Book Reviews

Review Article:

Sufism is rightly called “the inner dimension of Islam” by Algar, and is said to be “a reality without a name.” Though the word “Sufi” does not occur in the Qurʾān, nor did it exist in the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be on him) and his Companions, yet it is firmly rooted in the Qurʾānic revelation. Since its inception it has made the greatest and most important contribution in the dissemination of Islam throughout the world of Islam, right from the Atlantic coast of West Africa to the entire region of South Asia and the far eastern territories of Indonesia and Malaya. The emergence and early elaboration of Sufism went side by side with the establishment of Islamic jurisprudence and various schools of law in the second and third centuries of Hijrah. Sufism’s exposition as a distinct institution and the formalization of its practices and technical vocabulary took place in that era.

The seventh century of Hijrah is considered to be the richest and most productive epoch in the history of Sufism, termed “a fresh flowering or second youth” of Islam by Martin Lings in his Introduction to Austin’s translation of Ibn ‘Arabī’s Sūfīs of Andalusia. This happened despite, or partially because, of a grim background resulting from the violent Crusades from the west and the barbarian invasion of the Mongols from the east. In the western world of Islam there appeared during this period the supreme master of Islamic theosophy, Shaikh Muḥyi ‘l-Dīn Muḥammad b. ‘Alī Ibn ‘Arabī (d. 638/1240) who, during his fruitful visits to Cairo, Damascus and Qunya, won several disciples for spreading his teachings in the eastern Islamic lands. In North Africa a number of Sufi orders arose including the Badawiyyah of Āḥmad al-Badawi (d. 674/1276) and Shādhiliyyah of Abū ’l-Hasan ‘Alī b. ‘Abd Allāh al-
Shādhilī (d. 656/1258) with their offshoots influencing the spiritual life in all the adjoining areas. In Anatolia Mawlāna Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Rūmī (d. 672/1273), author of the great Mathnawi and Fih mā fih, a treatise on Sufism in Persian, led to the foundation of the Mevlāvī order that enriched the cultural life of Turkey for over five centuries. In India, Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī (d. 633/1236) laid the foundation of the popular Chishtī order, while Bahā’- al-Dīn Zakariyyā Multānī (d. 665/1267) brought the Suhrawardī order to the Sub-continent. Finally, in Central Asia we witness ‘Abd al-Khāliq Ghijduwānī (d. 616/1220), the spiritual ancestor of the Naqshbandī order, a very popular order in the area and the neighbouring domains; several important shaykhs of the cognate Yassawī order, and most important, the Kubrawī order founded by Najm al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Umar al-Kubrā (d. 618/1221), to which belonged his namesake, Najm al-Dīn Dāyah Rāzī, author of the work under review. Kubrā is known for his Sunnī beliefs, though expressing devotion for the Twelve Imāms of the Shi‘ah in his writings.

Later, Kubrā’s most prominent disciples, Majd al-Dīn Baghdādī (d. 616/1219), Sa‘d al-Dīn Hamūyā (d. 650/1252), Sayf al-Dīn Bākhrāzī (d. 658/1260), and Raḍī al-Dīn ‘Alī Lālā (d. 642/1244) and Rūkn al-Dīn ‘Alā’ al-Dawlah Simnānī (d. 736/1336) and others continued to disseminate Kubrā’s teachings. One of his disciples, Badr al-Dīn Samarqandī, founded the Firdawsīyyah branch in Eastern India with Ahmad Yahyā Manayrī (d. 772/1371) as its most important exponent who was respected by the Tughlaq sultans of Delhi. Kubrā’s other follower, Mīr ‘Alī Hamadānī (d. 786/1385), buried in Khuttalān (present day Kolāb in Tājikistān), introduced the order to Badakhshān and Kashmīr, and is credited with the conversion of thousands of non-Muslims to Islam, especially in Kashmīr. The majority of Hamadānī’s followers today in Kashmīr, Pakistan and elsewhere, are Shi‘ah. One of the Kubrawī schisms, known as Nūrbakhshīyyah, with exclusively Shi‘ī beliefs, flourished in Iran during the Şafāvid period, still survives in Baltistān and parts of Kashmīr. Another branch subscribing to similar beliefs known as Dhahabiyyah, has come down to the present in Iran with its major centre in Shirāz. There are also traces of Kubrawīyyah in Turkey.

