

HELL IN IBN 'ARABĪ ACCORDING TO AL-SHA'RĀNĪ

Abdul Muthalib

Abstract: *Ibn 'Arabī and his teachings were enormously influential and controversial in post-classical Islamic thought and Sufism. Attitudes towards his ideas ranged from sympathy and admiration to outrage and denunciation as disbelief. One major champion and interpreter of Ibn 'Arabī was the Egyptian Sufi 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī, who believed that the Andalusian mystic was divinely inspired and an outstanding source for many religious sciences. Al-Sha'rānī's contribution to the Akbarian tradition has been largely neglected by modern scholars, who have tended to consider him a simplifier of Ibn 'Arabī's teachings. This article aims to advance our knowledge of al-Sha'rānī's engagement with Ibn 'Arabī by examining his treatment of Ibn 'Arabī's controversial belief that the heat and chastisement of hell will eventually terminate, even for Iblīs. It shows that al-Sha'rānī's tendency to stress Ibn 'Arabī's orthodoxy while criticizing or avoiding some of his views and dissociating the Greatest Master from them, which he shared in part with the Shādhiliyya, is reflected in his engagement of this issue.*

Keywords: *Ibn 'Arabī; al-Sha'rānī; Concept of Hell; Shādhiliyya.*

Abstrak: *Ibn ‘Arabī dan ajarannya sangat berpengaruh dan kontroversial dalam pemikiran Islam dan Sufisme pasca-klasik. Sikap terhadap ide-idenya berkisar dari simpati dan kekaguman hingga kemarahan serta kecaman dan tuduhan kepadanya seakan akan sudah keluar dari Islam. Salah satu pendukung utama dan penafsir Ibn ‘Arabī adalah Sufi Mesir ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sya‘rānī, yang sangat meyakini bahwa mistikus Andalusia ini dapat ilham dari Tuhan sehingga karya karyanya dianggap sebagai sumber yang luar biasa bagi segenap ilmu keagamaan Islam. Kontribusi al-Sya‘rānī pada tradisi Akbarian ini sebagian besar telah diabaikan oleh para sarjana modern, yang cenderung hanya menganggapnya sebagai penyederhana ajaran Ibn ‘Arabī. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk memperdalam pengetahuan kita tentang keterlibatan al-Sya‘rānī dengan Ibn ‘Arabī dengan meneliti perlakuannya terhadap keyakinan kontroversial Ibn ‘Arabī bahwa panas dan hukuman neraka pada akhirnya akan berakhir, bahkan terhadap Iblīs. Ini menunjukkan kecenderungan al-Sya‘rānī untuk menekankan ortodoksi Ibn ‘Arabī sambil mengkritik atau menghindari beberapa pandangan Ibn ‘Arabī yang kontraversial yang dianggapnya bukan pandangan asli Ibn ‘Arabī, melainkan disusupi oleh oknum yang ingin mendiskreditkan Ibn ‘Arabī. Dan jelaslah bahwa sikap al-Sya‘rānī merupakan refleksi dari sebagian besar tokoh Syādziliyyah.*

Kata kunci: *Ibn ‘Arabī; al-Sya‘rānī; Konsep Neraka; Syādziliyyah.*

Introduction

In the post-classical period of Islamic thought, many Sufi scholars were attracted to the ideas of Ibn ‘Arabī (d. 638/1240). It is sometimes said that his works almost became the standard source for Sufi manuals composed by post-classical Sufis. This is in fact not an exaggeration but indeed an essentially indisputable reality in the Islamic world during that period. Furthermore, Ibn ‘Arabī’s influence has extended beyond Sunnites to Shī‘ites, especially the Imāmites.¹

Because Ibn ‘Arabī’s teachings are difficult to understand for many Muslims, later Sufis wrote commentaries on his popular works, especially *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* and *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*. Muslim scholars can be classified into three groups based on their reactions to these works. The first group consists of those who seem to be sympathetic towards Ibn ‘Arabī and even embrace his opinions. The second group consists of those who react negatively, considering Ibn ‘Arabī’s writings misleading and sometimes even accusing him of unbelief. The third group consists of those who represent a mean between the positions of the first two groups. Although they admire Ibn ‘Arabī’s works, they contend that some ideas expressed therein are inauthentic and thus must be contested.

One outstanding Muslim scholar with a major interest in Ibn ‘Arabī was ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha‘rānī (d. 973/1565). Although he devoted several

books to presenting and elucidating Ibn 'Arabī's thought, his treatment of the mystic appears to have been largely ignored by modern scholars. Alexander Knysh, for example, seems to dismiss al-Sha' rānī as a simplifier of Ibn 'Arabī's teachings but does not justify his stance.² What aspects of Ibn 'Arabī's thought did al-Sha' rānī simplify? It seems that the answer to this question should be established through a close study of al-Sha' rānī's works, which indeed cover a wide range of ideas set forth by Ibn 'Arabī.

