

FALKEIANA IV: THE SHAYKH AS THE LOCUS OF DIVINE SELF-DISCLOSURE: A POEM IN PRAISE OF SHAYKH ḤAMĀHU 'LLĀH

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Introduction

Among the manuscripts in the °Umar Falke Collection at Northwestern University is a poem about Ḥamāhu 'llāh, the twentieth-century Tijānī shaykh and reputed *walī*, who died in exile in France in 1943. The manuscript consists of a single sheet of paper, apparently torn from a French school *cahier*, and is item number 2352 of the Falke Collection. The poem, which is written on only one side of the page (the other being blank), is in a neat Ṣahrāwī hand without vocalization. The paper is somewhat fragile and there is wear at the edges, with the loss of two or three words in the last line. The poem is only prefaced by the *basmala* and the *taṣliya*. There are several indications, apparently in another hand, in the right margin. At the top is *bayt^m 21 (sic)*, although there are, in fact, 22 verses in the poem. Beneath this is written vertically: *kāmīl*, indicating the metre of the poem. To the right of that, very close to the edge of the paper, is written the name of the poet: Muḥammad al-Amīn b. al-Akḥṭar. Beginning at line 9, the verses are numbered from 1 to 13, the last line having no number. There is no indication of where or when it was copied. It is possible that it was acquired by °Umar Falke from a passing Mauritanian shaykh who

* Thanks are due to Vincent and Rkia Cornell for help in the initial interpretation of the poem, and to Bernd Radtke for reviewing the article as a whole. Its remaining inadequacies, however, are entirely our own.

copied it down for him, perhaps in some haste, or from memory, since the manuscript contains numerous errors of orthography. A possible candidate would be the Ḥamawī scholar, Sīdatī b. Bābā °Aynayn from Nema, who studied in Kano during the early twentieth century, probably establishing a scholarly network in this way.¹ This manuscript text was subsequently compared with a printed text published recently in Casablanca (see below).

Shaykh Ḥamāhu 'llāh: a brief biography

Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. *sayyidinā* °Umar, better known as Shaykh Ḥamāhu 'llāh, has attracted considerable attention since his emergence as a religious leader in West Africa under French colonial rule early in this century.² He was born into a family of Tishīti *sharīf*ian descent, c. 1883. He became a disciple of Sīdī Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh al-Akhḍar, a Tijānī *sharīf* of Tuwāt who had settled in Nioro, and who taught that the Tijānī prayer *Jawharat al-kamāl* was to be recited only eleven times in the *wazīfa* rather than twelve, the majority practice. This seemingly minor ritual difference came to distinguish Ḥamāhu 'llāh's followers, as they grew in number, from other Tijānīs in the region.

1 A biography of this scholar can be found in Mulāy Muḥammad b. Sīdatī, *Kitāb qaṣr al-tā'ifa al-ḥamawīyya li'l-ṣalāt al-rubā'iyya*, Casablanca 1986.

2 There is a certain literature on Ḥamāhu 'llāh from the colonial period that reflects French mythology about the movement. The article by J.C. Froelich, 'Ḥamāliyya', *EI* (2), III, 109-10, more or less sums this up. For more recent assessments of the man and his movement, see Louis Brenner, *West African Sufi: the Religious and Spiritual Search of Cerno Bokar Saalif Taal*, London 1984, 45-59; Constant Hamès, 'Cheikh Hamalla, ou qu'est-ce qu'une confrérie islamique (*ṭarīqa*)?', *Archives de Sciences Sociales de Religion*, IV, 1, 1983, 67-83; and Alioune Traoré, *Cheikh Hamahoullah, homme de foi et résistant*, Paris 1983. See further Benjamin Soares, 'The Spiritual Economy of Nioro du Sahel: Islamic Discourses and Practices in a Malian Religious Center', Ph.D. thesis, Northwestern University 1997.