The Kubrawīyyah, as a purely Sunnī order, flourished in Central Asia, with its centre in Khwārazm, and elsewhere, but from eighth/fourteenth century onward, Naqshbandiyyah, the comparatively strict Sunnī order, and initially having its centre in Bukhārā, attained dominance in Central Asia and soon displaced the Kubrawīyyah even in Khwārazm, confining its influence to a few small towns near Bukhārā. However, in Afghanistan it retained its popularity at least till the late thirteenth/nineteenth century. In India, the
Kubrawiyyah became intertwined with other orders, as affiliation to several orders was a common feature of Indian Sufism. The Kubrawiyyah spread its wings from Central Asia to China and became popular among the Muslims of Kansu, as, for example, we find the present work under review translated as early as in 1670, as “Islamic Neo-Confucianism.”

Merṣād al-‘Ebād [Mīrṣād al-‘Ibād], the work under review, is considered the most influential and widely read of all the Kubrawiyyah writings, and its author, Abū Bakr ‘Abdullāh b. Muḥammad al-Asādī al-Rāzī, generally known as Najm al-Dīn, with the title of Dāya [Dāyah], was one of the leading followers of Kubrawiyyah order and a staunch Sunnī. He was born in 573/1177 in Rayy, to which he owed the topographical designation of Rāzī, now a small town in the suburb of Tehran, which happened to be a major urban and cultural centre before the disastrous conquest and sacking of the region by the Mongols. In 599/1202, Dāya left his home-town and visited Syria, Egypt, Hijāz (performing Ḥājj in Makkah), Iraq and Azerbaijan. Later he travelled to Khwārazm where he became a lifelong murīd of his namesake, Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, and a faithful adherent of his Sufi order known as Kubrawiyyah. However, it is highly strange that Dāya has not mentioned the name of his master anywhere in his writings. It was partly due to the adverse impression made by his devoted friend, Shaykh Majd al-Dīn Baghdadī, whom Kubrā had at first delegated the task of spiritual training of his disciples, but who died by drowning in the Oxus on the orders of Khwārazmshāh, as an inevitable result of Kubrā’s imprecation. This is said to have been occasioned by the use of the impudent metaphor of a hen for his master and a duck for himself. According to a report by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 898/1492) in his hagiographical compendium, Nafāḥāt al-Uns, out of penitence and shame Baghdādī offered his sincere apologies to the master who duly forgave him, but refused to retract his imprecation against his impertinent disciple. This sad event is considered to have effaced the love and devotion for Kubrā from Dāya’s memory as a sign of resentment at Kubrā’s imprecation. However, there may have been other reason for the deadly action by Khwārazmshāh.

After the fulfilment of Kubrā’s imprecation about Baghdādī, Dāya perhaps dreaded the fulfilment of the second part of the imprecation which was related to the ultimate destruction of Khwārazm. The internecine fight between the Seljūq princes and the incessant clashes between the followers of the different schools of Islamic law, namely, Ḥanafī, Shāfī’ī and Shi‘ī, resulting in the spread of insecurity in the region, prompted Dāya to leave Khwārazm even before the Mongol invasion and its consequent destruction and general massacre including that of his family.
In these circumstances Dāya fled from the advancing Mongol armies in search of refuge and reached Qaysirī in central Anatolia in Ramadān 618/October 1221. Anatolia was at that time ruled by the great Seljuqs who, despite their Turkish origin, patronized Persian literature, Persian being their court language. They attracted the Sufis, poets and scholars from the western and eastern wings of the Islamic world. Thanks to the prevailing orthodoxy, the land was unaffected by Muʿtazilism and philosophy. Ibn ‘Arabī travelled three times to Anatolia, and had several disciples there, the most influential of them being Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnyawī (d.c. 673/1274), whose lectures inspired Fakhr al-Dīn ʿIrāqī (d. 688/1289) to write his celebrated Sūfī work: Lamaʿāt. Another migrant from Khwārazm, Bahāʾ al-Dīn Walad (d. 628/1231) and his great son, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī (d. 672/1273) had arrived in Anatolia four years before Dāya. Then there was Awhād al-Dīn Kirmānī, the well-known Sufi poet, with the *nom de plume* of Awhādī, who stayed for some time in Qaysirī and Qunyā. In Anatolia, Dāya also met Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ḥāšim b. Muhammad al-Suhrawardi (d. 632/1234), nephew of Abū l-Najīb ʿAbd al-Qāhir b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Suhrawardi (d. 563/1168), the founder of Suhrawardi order. The former has to his credit the fusion of Sufism with *futuwwāt*, the ideal of ethical manliness, one of the fundamental teachings and Sufistic philosophy of Mīr ʿAli Hamadānī too.