Due to the lack of scholarly attention to al-Sha' rānī's engagement with Ibn 'Arabī, I focus here on his treatment of Ibn 'Arabī's controversial teaching about the nature of hell, especially in his *al-Kibrīt al-Aḥmar fī Bayān 'Ulūm al-Shaykh al-Akbar* and *al-Yawāqīt wa-l-Jawāhir fī Bayān 'Aqā'id al-Akābir*. I aim to determine the extent to which al-Sha' rānī views are consistent with those of Ibn 'Arabī.

Al-Sha' rānī and Ibn 'Arabī

It is helpful to begin by discussing al-Sha' rānī's general perspective on Ibn 'Arabī and his approach to interpreting his thought. That Ibn 'Arabī is an important and inspiring figure for al-Sha' rānī is evident simply from the fact that he wrote many books in his defense. He believed that Ibn 'Arabī composed his works according to the knowledge he received through the angel of inspiration (*malak al-ilhām*) and, consequently, that he is inspired by a divine authority that cannot be challenged. In this regard, al-Sha' rānī quotes Ibn 'Arabī's statement that "what I wrote in my books and my authorship do not originate from [the use of] speculative reason, but rather from the inspiration of the angel of inspiration." Al-Sha' rānī also thinks that Ibn 'Arabī's ideas cannot be rejected because they do not contradict the Quran and the Sunnah.

He indicated that in Chapter 367 of the *Futūḥāt* with his remark, "We have nothing else to follow but the law of Muḥammad (PBUH) [...] And I have not asserted anything in this book that is not in conformity with the law, and I do not at all depart from the Book or the Sunnah. And his statement in Chapter 365 [also reveals that], "Know that everything I have said in my gatherings and writings originates from the Presence of the Quran and its treasures, for I was granted the keys to understanding it."³

A final reason for the indisputability of Ibn 'Arabī's views in al-Sha' rānī's eyes is that he considers the *Futūḥāt* the supreme reference for both Sufism and other Islamic sciences such as jurisprudence, Quran commentary, and hadith:

Know, O brother, that I have studied the books of the Sufis to such an extent that I cannot count them, yet I have not come across a book

that incorporates the words of the People of the Way better than *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, especially in terms of his discussion of the secrets of the law and account of the objectives of the mujtahids who derive their conclusions from it. If a legal mujtahid were to survey this book, his knowledge would grow, and he would become acquainted with the secrets about the methods of derivation and valid argumentation that he had never possessed. If a Quran commentator, hadith commentator, rationalist theologian, hadith scholar, linguist, Quran reciter, dream interpreter, natural scientist and doctor, geometrist, grammarian, logician, Sufi, knower of the Presence of the divine names, or lettrist [were to read the book], the case would be the same. It is a book that benefits the experts in these sciences with the knowledge that never occurred to them before.⁴

Notwithstanding such praise, al-Sha‘rānī admits that he sometimes cannot understand Ibn ‘Arabī’s teachings. In these cases, he hopes for the assistance of other Muslim scholars:

Know, O my brother, that I have studied innumerable treatises written by the People of Unveiling, and I have not found their expressions more comprehensive than those of the perfect, enlightened trainer of the gnostics, the shaykh Muḥyī l-Dīn b. al-‘Arabī, may God show mercy to him. For this reason, I have based this book on his words in the *Futūḥāt* and other [texts], not on those of other Sufis. However, I came across some passages in the *Futūḥāt* that I did not understand. I have mentioned them so that Muslim scholars might consider them, confirming the truth and invalidating the incorrect wherever they encounter it. But do not think, O my brother, that I mentioned them because I believe [what] they [contain is] correct and am satisfied with them as [expressions of] my beliefs.⁵

When al-Sha‘rānī is simply unable to comprehend an idea of Ibn ‘Arabī, he points to his weakness rather than blaming the shaykh or considering him wrong. He agrees with his teacher Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī’s (d. 926/1520)⁶ prescription of three approaches applicable and corresponding to three types of views held by Muslim scholars. First, it is obligatory to agree with the opinions of scholars that are clearly in agreement with the Quran and the Sunnah. Second, it is forbidden to agree with their opinions if they explicitly contradict the Quran or the Sunnah. Third, it is best to remain neutral if their opinions neither conform with nor contradict the Quran and the Sunnah.⁷ When encountering interpretive difficulty with Ibn ‘Arabī’s teachings, al-Sha‘rānī adopts the third approach of neutrality, which accords with his conviction that Ibn ‘Arabī was inspired by the angel of inspiration and thus did not make any mistakes in his writings.

The Shādhiliyya and Ibn 'Arabī

Michael Winter rejected that al-Sha' rānī belonged to the Shādhiliyya, since, he argued, it was an urban elite order in Egypt at the time, and al-Sha' rānī came from a rural area.⁸ Yet, al-Sha' rānī was affiliated with the Shādhiliyya, in addition to numerous other orders,⁹ and is even considered the forty-first headmaster of the Shādhiliyya in Shādhilī hagiography.¹⁰ Moreover, it was common for Sufis to travel from one place to another to meet shaykhs and be initiated into various orders, and al-Sha' rānī was twelve years old when he moved to Cairo,¹¹ making it likely that there he was initiated into the Shādhiliyya.