Ḥamāhu 'llāh himself was a quietist reclusive teacher, widely recognized as a saint, who, over time, avoided contact with the French, contrary to some Tijānīs—particularly those who came to be called °Umarians—whose closeness to the French administration had assured them a favoured position. After a series of clashes in the 1920s between some of Ḥamāhu 'llāh's followers and detractors, Ḥamāhu 'llāh was exiled from Nioro for a period of ten years. He spent the first part of the exile in Mederdra in southern Mauritania, until he was transferred to Adzopé in the Ivory Coast after violent clashes involving some of his followers erupted in Kaédi.

In 1930, while in the Ivory Coast, Ḥamāhu 'llāh began the abbreviated prayer of two *rak'as*, sanctioned for times of danger. Ḥamāhu 'llāh's continuation of the practice of abbreviating his prayers after his return to Nioro in 1936 was met with alarm by his African detractors, who derided him and his followers. The French, most likely at the prodding of Ḥamāhu 'llāh's enemies, interpreted the shortening of prayers as a potential political threat to their rule.³ In 1937, Ḥamāhu 'llāh abandoned the shortening of his prayers at the urging of the colonial administration and °Umarian Tijānīs.

After an incident in 1938 when Ḥamāhu 'llāh's eldest son was harmed by some members of the Tinwājīyū, a *zawāyā* group known for its hostility to Ḥamāhu 'llāh, this son organized a large number of men for retaliation, and in August 1940, led attacks on Tinwājīyū groups on the Saharan fringes.⁴ Although the French were never able to link Ḥamāhu 'llāh directly with the attacks, he was held ultimately responsible for the many deaths that occurred. In 1941, the French—now under the Vichy regime—forced Ḥamāhu 'llāh into his second

3 See Traoré, *Cheikh Hamahoullah*, 155.

4 The name *zawāyā* is given to western Saharan groups who devote themselves principally to religious pursuits—the acquisition of learning, teaching, and juristic functions. See al-Mukhtār wuld Hāmid, *Hayāt Mūrṭāniyā: al-Jughrāfiyā*, Rabat: Jāmi'at Muḥammad al-Khāmis [Manshūrāt Ma'had al-Dirāsāt al-Ifriqiyya: Maṣādir wa-Mawsū'āt, 1], 1414/1994, 29. On the Tinwājīyū, see *idem*, 76-9.

exile, planned to last another ten years. He was sent first to Algeria, and then to France where he died in Montluçon in January 1943. During this same period, many of his followers were subject to persecution and harrassment.

Although a number of scholars have written about Ḥamāhu 'llāh and his disciples within the socio-economic and political contexts of French colonialism, the religious aspects of the Ḥamawiyya branch of the Tijāniyya (in European writing often called the Ḥamāliyya) have received inadequate attention. The poem in praise of Ḥamāhu 'llāh offered here in translation provides us with an entry into the discourse of sainthood which surrounded Ḥamāhu 'llāh. The language of this text is arcane and esoteric, reflecting the Sufi world of divine secrets, and God's self-manifestation through His chosen human vessels. It is precisely this Sufi language and its use in praising Ḥamāhu 'llāh that stirred such a heated debate around Ḥamāhu 'llāh and his teachings. While such a debate was to those who participated in it a part of the discourse about religion, it was profoundly political in its development and ultimate consequences—the arrest and exile of Ḥamāhu 'llāh, ending in his death in 1943, and the persecution of his followers by the French colonial authorities.

