponds.\textsuperscript{28}

According to ‘Abd Allāh Ilāhī, it is not correct to say that the form of Heaven, its rewards, gardens, and rivers or Hell and its torments are only material. It is also not correct to say that they are spiritual or to interpret them with spiritual concepts and symbols. The essential point is that the material and the spiritual will be together.\textsuperscript{29} Moreover, spiritual pleasures, such as achieving the consent of God, speaking with Him, and observing His beauty, supersede material pleasures, such as eating, drinking, cloth, scent, houries, trees, and rivers. In other words, the spiritual heaven supersedes the material heaven. The main purpose is to turn toward God and to achieve His consent. Thus, the people of Heaven find real happiness in spiritual pleasure, not in formal things, as average people assume. On this point, Mullā Ilāhī mentions that for Sheikh Badr al-Dīn, the torments of Hell and the rewards of Heaven have the same names as in this world, but there is no other relationship between them because of the difference in their structure.\textsuperscript{30}

\begin{footnotes}
\item Ilāhī, \textit{Zād al-musḥtaqīn}, 46b-48a, 90a-91a, 123b. Sheikh Yāwṣī and Ḥārīrīzāda compare the unity to the water river, \textit{ḫilm} to the honey river, knowledge to the milk river, and \textit{ma‘rifā} to the wine river. In contrast, things such as wrong belief and poor character are seen as snakes and scorpions. See Yāwṣī, \textit{Ḥaqiqat al-ḫaqā‘iq}, 3a-b; Ḥārīrīzāda, \textit{Futūḥat-i Ilābiyya}, 10a.
\item Ilāhī, \textit{Zād al-musḥtaqīn}, 45a.
\item Sheikh Ilāhī notes that average people are veiled by the literal meanings of the Qur’ānic verses and ḥadiths on the nature of eschatological issues, Heaven, and Hell. On this issue, see Ilāhī, \textit{Zād al-musḥtaqīn}, 90a-92a, 123b; idem., \textit{Kashf al-Wāridāt}, 4b-7a, 12a, 33a-b, 66b-67b, 71b-73a, 98a-99a, 102a-b; idem., \textit{Uṣūl-i wuṣūl-i ilābiyya} (MS Manisa, Manisa İl Halk Kütüphanesi, 1524), 305a; Yāwṣī, \textit{Ḥaqiqat al-ḫaqā‘iq}, 3a-b.
\end{footnotes}
According to Sheikh Yāwṣī, who supports ‘Abd Allāh Ilāhī, everything in the world of shabāda, or sensible world, has an essence and only exists with this essence. For this essence, there is an ideal form in the angelic world (malakūt) and the hidden realm (ghayb). Thus, in his statement that “houries, mansions, rivers, trees, fruits, and the like exist in imaginary world, not in sensual world,” Sheikh Badr al-Dīn stresses that the realities of these rewards come existence in the world of image (mithāl), not in the world of shabāda. Nūr al-Dinzāda holds that this view is incorrect because the imaginary world is a barzakh between this world and the Hereafter. Sheikh Ilāhī regards the imaginary world as the world of baqā’ after fanā’. Those who are purified from all types of veils can observe Heaven and its rewards in the sensual and imaginary world, but those who become slaves to their selves and cannot rid themselves of their evil character will not see them at all. They fall into the great fire in this world due to their veils.31

Nevertheless, Sheikh Badr al-Dīn’s esoteric interpretation of Heaven and Hell was not an original idea. It is known that some early Sufis, especially Ibn ‘Arabī, held this view. According to Ibn ‘Arabī, for every deed, there is a heaven; there is a heaven for every fard, nāfilā, righteous deed, and prevention of evil or prohibited deed. Those who act with more morality and have more righteous deeds receive more shares of these heavens. Called “the heaven of deeds” or “the heaven of self,” this heaven is the šūrī heaven, which includes delicious food, pleasant and healthy drinks, and beautiful partners. It is built by the deeds of believers. The spiritual heaven, which comes from the manifestations of the divine names and attributes, is called the heaven of attributes. The heaven of attributes, which gathers the worlds of ghayb and shabāda, is the heaven of the heart as well. The heaven of essence is the heaven of the soul, the observation of the beauty of the Essence at the level of oneness (aḥadiyya). Ibn ‘Arabī accepted the Heaven that consists of formal pleasures as the heaven of the self, the heaven that consists of spiritual pleasures formed by the manifestations of the divine names and attributes as the heaven of the heart, and the heaven that is formed by observing the beauty of God beyond the two worlds as the heaven of the soul. However, this