It was soon after Dāya’s arrival in Qaysirī that he completed the first text of his monumental work *Mersād*, intended to be a “gift to true seekers and veracious lovers.” He completed the second recension of the book in Sivas, in Rajab, 620/August, 1223, and dedicated and presented it to ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Kayqubād, the Seljuq ruler of Anatolia (617–635/1220–1237), without mentioning its earlier text, wishing to present his work as exclusively inspired by the desire to present the ruler with a suitable gift. But contrary to his expectations, despite his encomium to the monarch at the end of the second recension, he was extremely disappointed by the cold attitude of the king and his courtiers, expressed in his *Marmūzāt-i Asadi dar Mazmūrāt-i Dāʾūdī*, written three years after the second recension of *Mersād* in Erzincan, in the following words:

Three years I wandered in that land [Anatolia]... I found no one in that realm able to tell musk from dung, or the sincere from the swindler... When I thus discovered there was no host in the house, I fully detached my heart from the realm ... and gladly, without any regret, turned my back on the whole herd (pp. 12–13).

Bitterly dejected, Dāya turned to Erzincan, a city ruled by a petty Turkish dynasty, the Mengucheks, in search of favour from their ruler, ʿAlāʾ...
al-Dīn Dā‘ūd, renowned for his patronage of Persian literature, to whom the great poet Nizāmī Ganjawi (d. 605/1209) had dedicated his *Makhtzan al-Asrār*. The city still had a large Armenian Christian population. It was here that Dā‘ya wrote the *Marmūzāt-i Asadī dar Muẓmūrāt-i Dā‘ūdī* (Asadī alluding to a part of his name, and Dā‘ūdī referring to the fact that its each chapter began with the Psalms of David, and skilfully referring to the name of the ruler). It is said to be a “special edition” of *Mersād*, diminishing the strictly Sūfī material and expanding the sections on kingly power. However, it seems to have failed to evoke any interest, as only a single manuscript of the book has survived. The Muslims of Erzincan also could not attract Dā‘ya’s approval, who has condemned them in the book, calling them “a people void of all humanity, with the seed of vileness sown in their souls.” Kayqubād overthrew Dā‘ūd in 625/1228 and incorporated Erzincan in his realm.

Dā‘ya migrated to Baghdad from where he was sent on a diplomatic mission by Caliph al-Zāhir bi Amr Allāh (r. 575–623/1179–1226) to Tabrīz where he met Jalāl al-Dīn Khwārazmshāh (r. 617–628/1220–1231), son of the king on whose orders Dā‘ya’s bosom friend, Majd al-Dīn Baghdādī, was killed. Jalāl al-Dīn had fled from Mongol invasion and was organizing an unsuccessful resistance to the invaders. The *Mersād* contains several exhortations to the Muslim rulers of the time to offer firm resistance to the Mongols, showing a favourable change in Dā‘ya’s attitude towards Jalāl al-Dīn despite his father’s misdeed. Dā‘ya returned to Baghdad in the company of Qādī Mujīr al-Dīn (d. 592/1196), Khwārazmshāh’s ambassador to the caliph’s court to find the caliph dead.