Scholars debate the influence of Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd* (oneness of being) on the Shādhiliyya. J.C. Garcin and E.M. Sartain insist that there has not been any such influence,¹² while Éric Geoffroy asserts that the Shādhilīs approve it.¹³ Since they base their divergent opinions on the same source, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī's *Ta'yīd al-Ḥaqīqa al-'Alīyya wa-Tashyīd al-Ṭarīqa al-Shādhiliyya*, we must examine this text. Al-Suyūṭī in fact neither employs the term *waḥdat al-wujūd* nor clearly indicates whether he accepts the teaching. Rather, he aims to refute the doctrines of incarnation (*ḥulūl*) and unification (*ittihād*). We might therefore suggest that the author espouses a "lesser" monism, likely closer to *waḥdat al-shuhūd* (oneness of witnessing). Although this position is not necessarily embraced by all Shādhilī masters, it might be suggested that most of them affirm it. Al-Suyūṭī likens the relationship between the existence of God and that of the world to the relationship between the physical body of a person and its in a mirror: what appears in the mirror is neither identical nor entirely distinct from the body.¹⁴ This kind of monism seems more acceptable to opponents of the idea that the existence of God is identical to that of the world. Those who espouse this view are "atheist existentialists" (*wujūdiyya mulḥid*). They differ from "monotheist existentialists" (*wujūdiyya muwaḥḥid*), who believe that the world is simply the shadow of God's existence and thus itself has no real existence, while it cannot be said that its existence is identical to that of God (*sewujud dengan Tuhan*).¹⁵

It can be difficult to differentiate between *waḥdat al-shuhūd* and *waḥdat al-wujūd* because both terms are intended to indicate that God is the only truly existent being. However, the theories differ in their expressions of this notion. In *waḥdat al-shuhūd*, emphasis is placed on the experience of a mystic: he is said to witness God as the only being in existence through contemplating Him and ignoring other beings; that is, the existence of beings other than God is not totally denied, but rather only ignored. On the contrary, *waḥdat al-wujūd* represents the *conviction* that existence belongs

to God alone; thus, existent beings (i.e., the phenomenal world) are only manifestations of God. Hence, the ontological relationship between God and the phenomenal world is likened to that between, for instance, the sea and waves; only water exists; when it is in motion, it becomes waves and foam, while when it stretches over a large area, it becomes a sea; but the essence or reality of these diverse forms remains water.¹⁶ Meanwhile, the phenomenal world is considered to be made up of accidents, regardless of whether they are corporeal things or real accidents.¹⁷ Therefore, *waḥdat al-shuhūd* denies the existence of beings other than God in a relative sense, while *waḥdat al-wujūd* denies it in an absolute sense.

An objection to *waḥdat al-wujūd* is that it risks leading one to think that the phenomenal world is identical with God since it is simply a mode of His existence. Al-Suyūṭī, for example, criticizes this idea as implied by Ibn al-Fāriḍ's (d. 632/1235) assertion that the infidels' worship of fire, idols, and other objects is in fact worship of God.¹⁸ Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī (d. 1068/1658) likewise considers this to be the danger of believing that the existence of the phenomenal world is identical with that of God.¹⁹

Even though many Shādhilī masters espouse a less intense monism, they do not necessarily oppose the works of Ibn 'Arabī. Al-Sha' rānī, for example, admires Ibn 'Arabī even more than al-Junayd (d. 298/910). Despite his lofty reputation in Sufism, al-Junayd is viewed only as the teacher for beginners, whereas Ibn 'Arabī is seen as the teacher for gnostics.²⁰ From this perspective, it is right to conclude that al-Sha' rānī's position differs somewhat from that of other prominent Shādhilīs, who highly admire al-Junayd. Al-Suyūṭī, for instance, states that the Shādhilī way is identical with that of al-Junayd and views his way as superior to others due to its consistency with the Quran and the Sunnah.²¹ Al-Sha' rānī may have been influenced by Ibn 'Arabī, who accused al-Junayd of failing to espouse true monotheism (*tawḥīd*) at the time of his death. According to Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), Ibn 'Arabī insulted al-Junayd for not maintaining *waḥdat al-wujūd*.²² It is true that al-Junayd never asserted the union between God and the phenomenal world. What he meant by *tawḥīd* is rather the separation of God from that which is originated in time.²³ Al-Junayd strongly warned Sufis not to espouse a wrong understanding of *tawḥīd* in which the Eternal (God) is seen as the phenomenal or vice versa.²⁴ It is because al-Junayd did not advance the unity of existence that Ibn Taymiyya considered him to have held the correct understanding of *tawḥīd*, while Ibn 'Arabī's understanding of that notion, he thought, is simply wrong.²⁵

Although, as we have seen, al-Sha' rānī admired the *Futūḥāt*, he

admitted that in abridging it he had to omit any ideas that he considered inauthentic.²⁶ It appears that, just like other Shādhilī, al-Sha' rānī sometimes adopted a cautious approach to explicitly monistic statements of Ibn 'Arabī by interpreting them according to the moderate Shādhilī attitude towards monism. This is why his writings are not considered totally Akbarian.