31 See Ilāhī, Kashf al-Wāridāt, 15b-16a; Yāwṣī, Ḥaqiqat al-ḥaqā’iq, 3a-b, 6b; Ḥarīrizāda, Futuḥāt-i Ilābiyya, 14a-16a; Nūr al-Dinzāda, al-Radd ‘alā l-Wāridāt, 219a-b.

\section*{3. The Apocalypse and Its Signs}

Sheikh Badr al-Dīn states that some people during the time of the Prophet expected such apocalyptic signs as the Dajjāl, dābbat al-ard, and the Mahdī. Similarly, those who came after this time expected those signs to occur during their time and even wrote on this issue. However, Sheikh Badr al-Dīn attempted to interpret the apocalypse and its signs outside of their literal meanings. The apocalypse means the complete emergence of the Essence due to the annihilation of attributes, both exoterically and esoterically. ‘Abd Allāh Ilāhī calls this “the great apocalypse (\textit{qiya‘mat-i kubrā}).” In a sense, this means the inclusion of the existence of the servant (human beings) in the existence of God after the self is completely annihilated. A person’s death, be it voluntary or involuntary, is the little apocalypse (\textit{qiya‘mat-i ṣugbrā}).\footnote{Sheikh Badr al-Dīn, \textit{al-Wāridāt}, 73b, 74b.} In fact, Sheikh Ilāhī explains the issue by dividing the apocalypse into four parts; because there are four births, there are four apocalypses. The birth of a child from the womb of the mother is called the bodily birth (\textit{wilādat-i ṣūrī}) and the little apocalypse (\textit{qiya‘mat-i ṣugbrā}). Reaching puberty and distinguishing between good and evil by learning is called the spiritual birth (\textit{wilādat-i ma‘nawi}) and the middle apocalypse (\textit{qiya‘mat-i wustā}). Reaching middle age and gaining satisfaction and maturity is called the beautiful birth (\textit{wilādat-i ṣayyība}) and the great apocalypse (\textit{qiya‘mat-i ...
‘uzmā). Passing the level of knowledge and reaching the level of seeing and living things that are known is called the real birth (wilādat-i ḥaqiqi) and the great apocalypse (qiyyāmat-i kubrā).\(^{34}\)

The esoteric interpretation is valid for the signs of the apocalypse as well as the apocalypse. According to Sheikh Badr al-Dīn, only those who are perfect men and muḥaqqiqs can understand the essence of the apocalyptic signs that were recorded in the Scripture, such as the sunrise from the west, the closure of the gates of repent, the emergence of the Dājīl, dāḥbat al-ārd, and the Mahdī. It is wrong to interpret these events in a literal way, as average people do, and to expect them occur literally. Accordingly, the Dājīl refers to the emergence of the ‘aql-i maʿāsh with arrogance, the overcoming by the natural faculties of people over spiritual ones, or people who misguide others by lying, as in the example of Abū Jahl and ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ubayy ibn Salūl in the time of the Prophet. Similarly, Gog and Magog refer to the complete emergence of the evil character and thoughts of human beings and their invasion of people’s hearts. The Mahdī refers to the emergence of the universal intellect and the rūḥ-i aʿẓām; the dāḥbat al-ārd refers to the regretful self (al-nafs al-lauwāma); the sunrise from the west refers to the separation of the soul from the body; and the closure of the gate of repent refers to the end of the lives of believers. Furthermore, the coming of Jesus is a metaphor for the emergence of the ‘aql-i maʿād with the light of yaqīn. His killing of the Dājīl means the bringing of his rule to an end.\(^{35}\)

After stressing that these interpretations are not decisive, Sheikh Ilāhī states that one cannot conclude from these esoteric meanings about the apocalypse and its signs that the apocalypse and the resurrection after death will not happen.