Little is known further about Dā‘ya’s career, except that he died in Baghdad in 654/1256, two years before the city was conquered and sacked by the Mongols. He was buried in Shoneyziya graveyard in the Karkh area of Baghdad near such Sūfī celebrities as Ma‘rūf b. Firūz al-Karkhī (d. 200/816) and Junayd al-Baghdādī (d. 298/911). His tomb still stands.

In his final phase of life lasting about thirty years, Dā‘ya turned to writing in Arabic, contrary to his earlier preference for Persian expressed in the preface to *Mersād*. He completed an Arabic version of *Mersād* entitling it *Maṇārāt al-Sā‘īrin ilā ‘Ilāh wa Maqāmāt al-Tā‘rīn bi ‘Ilāh*. It failed to attract the degree of interest that *Mersād* did, and was curiously translated into Persian for the Ottoman Sultan, Bayazīd II (r. 886–918/1481–1512).

Far more important was his Qur’ānic *tafsīr* composed in Baghdad and known by several different names, as *al-Ta‘wilāt al-Najmiyyah*, ‘Ayn al-Ḥayāt, and *Babr al-Ḥaqā‘iq*, the last being the earliest. His master, Kubrā himself began composing a *tafsīr* of the Qur’ān, but could not go beyond its opening chapter. Dā‘ya then took up the work but could not proceed beyond *sūrat al-
Najm (sūrah 53) before he died. Then ‘Alā’ al-Dawlah Simnānī wrote a long and valuable preface on the principles of Sufi exegesis and completed the tafsīr. Thus, although it was a joint Kubrawī venture, it has always been ascribed to Dāya who indeed had the major share in writing it. The tafsīr is regarded as a monumental desideratum of Sufi exegesis. The large number of its manuscripts found in Turkish and other libraries testifies to the popularity it has enjoyed.

An important Shi‘ite gnostic and writer, Ḥaydar mu‘ṭāb, has acknowledged it to be “without like or peer,” and declared to have taken it as a model for his own Qur’ānic commentary, al-Muḥīṭ al-A‘zam. Large sections of Dāya’s tafsīr have been incorporated in Rūh al-Bayān, the great tafsīr of the Turkish Sufi Ismā‘īl Ḥaqqī Bursawī (d. 1136/1724), and Rūh al-Ma‘ānī by Shihāb al-Dīn Māhmūd al-Alūsī (d. 1270/1854), the last tafsīr of the genre. As both the later commentaries have been printed, Dāya’s work is also partially accessible.

Then there are some lesser writings of Dāya. There is a brief allegory, Risālat al-Tayyīr, a theme better treated by al-Husayn b. ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) and Frīd al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-‘Aṭṭār (d. 620/1223). He also wrote a brief treatise in exposition of the celebrated utterance of Abū l-Ḥasan Khāraqānī, “the Sufi is uncreate,” and a longer treatise on the virtues of love and intellect, entitled Mi‘yār al-Ṣidq fī Miṣdāq al-Ishq or ‘Ishq wa ‘Aql, with preference going to the former, that has similarity to certain sections of the Merṣād.

Merṣād al-‘Ebād min al-Mabda‘ ila ‘l-Ma‘ād is certainly Dāya’s masterpiece. The key word in its title is drawn from the Qur’ān: “inna rabbaka la bi ‘l-mirṣād” (Verily thy Lord watches over the path) (Qur’ān 89: 14), though taken by Dāya in a slightly different sense: protective and guarding vigilance, or straight path. The latter part of its title reminds us of Sanā‘ī’s poem: Suyr al-‘Ībād ilā al-Ma‘ād, and Risālah-‘i Mabda’ wa Ma‘ād of Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1034/1624) and a work of identical title by the well-known Shi‘ite philosopher, Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, known as Mullā Ṣadr Shīrāzī (d. 1050/1640).