One study suggests, however, that the most significant Shādhilī, Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh (d. 709/1309), is indebted to the teachings of Ibn 'Arabī.²⁷ Certain Sufis tend to rank Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh's works lower than those of Ibn 'Arabī, probably because they articulate less the concept of *waḥdat al-wujūd*. This is indeed precisely the view of the greatest Indonesian Sufi, 'Abd al-Ṣamad al-Palimbānī (d. 1205-6/1791), who lived in the twelfth/eighteenth century and studied in Mecca under the hand of the great Sufi master of the time Muḥammad 'Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān (d. 1189/1775). According to al-Palimbānī, Sufi works do not all have the same quality. Some are for elementary Sufis, including the works of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh such as *al-Ḥikam*, *Isqāt al-Tadbīr*, and *Laṭā'if al-Minan*; others are for intermediate Sufis, such as al-Sha' rānī's *al-Yawāqit* and *al-Kibrīt al-Aḥmar*; and yet others for advanced Sufis, including the writings of Ibn 'Arabī and some by his followers.²⁸ In this scheme, the writings of the most important Shādhilī are thus considered most elementary.

Although al-Sha' rānī's writings are appraised higher than those of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, they are still ranked lower than those of Ibn 'Arabī and his supporters. One questions the reason for this classification, given that the abovementioned works by al-Sha' rānī are abridgments of the *Futūḥāt*. Perhaps, al-Palimbānī thinks that al-Sha' rānī does not fully endorse the teachings of Ibn 'Arabī, but rather concentrates on simplifying them to render them orthodox.

Al-Sha' rānī's Interpretation of Ibn 'Arabī's Concept of Hell

Since al-Sha' rānī believes that Ibn 'Arabī's writings are the result of divine inspiration, he objects to Ibn 'Arabī's unorthodox ideas by contending that others later inserted them into his works. He tells us that this approach was adopted by several scholars, such as Abū Ṭāhir al-Mazanī al-Shādhilī, who personally informed al-Sha' rānī about the method.²⁹

One seemingly unorthodox idea espoused by Ibn 'Arabī is that the inhabitants of hell will eventually enjoy their abode and thus not even desire to exit. The authenticity of this teaching has been confirmed by many commentators on Ibn 'Arabī's works. 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī (d. ca. 730/1330) stresses that Ibn 'Arabī did not entirely deny suffering

in hell. Rather, its dwellers will suffer terribly for a very long time before becoming accustomed to their punishment. Henceforth, they will no longer experience pain and suffering from the heat of hellfire, and when the wind from paradise blows over them, they will not enjoy it because their bodies will not be capable of adjusting to its briskness and coldness. For this reason, they would not even desire to enter paradise.³⁰

Al-Sha‘rānī rejects this understanding and maintains that Ibn ‘Arabī never held such a view. Rather, he claims, others inserted it into his works to discredit him. Al-Sha‘rānī explains that such a notion about hell contradicts the Quran and hadiths, which clearly state that the inhabitants of hell will imagine and anticipate their release. He writes:

One who related to Shaykh Muḥy al-Dīn the statement, “the inhabitants of the Fire take pleasure from entering the Fire, and if they are brought out from it, they suffer from their exit,” has lied and slandered. If anything as such is found in his books, it has been inserted [by someone else]. For I read his entire book *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, and I saw that it is full of statements about the punishment of the people of the Fire. This is one of his greatest books and the last to be written.³¹

Al-Sha‘rānī thus disagrees with the idea that the eternal dwellers of hell will finally experience joy and pleasure, even though both the *Futūḥāt* and the *Fuṣūṣ* assert this and, although controversial, Ibn ‘Arabī was not the first Muslim author to posit such. In his voluminous Quran commentary, Ibn ‘Arabī’s contemporary Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209) notes that belief in the limited duration of hellfire through its becoming cold and pleasant can be supported by both scripture and reason, though he himself, adducing scripture, denies the notion.³² Ibn Taymiyya, however, argued that while hell itself will not disappear, its fire will cease, thus causing its inhabitants, including disbelievers, to enjoy.³³ His reasoning is that while paradise is eternal due to its derivation from the divine name “Blessed” (*al-Na‘īm*), which, denoting God’s essence, is itself eternal, “punishment” (*‘adhāb*) signifies only a creation of God and thus is perishable.³⁴ Hence, Ibn Taymiyya agrees with Ibn ‘Arabī on several points: 1) the distinction between God’s eternal attributes of essence and temporally-originated attributes of the act, which is upheld by the Ash‘arites and Mu‘tazilites; 2) the manifestation of the divine attributes and names in paradise and hell (see below); and 3) that hell is eternal, but the suffering of its dwellers is not. It thus seems that Ibn Taymiyya was influenced by Ibn ‘Arabī, and indeed, according to al-Suyūṭī, he had thoroughly read his works and even admired the *Futūḥāt* to an extent.³⁵ However, Ibn ‘Arabī differs from Ibn Taymiyya in holding that the essence of hell as fire forever remains, but its heat and capacity to burn will disappear after a long period when the

manifestation of the divine name “Punisher” (*al-Muntaqim*) in the fire terminates.