\(^{35}\) Yāwṣī, Ḥaqiqat al-ḥaqāʾiq, 81b-83a; Ḥāfirīzāda, Fatḥāt-i Ilāhīyya, 161a-165a; Șadr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ishāq ibn Muḥammad al-Qūnawī, Kirk Hadis Şerbi ve Tercümesi [Interpretation and Translation of Forty Ḥadīths] (ed. and translated into Turkish by H. Kâmil Yılmaz; İstanbul: Meram Belediyesi Konevi Araştırma Merkezi [MEBKAM], 2010), 42-43.
Life, death, and the apocalypse as explained does not cancel the belief in the resurrection and gathering after death, the apocalypse, and the Judgment Day. Our Prophet and other prophets reported the torment in grave, the Judgment, Hell, and Fire, the širāf bridge, and the people of purgatory. They will happen as reported and they are literally and figuratively real.36

4. Angels, Jinns, and Satan

One of the issues for which Sheikh Badr al-Dīn was criticized is the claim that he did not prove an external existence for the unseen creatures such as angels, jinns, and Satan by contrast with the thought of Ahl al-sunna; instead, he interpreted them as esoteric powers.37 Early in his al-Wāridāt, the Sheikh’s words are as follows:

Everything that directs you to God is angel and rahmān; everything that directs you to worldly things (mā-siwa) is Iblīs and Satan. Your power that causes you to lean toward God is angels and your power that causes you to lean toward worldly and lustful appetites are satans. You are full of angels and satans. Your position is decided by which side is dominant. Jinns are between angels and satans.38

According to ‘Abd Allāh Ilāhī, by these words, the Sheikh notes the angelic and the satanic character and thoughts of human beings. Yet, he does not deny their external existence. A person has a good as well as a bad side. The good side indicates a person’s soul and his/her spiritual aspect, and the bad side indicates the ego (nafs) and his/her worldly appetites. Thus, people are filled with angelic and satanic characteristics. If a person has characteristics such as leaning toward what is right and good, keeping promises, and practicing religious duties, the dominant side is the angelic one. Similarly, if a person has characteristics such as envy, arrogance, stinginess, self-love, lust, and fame, the dominant side is the ego and the satanic one.

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36 Ilāhī, Zād al-musbtāqān, 45a.
37 Nūr al-Dinzāda holds that the fact that angels, jinns, and satan have a latīf (subtle) structure does not mean that they are not separate and real beings. See al-Radd ʿalā l-Wāridāt, 219b, 221b-223b.
38 Sheikh Badr al-Dīn, al-Wāridāt, 20b.
Thus, one should know which side is dominant in him/her and take the required precautions.39

The angels that are the manifestation of the divine name al-Hādī inspire recitation (dhikr), good thoughts, and good morals with râhmânî revelations (kbawāṭîr), the satans that are the manifestation of the divine name al-Mudîll inspire lustful and egoistic revelations and thoughts. Thus, the faculty that leads someone to God, which is the intellectual or spiritual faculty, is called an “angel,” whereas the wâhmi faculties that keep someone from God are called “satan.”40 This is because the intellect in the human body symbolizes Gabriel, and wâhmi symbolizes Iblîs. People are under the rule of whichever one is dominant. According to Ḥârîrîzâda, this dominance is because of predestination (qadar and qaḍâ‘), which is no more than fayd-i aqdas and fayd-i muqaddas. In contrast, the jînns, which are between angels and Satan, symbolize the al-quwwâ al-khayâliyya. Although they could have the ability to appear in different forms because they are spiritual beings they are seen by āhir-i bâţin and the faculty of khâyîl. Thus, angels, jînns, and Satan resemble each other due to their being composed of non-material substances, and they differ due to knowledge and power.41