Merṣād has been one of the most valuable and celebrated treatises on Sufism. It is a summation of the historical elaboration of Sufism down to the seventh/thirteenth century, regarded as the “second flowering” of Sufism, the period in which the major systemizations of speculative Sufism and elaboration of Sufi ritual and practice took place. Subscribing to Islam’s Sunnī understandings, the author followed the Ash‘arī theology. He has focused his attention on the exploration and analysis of the visionary states experienced by the Sufis in the course of their mystical journeys. He strikes a middle course between those Islamic mystics who concentrated on ecstasy and spiritual raptures and neglected or made light of religious observances and rituals, and the ascetic Sufis who emphasized worship through meticulous or
excessive performance of religious duties.

The book contains a brief Prologue (pp. 25–28) in which the author has emphasized that the purpose of existence of man is [the attainment of] knowledge of the essence and attributes of God Almighty. The essence of the man’s soul is the heart, and the heart is like mirror,... reflecting all the attributes of the beauty and splendour of the Divine Presence. This is followed by the Contents, and List of Five Parts and forty Chapters.

Part I contains Introduction to the book, containing three chapters on the utility of this book, the reason for writing it particularly in Persian and its manner and method (pp. 34–57).

Part II contains five chapters dealing with the creation of spirits and knowledge of its stages, world of Dominion and its degrees, appearance of the realms of Kingship and Dominion, the creation of the human frame and the attachment of the spirit to it (pp. 60–122).

Part III containing twenty chapters is concerned with the veils covering the human spirit, its attachment to the frame, the necessity of the Prophets, abrogation of all previous religions, and the sealing of the prophethood of Muḥammad (peace be on him), the training of the human frame according to Law, the refinement of human soul and its knowledge, the purification of the heart according to the code of the Path and its knowledge, the adornment of the spirit according to the code of Truth and its knowledge, the necessity of a shaykh for man’s training and wayfaring, the station, conditions and attributes of shaykhhood, conditions, attributes and customs of the murīd, the need for dhikr and special properties of dhikr of Lā ilāh illā Allāh, the method of uttering dhikr, its conditions and customs, the need of the murīd’s transmission of dhikr by the shaykh and its property, the necessity of seclusion and its conditions and customs, certain visions deriving from the unseen and the difference between dreams and visions, the witnessing of the lights and its degrees, unveiling of its varieties, the manifestation of the Divine Essence and attributes, and attaining to the Divine presence, with neither absorption nor separation (pp. 124–332).

Part IV contains four chapters that deal with the return of the souls of the felicitous and the wretched. God Almighty said in the Qur’ān: “And among them some wrong their own souls; some follow a middle course; and some are foremost in good deeds, by God’s permission” (Qur’ān 35: 32). He also said in the Qur’ān: “Therefore I have warned the fiercely blazing fire. None shall endure [or reach] it but the most wretched, who denies the Truth and turns away” (Qur’ān 92: 14–16). The four chapters concern the return of the oppressive soul which is reproachful (nafs-i lawwāmah), the soul that follows a middle path which is the inspired one (nafs-i muḥamah), the foremost soul
which is the tranquil one (nafs-i muţma‘īnna), and the most wretched which is the instigating soul (nafs-i ammāra), (pp. 334–393).

Part V contains eight chapters dealing with the wayfaring of the various classes of men; the duties of kings, their conduct towards each group of their subjects, the duties of ministers, men of pen and deputies, the different classes of scholars—experts in law, preachers, judges, the wayfaring of the holders of wealth, farmers, village headmen, merchants, trades men and craftsmen, (pp. 395–493). This part of the book reminds the reader of earlier identical works by other Sufis and ethical writers and sages like Imām ‘Ali b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661) whose ethical and administrative views are contained in Nahj al-Balāghah, Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), a number of Kubrawī and other saints like ‘Alī b. ‘Uṯmān Ḥujwīrī (d. 469/1077), Mīr ‘Alī Hamadānī (d. 786/1385) and authors of a large number of treatises on Islamic Akhlāq like Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 672/1284), etc. It may be regarded as an important document on Perso-Islamic political philosophy, couched in Sufi terminology.