Although al-Rāzī mentions the opinion that hellfire will eventually become cold and pleasant,³⁶ he does not relate an argument based on the manifestation of a divine name. For Ibn 'Arabī, the chastisement of the inhabitants of hell will come to an end because God's mercy will overcome His anger, that is, the activity of the divine name “Merciful” (*al-Rahmān*) will replace that of “Punisher.” All divine names, even “Punisher,” in fact embody God's attribute of mercy (*rahma*), and mercy manifests both in all 100 levels of paradise and 100 pits of hell. However, its manifestation is hidden for the inhabitants of hell until a certain time,³⁷ and it will appear when the manifestation of the name “Punisher” ceases. When “Merciful” discloses itself in hellfire, its dwellers will no longer suffer. Ibn 'Arabī adduces as evidence the case of Prophet Abraham, who despite being placed in the fire was neither pained nor burned because God made it cool and comfortable. He explains that Abraham was indeed initially fearful due to his knowledge of the custom of fire to burn, but slowly he saw it transform into a kind of luminous light while still appearing as fire to others.³⁸ The same situation, according to Ibn 'Arabī, will prevail for the permanent inhabitants of hell.

Several Sufis have been attracted by Ibn 'Arabī's idea of the transformation of the nature of hellfire. This includes 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (d. likely 811/1408), who in his well-known masterpiece, *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, elaborates the teaching. According to him, when creating hellfire God regarded it with His name “Subduer” (*al-Qābir*), and it is through this name that He manifests His name “Forgiver” (*al-Ghāfir*). Through the manifestation of “Subduer,” the inhabitants of hell will acquire tremendous physical and mental strength to face their torment; through the manifestation of “Forgiver,” their expectation for a happy ending will be fulfilled. Like Ibn 'Arabī, al-Jīlī also argues that hell itself is only an accident, not a truly existent, and thus it must come to an end. This ending consists of the elimination of its heat rather than the fire itself. At this point, the angels of punishment withdraw and those of compassion replace them, thereby transforming hell into a pleasant place.³⁹

Al-Sha' rānī refutes an accusation that Ibn 'Arabī denied that hell is the permanent abode of infidels.⁴⁰ In this respect, he is correct. In the *Futūhāt*, Ibn 'Arabī delineates four types of eternal inhabitants in hell. The first are those arrogant to God who attribute to themselves the quality of lordship (*rubūbiyya*), such as Pharaoh and Nimrod. The second is polytheists, who believe that others partake of God's lordship. The third are atheists, who

deny the existence of God. The fourth are hypocrites, who openly declare their adherence to Islam while secretly rejecting it; these folk may also belong to one of the other three types.⁴¹ Al-Sha‘rānī specifies precisely these four types of people as eternal occupants of hell.⁴²

In addition to these four groups, Ibn ‘Arabī includes Iblīs among those eternally in hell.⁴³ Even though according to Ibn ‘Arabī, Iblīs recognizes the oneness of God, which is usually considered the key to salvation in Islam, he considers himself a polytheist due to his incitation to polytheism.⁴⁴ He contends that Iblīs has always known that he will be sentenced to hell for leading people to polytheism, but he does not worry so much because he also knows that God will eventually show His mercy to the inhabitants of hell and cause them to enjoy therein.⁴⁵ Ibn ‘Arabī indeed insists that Iblīs will take pleasure in hellfire.

One might question why, in Ibn ‘Arabī’s teaching, Iblīs disobeys God even though he recognizes His oneness. In the Quran commentary usually attributed to Ibn ‘Arabī,⁴⁶ Iblīs is said to be an imaginary or delusive power. He differs from purely earthly angels, who, due to their perception of forms, cannot perceive meanings or essences (*ma‘ānī*) but are forced to obey God’s commands; and from heavenly angels, who, because they perceived the nobility of Adam, voluntarily obeyed God’s command to prostrate before him. Iblīs can only be categorized with the jinn, who are earthly and spiritually inferior. Unlike them, though, Iblīs has spiritual achievements like those of heavenly angels due to his interaction with them.⁴⁷ It is probably for this reason that Iblīs acknowledges God’s oneness, and it is likely that his nature as an imaginary or delusive power makes it impossible for him to obey God’s command.

The idea that Iblīs has knowledge of God’s oneness was espoused by several Sufis before Ibn ‘Arabī, including Abū Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 309/922), Aḥmad al-Ghazālī (d. 517/1123 or 520/1126), and ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt al-Hamadhānī (d. 525/1131). In *Kitāb al-Ṭawāsīn*, al-Ḥallāj depicts Iblīs pleading his innocence before God because his refusal to prostrate to Adam was motivated by his strong belief in God’s oneness. Iblīs also claims that he is far superior to Adam for several reasons: he has known God for all eternity, served God before Adam, and is made from fire, not clay.⁴⁸ According to ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, both the light of Muḥammad and that of Iblīs originate from two lights of God: the light of Muḥammad is the manifestation of God’s attribute of mercy, while the light of Iblīs is the manifestation of God’s attribute of wrath.⁴⁹

Al-Sha‘rānī seems to think that Ibn ‘Arabī’s understanding of Iblīs is inconceivable. He insists that Iblīs is a genuine polytheist, arguing that

otherwise, he would not be capable of inciting people to polytheism. When the notion of polytheism comes to Iblīs' mind, that of God's oneness disappears. The most that can be said is that Iblīs espouses the monotheism of the hypocrites; that is, he declares God's oneness with his tongue but does not believe it in his heart.⁵⁰