Sheikh Badr al-Dîn means that angels are spiritual beings when he says, “You should know that celestial, elemental, and similar faculties are angels. Prophet’s sayings about angels indicate my words on faculty. It is not the way ignorant people assume.”42 According to ‘Abd Allâh Ilâhî, the Sheikh does not hold that these beings do not have any material bodies, as some philosophers assume. However, Ḥârîrîzâda states that angels can have hands and multiple wings, which represent power.43 In other words, rather than the existence of their material forms, the reason for indicating that they have material forms is to show that they can take the form of birds or human beings

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39 Ilâhî, Zâd al-mushtâqîn, 7a, 95b-96b.
40 According to Sheikh Badr al-Dîn (al-Wâridât, 70b), angels refer to the universal faculties in âfâq and the particular faculties in anfus.
41 Ilâhî, Kashf al-Wâridât, 14b, 20b-21b, 37a-b, 70b; Yâwšî, Ḥâqîqat al-ḥaqa‘îq, 9b-10b, 22b-23b, 74a; Ḥârîrîzâda, Futûḥât-i Ilâbiyya, 23a-28a, 57b-60a, 152b.
43 See Q 35:1, Q 53:5, Q 66:6, Q 81:20, Q 6:93.
depending on their duties.\textsuperscript{44}

5. The Issue of Free Will

Sheikh Badr al-Dîn states, “All actions belong to God. Forms are His tools (...) There is no one who owns and has an influence on the forms of humans and humans are not aware of this. Thus, they imagine a choice, action, and existence that are special to them ... However, this imagination is evil because of their ignorance ... They assume that they have the ability to give up the actions, however the situation is not so.”\textsuperscript{45} Because of these words, he was accused of denying the \textit{al-irāda al-juzʿîyya}, i.e., human’s free will, and holding the idea of fatalism. ‘Abd Allāh Ilāhī explains his words in terms of the unity of existence. Accordingly, the knowledge, power, and will of the human, those who in fact do not exist and remain in non-existence (‘\textit{adam}), are the attributes of God. The emergence of the actions of the human is due to their abilities and aptitudes in the eternal knowledge. They only happen as a result of the power of God. Thus, because every person’s actions are because of his/her abilities and aptitudes, there is no fatalism here. The Sheikh points out that it is heedlessness for the human to imagine that they have an independent existence and thus independent actions. All possible beings, including all types of wills and actions, are the products of the existence of God. There is no other agent except for Him, and there are no will and actions except for His. The emergence of actions by the human with the presence of causes is, first, because of the divine will and, second, because of the emergence of actions in accordance with their abilities and aptitudes. In other words, when causes do not come together, the will does not occur, and when the will does not occur, actions do not come into existence. However, one should bear in mind that this relation between the will and the abilities does not contradict the \textit{al-irāda al-juzʿîyya}.\textsuperscript{46}


\textsuperscript{46} See Ilāhī, \textit{Kashf al-Wāridāt}, 25b-27a, 39a-40a; idem., \textit{Zād al-mushtaqīn}, 82b, 101a, 110b-111a, 174b, 181a; Yāwṣī, \textit{Ḥaqiqat al-ḥaqāʾiq}, 15a-16a; Ḥārīrīzāda,
6. The Situation of Jesus

The issue of the descent of Jesus (i.e., the death of Jesus and his return to the world as a sign of the apocalypse) is one of the most controversial issues among Muslim scholars. Sunnī scholars hold that when Jesus was about to be killed, he was raised to the divine presence both bodily and spiritually, and he is still in the heavens. Before the apocalypse, he will come to this world following the revelations brought by the Last Prophet, kill the Dajjāl and establish the rule of justice. Accordingly, Sheikh Badr al-Dīn states, “Jesus (peace be upon him) is alive with his spirit and dead with his body. Because he is the soul of God (rūḥ Allāh), his spiritual side is dominant. There is no death for the soul. They all said: ‘Jesus was not dead.’ This does not mean that his body which consists of elements was not dead. For this kind of thing is impossible.” Thus, Jesus, as the soul of God, is spiritually alive and was raised to the world of malakūt and parted from his body which consists of elements when he ascended. The impos-sibility of his bodily ascension is because of that the essential charac-ter of the world of malakūt is being subtle (laṭīf), not intensive (kathīf).