Poetry in praise of Ḥamāhu 'llāh

Like Sufi shaykhs in other times and places, Ḥamāhu 'llāh had many poems written in his honour, including some by leading West African scholars of his day. Throughout French colonial archives, there is frequent mention of poems about Ḥamāhu 'llāh, with an occasional translation but never an Arabic text. One poem dated 1916, the year when his career of sainthood began in earnest, was published with a French translation in the recent monograph about Shaykh Ḥamāhu 'llāh by Alioune Traoré.⁵ It is said to have been written to

5 Traoré, *Cheikh Hamahoullah*, 234-6. The poem is by Thierno Aliou Boubou Dian.

celebrate Shaykh Ḥamāhu 'llāh's being blessed with the 'Grand Illumination (*al-faṭḥ al-ʿaẓīm*)',⁶ and his becoming the *quṭb* of his age and the *khalīfa* of his time. Of the many poems in praise of Ḥamāhu 'llāh in West African languages, a Fulfulde poem from Nioro du Sahel in Mali was translated into French by Constant Hamès.⁷

The poem presented here was written by Shaykh Muḥammad al-Amīn b. Ṭālib b. Akḥṭar of the Idaw al-Ḥājj from near Kiffa, remembered in Ḥamawī circles as a learned scholar, but, above all, as a devoted follower of Ḥamāhu 'llāh. Named a *muqaddam* by Ḥamāhu 'llāh, Muḥammad al-Amīn was considered among the shaykh's most important deputies and is said to have been Ḥamāhu 'llāh's only follower given the title 'shaykh' by Ḥamāhu 'llāh himself. Muḥammad al-Amīn was one of the shaykhs who replied to Ḥamāhu 'llāh's Muslim critics in written texts, often in verse, as he did, for example, concerning the controversy which erupted in 1936 over the shortening of prayers. In January 1937, while in prison in Nioro du Sahel, for reasons that remain unclear, Muḥammad al-Amīn died.

Muḥammad al-Amīn's poem is somewhat different from those noted above and is of interest for a number of reasons. While there has been considerable research on the Ḥamawiyya in most of the countries of the former French West Africa (AOF), there is a paucity of research on the spread of the

6 More usually called *al-faṭḥ al-kabīr*. This is achieved after the seeker has obtained the first stage of illumination in which the secrets of the material cosmos are revealed to him. With the Grand Illumination comes an unveiling that allows the seeker to behold the angels, the prophets, the spirits of the Friends of God, as well as Paradise, Hell, and the *barzakh*. Such, at any rate, is the definition provided by the *K. al-Ibrīz* of Aḥmad b. Mubārak al-Lamaṭī, which was an important source for Tijāni doctrines. See Bernd Radtke, 'Ibrīziana', in this issue of *Sudanic Africa*.

7 Constant Hamès, 'Un poème peul en l'honneur de Cheikh Hamallah' in Jean-Pierre Digard (ed.), *Le Cuisinier et le philosophe: hommage à Maxime Rodinson*, Paris 1982, 227-33.

Hamawiyya in Nigeria.⁸ It is known, however, that the French colonial administration in the AOF worried about pan-Islamism and the possible support that might exist for Ḥamāhu 'llāh among Tijānīs from beyond French West Africa. This was certainly the case in the 1920s after the death of Malik Sy of Tivaouane in Senegal, and before Seydou Nourou Tall rose to his prominent role in relation to the colonial administration. There was particular concern about the possibility of support for Ḥamāhu 'llāh coming from the descendants of Ahmadu Sheku and his entourage who made *hijra* to the east, particularly those who had settled in areas under British control in northern Nigeria.⁹ Although it is unclear what support, if any, Ḥamāhu 'llāh had from so far afield, we know from this poem that he was familiar to at least some scholars in Nigeria during his lifetime. Nonetheless, he and his *ṭarīqa* were unquestionably overshadowed by other Sufi orders and shaykhs in Nigeria, not to mention subsequent anti-Sufi currents.