Conclusion

Al-Sha' rānī deeply admired Ibn 'Arabī. He believed that the mystic was divinely inspired and praised him for his comprehensive and brilliant engagement with issues in the religious sciences. He also recognized the difficulty of comprehending some of Ibn 'Arabī's controversial ideas. But rather than rejecting them outright and blaming Ibn 'Arabī, he argued that they were inserted into his works by others. This tendency to emphasize Ibn 'Arabī's orthodoxy while criticizing or avoiding some of his doctrines and dissociating him from them, which al-Sha' rānī shared in part with the Shādhiliyya as shown by their preference for *wahdat al-shuhūd* over *wahdat al-wujūd*, is reflected in his treatment of Ibn 'Arabī's belief in the eventual elimination of the heat of hellfire and his conception of Iblīs. []

Endnotes

1. One Shī'ite figure who attempted to integrate Ibn 'Arabī's ideas into Shī'ite theology is Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī. On this trend in general, including Ḥaydar Āmulī's role, see Henry Corbin, *Histoire de la philosophie islamique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1986), 255-59.
2. Alexander D. Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabī in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 184.
3. 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha' rānī, *al-Kibrīt al-Aḥmar fī Bayān 'Ulūm al-Shaykh al-Akbar*, ed. 'Abdullāh Maḥmūd Muḥammad 'Umar (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2012), 8.
4. Al-Sha' rānī, *al-Kibrīt al-Aḥmar*, 7.
5. 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha' rānī, *al-Yawāqīt wa-l-Jawāhir fī Bayān 'Aqā'id al-Akābir*, ed. 'Abd al-Wārith Muḥammad 'Alī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1998), 3.
6. In his *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣuḡhrā*, al-Sha' rānī refers to Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī as "our shaykh, our model [in the quest to reach] God Almighty" (*shaykhunā wa-gudwatunā ilā Llāh ta'ālā*). Al-Sha' rānī tells us that he studied with this master for almost ten years. See 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha' rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣuḡhrā* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1999), 32-33.
7. Al-Sha' rānī, *al-Yawāqīt wa-l-Jawāhir*, 4.
8. Michael Winter, *Egyptian Society Under Ottoman Rule 1517-1798* (London: Routledge, 1992), 128.
9. Al-Sha' rānī belonged to twenty-seven orders, the Shādhiliyya being the fifth. See Muḥammad Muḥyī l-Dīn Abī l-Unsī, *Kitāb al-Manāqib al-Kubrā* (Cairo: Maṭba'a Amīn 'Abd al-Raḥma, n.d.), 66-67.
10. Abū 'Alī Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Maghribī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shādhiliyya al-Kubrā* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, n.d.), 130.
11. Al-Unsī, *Kitāb al-Manāqib al-Kubrā*, 39.
12. Jean-Claude Garcin, "Histoire, opposition, politique et piétisme traditionaliste dans le