In addition, Sheikh Badr al-Dīn attempts to support his ideas by narrating a dream of him about Jesus: “In the year 808 [1405] on Fri-day, I saw two men ready. One of them was holding the dead Jesus. It seems that they were trying to tell me that Jesus is bodily dead. God knows the best.” According to Sheikh Yāwṣī, while Jesus’ being the soul of God and the dominance of his spirituality over his materiality is an intellectual proof, this dream is an intuitional (kashfī) proof for the fact that he is bodily dead. In the eyes of Sufis, the kashfī proof is better than the intellectual proof because it shows the truth. Yet Nūr al-Dinzāda states that this type of kashf cannot be accepted as proof because it contradicts the Qurʾān and the Sunna.
‘Abd Allâh Ilâhî chose to adopt a moderate approach to the ideas of Sheikh Badr al-Dîn, whom he saw as a Jesus-like character. For instance, contrary to the Sheikh’s acceptance of the eternality of Jesus’ body as improbable, he says that although it is improbable by reason, it is not improbable in terms of the divine power and the Scripture, and this can only be achieved by mystical taste (dhawq), not by taqlîd. Furthermore, he holds that the Sheikh’s dream can be interpreted. The Sheikh’s closing words, “God knows the best,” are an indication that the dream is subject to interpretation. Nûr al-Dînzâda severely criticizes both the Sheikh’s comments and those of his commentators including ‘Abd Allâh Ilâhî.\(^{51}\)

On the other hand, ‘Abd Allâh Ilâhî addresses another issue concerning Jesus for Christians in his work Zâd al-mushtâqîn. He specifically criticizes the acceptance of Jesus as God and stresses not to forget that he was a servant of God, although he was created without a father and he had the name “the soul of God.”

7. His Understanding of Divinity and the Issue of the Eternity of the World

It has been argued that Sheikh Badr al-Dîn takes a pantheist approach in his understanding of divinity, particularly referring to his words regarding the issue of the eternity of the world.\(^{52}\) I believe that these types of claims mentioned mostly in modern works are the result of incomplete knowledge about the Sheikh’s thought. In contrast,
the entire thought of the Sheikh depends on the unity of being. Explaining his stance, he says that the absolute and the unique being is God, that His essence tends to emerge because of love, that possible beings come into existence due to this emergence and the divine names and attributes, that the essence of God is the same as things in that He gives them their existence, although it is independent (munazzah) from everything, and that there is a relative dualism in existence in addition to the absolute unity of being.⁵³

‘Abd Allāh Ilāhī interprets Sheikh Badr al-Dīn’s statement regarding the eternity of the world that “the world is eternal in terms of its genus (jins), species (nauv), and individuality (shakhs). Its temporality is essential (dbātī), not temporal (zamānī)”⁵⁴ by noting that the world is temporal in one way and eternal in another. According to him, the world is eternal in the knowledge of God before it comes to appearance in reality, while it is temporal in terms of its dependency to the existence of God to come to existence. However, the temporality of the world is not limited by time; it is related to the essence. This is because it is not possible to mention about time in this stage.⁵⁵

**Conclusion**

Sheikh Badr al-Dīn has been both supported and criticized by scholars and Sufis because of his above-mentioned thoughts, which were the reason for his execution. Furthermore, his work *al-Wāridät* was severely attacked because it was accepted as the source of blasphemy and heresy among the scholars. ‘Alā‘ al-Dīn ‘Arabī, who was one of the scholars during the reign of the Sultan Meḥmed II, attempted to have the book burned.⁵⁶ Sheikh al-Islām Abū l-Su‘ūd announced that those who followed the Sheikh were unbelievers.⁵⁷ Idrīs