In the end, there is a Conclusion (pp. 494–497), in which the author has dedicated the book to the ruler of his time, Kayqubād, on Monday, 1st Rajab, 620/1223 in the city of Sivas, calling the monarch in the concluding versified prayer, “Shadow of Allāh, Guardian ruler over the world and Protector of the Realm of Islam.”

The book provides a full conspectus of Sufism, combining exposition of doctrine with description of method. In this respect it occupies a unique position, excelling earlier expository texts which lack the degree of elaboration, systemization and explicitness that characterized the Sufism of seventh century Hijrah.

A particular importance of Mersād lies in its clear demonstration of the Qur’ānic origins of Sufism. The numerous quotations from the Qur’ān, interspersed in the work do not merely serve the purpose of rhetoric or ornamentation. They are meant to emphasize that the Qur’ān constitutes a well-structured, seamless and coherent universe. Thus, the book contains important elements of Sufi exegesis.

Another main feature of Mersād is the parallel drawn between the inner and outer world, specially with reference to the process of growth and development, e.g. the gradual progress of a seed into a tree, branch and fruit or the birth of a hen from the egg, etc. In his commentary on the Qur’ān, Daya says: “Verily all that God created in the world of form has its like in the world of meaning; all that He created in the world of meaning, being the hereafter, has its essence in the world of reality, which is the uttermost unseen. Know too that a specimen and sample of all that God created in the worlds is present...
in man” (p. 18). Therefore, in Sufi terminology man is called “‘alam-i ašghar” or microcosm.

Besides, to the four subtle centres of perception (laṭā‘if), or inner means of perception (mudrikāt-i bāṭinī), namely, heart, intelligence and mystery, enumerated by the earlier Sufis including Kubrā himself, Dāya added a fifth one, the “arcane” (khafī). Later, ‘Alā’ al-Dawlah Simnānī added another two elements, qālib (bodily frame) and akhfā (super-arcane). (See, Merṣād, p. 134, n. 9).

Another aspect of the work’s importance lies in the historical information provided incidentally by the author particularly in the fifth part of the book regarding social and administrative conditions, the rapaciousness of the king’s officials and the venality of the judiciary. In various parts of the book, Dāya has also referred to the awesome destruction wrought at the hands of the Mongols that gives an indication of the apocalyptic impact of that barbaric onslaught on the Muslim world.

Like his predecessors such as Ghazālī, Sanā‘ī, ‘Aṭṭār and Rūmī, Dāya has also vigorously condemned the Hellenic philosophers. He has scornfully quoted several quatrains of ‘Umar Khayyām (d. c. 516/1122) and forcefully denounced his philosophy.

Merṣād also has a considerable literary importance and ranks among the masterpieces of Persian literature, particularly the discussion on the creation and appointment of Adam as God’s viceroy may be regarded as one of the best examples of Persian prose. The Qur’ānic verses, pieces of Sufi poetry and quatrains, interspersed throughout the book, have added to the beauty of the text.

Due to the qualities pointed out above, Merṣād has enjoyed a continuous and extensive popularity in the world for exceeding the confines of Kubrawī order. The existence of abundant copies of its manuscripts in Iran, India, Pakistan, Central Asia and Turkey is a clear evidence of its popularity in contrast to the many early Sufi works that have recently come into prominence, thanks to the efforts of modern Muslim scholars and Orientalists. Parts of the book, though sometimes unacknowledged, have been frequently quoted by the later Sufi writers. It seems to have reached India in the lifetime of its author, as its name is included in Baranī’s list among the early books that became popular in Delhi. The book exercised great influence in Anatolia, both in its Persian original and its widely circulated Turkish translation by Qāsim b. Mahmūd Qaraḥiṣārī in the ninth/fifteenth century and dedicated to Sultan Murad II (r. 824–855/1421–1451).

The book was translated in over five years by Wu Sunquie of Jiangning in 17th century, and also by Wu Tzu-Hsien under the title Kuei-chen yao-tao in
1670 as “Islamic Neo-Confucianism.” Among the Sino-Muslim manuscripts brought from Kansu to Europe in 1909 by the d’Ollone mission, together with many Naqshbandi works, was a copy of *Mersād* containing marginal glosses in a North Chinese idiom written in the Arabic script.