- Husn al Muḥādarat de Suyūti*,” *Annales Islamologiques* 7 (1967): 85; E.M. Sartain, *Jalāl al-dīn al-Suyūṭī* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 1:33-36.
13. Éric Geoffroy, “Al-Suyūṭī as a Sufi,” in *Al-Suyūṭī, a Polymath of the Mamluk Period: Proceedings of the themed day of the First Conference of the School of Mamlūk Studies (Ca’ Foscari University, Venice, June 23, 2014)*, ed. Antonella Gherseti (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 11.
 14. See Jalāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’yīd al-Ḥaqīqa al-‘Aliyya wa-Tashyīd al-Ṭarīqa al-Shādhiliyya*, ed. ‘Āṣim Ibrāhīm al-Kayyālī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2006), 82-83.
 15. See Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī, “Hujjat al-Ṣiddīq lidaf al-Zindīq,” in Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *A Commentary of the Ḥujjat al-Ṣiddīq of Nūr al-dīn al-Rānīrī* (Kuala Lumpur: The Ministry of Culture Malaysia, 1986).
 16. This comparison is drawn by Muḥammad Nafis al-Banjārī (d. 1227/1812): “wujud alam ini mazhar wujud Allah Ta’āla jua. Dibuat misal oleh ‘Ārif Billah karena menghampirkan kepada paham jua, bukan hakikatnya, seperti laut dan ombak dan buih, maka laut, ombak dan buih mazhar air jua dan tiada yang maujud hanya air jua. Dan tatkala Zahir itu dengan rupa bergerak gerak, maka jadi daripadanya itu ombak dan buih. Dan tatkala luas tempatnya itu, jadi ia laut, tetapi sekalian itu hakikat air jua. Tiada maujud pada yang sekalian itu hanya air jua, meliputi wujud air itu pada laut, ombak dan buih. Karena jikalau air itu tiada bergerak dan tiada pada tempatnya yang luas, niscaya tiadalah baginya ombak dan buih dan laut, maka kembalilah ia kepada air semata mata wujud ombak dan buih, dan hilanglah ombak dan buih dan laut padanya. Demikianlah wujud Allah itu meliputi wujudNYA itu pada segala alam ini.” See Muḥammad Nafis al-Banjārī, *al-Durr al-Nafīs* (Singapore: al-Haramayn, n.d.), 16. See also Abdul Muthalib, “The Mystical Thought of Muḥammad Nafīs al-Banjārī: An Indonesian Ṣūfī of the Eighteenth Century,” (Montreal: McGill University, 1995), 72.
 17. See Shāh Walī Allāh al-Dihlawī, *al-Taḥfīmāt al-Ilāhiyya* (Bijnaur: Madīna Barqī Press, 1936), 1:182-85.
 18. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’yīd al-Ḥaqīqa al-‘Aliyya wa-Tashyīd al-Ṭarīqa al-Shādhiliyya*, 59.
 19. Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī, “Hujjat al-Ṣiddīq lidaf al-Zindīq,”
 20. ‘Abd al-Ṣamad al-Palimbānī, *Siyar al-Sālikīn* (Indonesia: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Kutub al-‘Arabiyya, n.d.), 201.
 21. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’yīd al-Ḥaqīqa al-‘Aliyya wa-Tashyīd al-Ṭarīqa al-Shādhiliyya*, 56.
 22. Ibn Taymiyya, *Ibtāl Waḥdat al-Wujūd*, ed. Muḥammad b. Ḥamad al-Najadī (Kuwait: Jam‘iyyat Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-Islāmī, 1992), 47.
 23. Ali Hasan Abdel-Kader, *The Life, Personality and Writings of al-Junayd* (London: Luzac & Company, 1962), 70.
 24. Abdel-Kader, *The Life, Personality and Writings of al-Junayd*, 71.
 25. Abdel-Kader, *The Life, Personality and Writings of al-Junayd*, 72.
 26. Al-Sha’rānī, *al-Kibrīt al-Aḥmar*, 2:475. See also al-Unsī, *Kitāb al-Manāqib al-Kubrā*, 50.
 27. Éric Geoffroy, “De l’influence d’Ibn ‘Arabī sur l’école shādhilīe (époque mamelouk): premiers jalons,” *Horizons Maghrébīns* 41, no. 1 (1999): 84-86.
 28. Al-Palimbānī, *Siyar al-sālikīn*, 3:181 and 183.
 29. Al-Sha’rānī, *al-Yawāqīt wa-l-Jawābir*, 4.
 30. See Kamāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī, *Sharḥ ‘alā Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam* (Qom: Maṭba‘a Amīr, 1950), 123.
 31. Al-Sha’rānī, *al-Kibrīt al-Aḥmar*, 254.
 32. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Taḥfīr al-Kābir* (Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-Bahiyya al Miṣriyya, 1938), 18:62-68.
 33. Jon Hoover, “Islamic Universalism: Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya’s Salafi Deliberation on the Duration of Hell-Fire,” *Muslim World* 99 (2009): 186-90. See also Binyamin Abrahamov, “The Creation and Duration of Paradise and Hell in Islamic Theology,” *Der Islam* 79

- (2002): 87-102.
34. Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Radd 'alā Man Qāla bi-Fanā' al-Janna wa-l-Nār*, ed. Muḥammad b. 'Abdillāh al-Simharī (Riyadh: Dār Balansiyya, 1995), 81.
 35. Ibn Taymiyya stated that he read the original edition of the *Futūḥāt* consisting of twenty volumes, and that it is wonderful because it contains brilliant ideas. See Jalāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī, *Tanbīh al-Ghabī fī Takḥṭī'at Ibn 'Arabī*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ḥasan Maḥmūd ([Cairo]: Maktabat al-Ādāb, 1990), 69-70.
 36. Al-Razi, *al-Taḥṣīr al-Kabīr*, 18:62-68.
 37. Muḥyi l-Dīn b. 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, ed. Aḥmad Shams al-Dīn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1999), 7:70.
 38. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, *Sharḥ al-Jāmi 'alā Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, ed. 'Āṣim Ibrāhīm al-Kayyālī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, n.d.), 400-2.
 39. 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jilī, *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, ed. 'Āṣim Ibrāhīm al-Kayyālī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2005), 2:228-29.
 40. Al-Sha' rānī, *al-Yawāqīt wa-l-Jawābir*, 286.
 41. Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, 3:455 and 474.
 42. Al-Sha' rānī, *al-Yawāqīt wa-l-Jawābir*, 465.
 43. According to al-Rāzī, there are two opinions about Iblīs' nature. The first, espoused by many jurists, is that he belongs to the category of angels. The second is that Iblīs' nature is identical to that of jinn, for he is created from fire, is gendered, and has offspring, whereas angels are created from light and neither are gendered nor bear offspring. See al-Rāzī, *al-Taḥṣīr al-Kabīr*, 2:212-16.
 44. Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, 7:474.
 45. Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, 7:402.
 46. According to Pierre Lory, this commentary is in fact the composition of al-Qāshānī. See Pierre Lory, *Les Commentaires ésotériques du coran d'après 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī* (Paris: Les Deux Océans, 1980), 23-24.
 47. See Muḥyi l-Dīn b. 'Arabī, *Taḥṣīr Ibn 'Arabī* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 2002), 1:23-24.
 48. Abū Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj, *Kitāb al-Ṭawāsin*, ed. Louis Massignon (Paris: Libraire Paul Geuthner, 1913), 43-46.
 49. See Firoozeh Papan-Matin, *Beyond Death: The Mystical Teaching of 'Ayn-al-Quḍāt al-Hamadḥānī* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 159-62.
 50. Al-Sha' rānī, *al-Yawāqīt wa-l-Jawābir*, 2:234 and 473.