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⁵³ Sheikh Badr al-Dīn, *al-Wāridät*, 16b, 23b, 40a, 42b, 47a.
Bidlisî wrote that the work spread the seeds of heresy among people. One of the sheikh al-islâms of the 19th century ʻĀrif Ḥikmet Beg bought copies of the book and had them burned whenever he found because he believed that it would harm Muslims. In Sufi circles, the most serious criticism came from Nūr al-Dînzâda, who criticized the Sheikh’s views on the interpretation of the Scripture, the afterlife, angels, spiritual beings, and his understanding of being. According to him, Sheikh Badr al-Dîn adopted a type of Bâṭinism in interpreting the Qur’anic verses and prophetic traditions and he was also confused about the issue of the Hereafter. He negated the objective realities of angels by reducing them to pure faculties. In the 16th century, the Khalwatî sheikh Bâlî Efendî of Sofia accepted the Sheikh as the leader of the heretics. In the 17th century, in his letter to the Sultan Aḥmad I, the Jalwatî sheikh ʻAzîz Maḥmûd Hudârî said that “he was hung because of his damnation in the presence of God.”

Despite these attacks, some Sufis regarded Sheikh Badr al-Dîn as “the sun of religion, the sultan of ʻarîfîs and muḥaqqiqs.” Some scholars wrote commentaries on al-Wâridât to defend his views soon after he was executed. Among these were Mullâ ʻAbd Allâh İlâhî, who played an essential part in spreading the Naqshî order in Anatolia, the Khalwatî sheikh Muḥîî al-Dîn Yâwşî, who was the father of the sheikh al-islâm Abû l-Suũûd, and Muḥammad Nūr al-ʻArabî, who is known as the founder of the Malâmî order in its third period. With a poem of him including the verses meaning that “Muḥîî al-Dîn and Badr al-Dîn revived the religion/Fuṣûs is an ocean and al-Wâridât is its river,” another Khalwatî sheikh Niyyâzî al-Miṣrî, regarded the Sheikh as one of the followers of the school of Ibn ʻArabî. Contrary to his sheikh ʻAzîz Maḥmûd Hudârî, İsmâ‘îl Haqqî Bûrsawî holds that

58 Idrîs Bidlisî, Hasbt Bibisbt (MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Esad Efendi, 2197), 255a-256b.
60 Meḥmed Shâraf al-Dîn (Yaltkaya), Simawna Qâdisioglu Sheikh Badr al-Dîn (İstanbul: Awqâf-i İslâmîyya Maṭba‘ası, 1340 H [1924]), 71-72.
al-Wāridāt does not contain any disbelief.  Ḥarīrizāda describing him as “the qūṭb of martyrs” said that none of Sheikh Badr al-Din’s thoughts is contrary to religion. The common point of the Sheikh’s supporters is that they interpreted his thoughts in a symbolic (iṣbârī) way in the Sunnī framework. They also strove to support their interpretations with the ideas of the followers of Ibn ‘Arabī and the Akbarī School. Hence, Aḥmad Jawdat Pasha defines al-Wāridāt as a treatise that “was written to imitate Fuṣūṣ.”

If all of these positive and negative comments about Sheikh Badr al-Din are taken into consideration, it can be understood that his execution was political, not religious. When his most important supporter, Mūsā Chalabī, lost his fight for the throne, Sheikh Badr al-Din was regarded as one of those who rebelled against the state. His statements in al-Wāridāt were offered as evidence, and he was hung for the crime of heresy because of these statements. Putting aside the mystical tendencies and character differences of those Sufis who found his views heretical, the problem is still political. Hence, it is intriguing that those who criticized Sheikh Badr al-Din were close to the state and to the central authority, whereas those who supported him fought the state or, at least, kept their distance.

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63 Ḥarīrizâda, Futūḥât-i İlâhiyya, 3a-5a.
64 Aḥmad Jawdat Pasha, Kısas-i Enbiyâ, XX, 1746.


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