In short, the influence of *Mersād* has extended to the whole Muslim world except indeed its Arab and African regions. By contrast, this important work has also failed to attract the attention of the Western scholars.

The Persian text of the book was first published in 1312/1894 by ‘Abd al-Ghaffār Najm al-Dawlah, and in 1352/1933 by Ḥusayn Shams al-‘Urafā’ Ni‘mat Allāh, one of the most well-known Iranian Sufis of recent times. Both the editions were unreliable, their texts being a mixture of the two recensions of the book, as their editors were unaware of the existence of its two recensions. A new critical edition prepared by Dr Am in Riyāhī, based mainly on the second recension, appeared in 1352 of Iranian Calendar/1972. In some parts, the editor has used the first recension, see, for example, the reason for writing the book, where the year of writing the book is mentioned as 618 AH (see, p. 49 of the English translation), whereas the year of writing of the second recension is 620 AH.

The present English translation is faithful, literal and exquisite, retaining, as far as possible, the beauty of the original text, despite the difficulties encountered by the translator of a classical Persian (or Arabic) text like the present one, containing complex sentences, with the frequent use of *idāfah*, and insertion of Qur’ānic verses or their fragments. Besides, the absence of a comprehensive Persian or Arabic-English Dictionary containing particularly English equivalents of the Sufi terms that are sometimes quite alien to the peculiar idiom of the English or other western languages has made the task of a translator of Sufi works written in Persian or Arabic more arduous. The translator of the present work has, therefore, taken great pains in his efforts to make the translation of such exclusive Sufi terms and phrases intelligible to the English knowing readers by elucidating their meanings as far as possible in plain and simple language. Moreover, he has also succeeded in giving the sources of the Qur’ānic verses and Traditions of the Prophet (peace be on him) occurring in the text of the book with the help of the comprehensive indices to Qur’ānic verses and the Prophet’s Traditions now easily available. However, the original sources of most of the poetic verses and quatrains have not been traced, except when mentioned in the original text. It is because no such index exists giving the poetic verses of any language along with the names of their composers. It is, in fact, a gigantic work so far not taken up by any person or institution anywhere.
The long list of books given in the Bibliography at the end of the book as well as the books cited in the notes are ample proof of the hard labour of the translator in garnering relevant information from various sources.

The original book being in Persian, the translator has adopted the system of Persian pronunciation while transcribing the Persian names and terms.

In short, the translator deserves our best appreciation and accolade for his successful performance of such a colossal job. It is hoped that this translation will serve as a means for introducing the basic principles and teachings of Sufism that have rendered valuable service in bringing the believers of various religions closer and in eliminating parochial prejudices and estrangements.

Ali Raza Naqvi


The work under review, originally written in Russian in 1999, is a survey of the topic of sainthood in South Asian Islam. It consists of eight chapters, starting with an overview of “the Indian tomb,” and then continuing with monographic treatments of major figures including ‘Ali Hujwîrî (d. 469/1077), Mu‘în al-Dîn Chishtî (d. 633/1236), Bābâ Farîd Ganjî Shakkar (d. 633/1236), Niţâm al-Dîn Awliyâ’ (d. 728/1328), and Bahâ’ al-Dîn Zakariyyâ (d. 665/1276); the last two chapters treat warrior saints and mendicant saints.

This study retains in its English revision a distinctively Russian approach to Islamic studies that is inseparable from Orientalism. Throughout this study, a paradoxical combination of scientific condescension and personal appreciation remains an unresolved problem. The result is a perspective on South Asian Sufism that is unreflective and unintegrated into modern scholarly discourses on the study of religion. Like the many colonial sources quoted at face value throughout this work, it has the flavour of a gazetteer, containing an ambivalent combination of supercilious condemnation of superstition and a nonetheless positive aesthetic appreciation. In particular, this work avoids any engagement with the substantial critical literature on sainthood as a category in Islamic studies, to its detriment.¹

¹ See, for example Vincent J. Cornell, *Realm of the Saint: Power and Authority in Moroccan...