Bibliography

- Abdel-Kader, Ali Hassan. *The Life, Personality and Writings of al-Junayd*. London: Luzac & Company, 1962.
- Abrahamov, Binyamin. "The Creation and Duration of Paradise and Hell in Islamic Theology." *Der Islam* 79 (2002): 87-102.
- Al-Banjārī, Muḥammad Nafīs. *al-Durr al-Nafīs*. Singapore: al-Haramyn, nd.
- Corbin, Henry. *Histoire de la philosophie islamique*. Paris: Gallimard, 1986.
- Dihlawī, Shāh Walī Allāh al-. *al-Taḥṣīrāt al-Ilāhiyya*. Bijnaur: Madīna Barqī Press, 1936.
- Garcin, Jean-Claude. "Histoire, opposition, politique et piétisme traditionaliste dans le Ḥusn al Muḥādarat de Suyūṭī." *Annales Islamologiques* 7 (1967): 33-90.
- Geoffroy, Éric. "De l'influence d'Ibn 'Arabī sur l'école shādhilīe (époque mamelouk): premiers jalons." *Horizons Maghrébins* 41, no. 1 (1999): 83-90.
- Hoover, Jon. "Islamic Universalism: Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's Salafi Deliberation on

- the Duration of Hell-Fire.” *Muslim World* 99 (2009): 181-201.
- Ibn ‘Arabī, Muḥyī l-Dīn. *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*. 9 vols. Edited by Aḥmad Shams al-Dīn. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1999.
- Ibn Taymiyya. *Ibtāl Waḥdat al-Wujūd*. Edited by Muḥammad b. Ḥamad al-Najadī. Kuwait: Jam‘iyyat Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-Islāmī, 1992.
- . *al-Radd ‘alā Man Qāla bi-Fanā’ al-Janna wa-l-Nār*. Edited by Muḥammad b. ‘Abdillāh al-Simharī. Riyadh: Dār Balansiyya, 1995.
- Knysh, Alexander D. *Ibn ‘Arabī in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam*. Albany: the State University of New York Press, 1999.
- Al-Maghribī, Abū ‘Alī Ḥasan b. Muḥammad. *Ṭabaqāt al-Shādhiliyya al-Kubrā*. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, n.d.
- Muthalib, Abdul. “The Mystical Thought of Muḥammad Nafīs al-Banjārī: An Indonesian Ṣūfī of the Eighteenth Century.” Montreal: McGill University, 1995.
- Al-Palimbānī, ‘Abd al-Ṣamad. *Siyar al-sālikīn*. Indonesia: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Kutub al-‘Arabiyya, n.d.
- Papan-Matin, Firoozeh. *Beyond Death: The Mystical Teaching of ‘Ayn al-Qudāt al-Hamadhānī*. Leiden: Brill, 2010.
- Qāshānī, Kamāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-. *Sharḥ ‘alā Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*. Qom: Maṭba‘a Amīr, 1950.
- Al-Rānīrī, Nūr al-Dīn. “Ḥujjat al-Ṣiddīq lidaf al-Zindīq.” In Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *A Commentary of the Hujjat al-Ṣiddīq of Nūr al-dīn al-Rānīrī*. Kuala Lumpur: The Ministry of Culture Malaysia, 1986.
- Al-Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn. *al-Tafsīr al-Kābir*. Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-Bahiyya al Miṣriyya, 1938.
- Sartain, E.M. *Jalāl al-dīn al-Suyūṭī*. 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.
- Al-Sha’rānī, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb. *al-Kibrīt al-Aḥmar fī Bayān ‘Ulūm al-Shaykh al-Akbar*. Edited by ‘Abdullāh Maḥmūd Muḥammad ‘Umar. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2012.
- . *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣughrā*. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1999.
- . *al-Yawāqīt wa-l-Jawāhir fī Bayān ‘Aqā’id al-Akābir*. 2 vols., in 1. Edited by ‘Abd al-Wārith Muḥammad ‘Alī. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1998.
- Al-Suyūṭī, Jalāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr. *Tanbīh al-Ghabī fī Takḥṭī’at Ibn ‘Arabī*. Edited by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ḥasan Maḥmūd. [Cairo]: Maktabat al-Ādāb, 1990.
- Al-Unsī, Muḥammad Muḥyī l-Dīn Abī. *Kitāb al-Manāqib al-Kubrā*. Cairo: Maṭba‘a Amīn ‘Abd al-Raḥma, n.d.
- Winter, Michael. *Egyptian Society Under Ottoman Rule 1517-1798*. London: Routledge, 1992.

Abdul Muthalib, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta | muthalibsamad@yahoo.ca