During research in Mali, Soares learned that the poem translated below is well-known in Ḥamawī circles and is merely one among the many learned by Ḥamawī adherents, often young boys and men studying the Qur'ān. These poems are frequently committed to memory during time free from regular Qur'ān instruction in the evenings and chanted liltily on various occasions, usually by individuals or small groups of men. They are performed publicly in Niōro du Sahel, and most prominently at the celebration of *ism al-nabī*, which follows one week after the *mawlūd al-nabī*, the celebration of the Prophet Muḥammad's birth. This is the largest annual gathering at the *zāwiya* in Niōro of Ḥamawiyya and others seeking the *baraka* of Ḥamāhu 'llāh and his descendants. Such poems are also sung in Ḥamawī circles in conjunction with ceremonies marking the life cycle, such as naming cere-

8 See Y.A. Quadri, 'The Hamahullah group: a sub-Tijaniyyah movement and its traces in Nigeria', *Islamic Studies*, xxiv, 2, 1985, 205-13.

9 These French concerns are well illustrated in a report from 1922, see Archives Nationales du Sénégal, 19G 23-108, Rapport André, 1923.

monies and the recitation of the Qur'ān following a death. The literal meaning of such poems is not readily apparent to most members of the audience, given their complexity, as well as the manner of recitation which prevents immediate apprehension even for highly literate people. The recitation of these poems is considered a pious act and herein lies the performative effect.

As indicated above, the poem has been published. It is one of several by Muḥammad al-Amīn included in a book of *qaṣīdas* collected and published in Morocco in 1988 by the Mauritanian Sayyid Muḥammad b. Mu'ādh.¹⁰ The poems in this collection are all in praise of Ḥamāhu 'llāh, and were written by a small Muslim scholarly elite of the first half of this century, nearly all 'Moors' (*bīdān*). The collection is considered official, being published with the blessing of Ḥamāhu 'llāh's son Muḥammad, who lives in Niōro and is widely recognized as the leader of the Ḥamawiyya.¹¹

It is important to note that there are poems in praise of Ḥamāhu 'llāh that are better known within Ḥamawī circles than the one presented here. A number of such poems were not included in the official published collection because they failed to meet the rigorous criteria of correct Arabic grammar. Similarly, none of the innumerable poems in the region's vernaculars, many of which are written in the Arabic script, are included in the official corpus. Almost without exception, these poems in the region's vernaculars are not sung at official gatherings at the Ḥamawī *zāwiya* in Niōro. They remain, however, more popular among the many followers of Ḥamāhu 'llāh who are not literate in Arabic.

10 Sayyid Muḥammad b. Mu'ādh, *al-Yāqūt wa'l-marjān fī ḥayāt shaykhinā ḥimāyat al-raḥmān*, Casablanca: Maṭba'at al-najāh al-jadīda 1988.

11 Muḥammad is the sole living child of Ḥamāhu 'llāh, following the recent death of his younger brother Abū Bakr and his older sister, Zaynab.

The ideas contained in Muḥammad al-Amin's poem

The first eight lines of the poem are fairly straightforward. In them the poet evokes his longing for the *dhikr* assemblies of disciples of Ḥamāhu 'llāh in which they strove to comprehend spiritual truths and to draw near to God through recitation of mystical poetry and the performance of spiritual exercises. Lines 9-17 portray the shaykh as a virtual *alter ego* of God; in fact, it is difficult to be sure sometimes whether the poet is speaking of the shaykh or of God. This is especially true of lines 13-15, except that it becomes clear that he is speaking of the shaykh when he says '[he is] possessed of a soul that encompasses the mystery of God in its entirety, assuming the [divine] traits'. Nevertheless, it is small wonder that Muḥammad al-Amin refers to 'the ignorant one' (*al-jahūl*) who accuses Ḥamāhu 'llāh of 'heresy' (*tazanduq*). There was certainly no lack of such critics.

The complex of concepts alluded to in the middle verses of the poem may best be understood by reference to the writing of Sachiko Murata.¹² The following introduction to these ideas is taken from that work, though in the footnotes to the text we have also referred to explanations of particular concepts taken from the writings of William Chittick, Michel Chodkiewicz and Titus Burckhardt. We present these by way of *sharḥ*—in the manner of Muslim commentators—in order to give a variety of ways of understanding the theosophical discourse that lies behind the language of the poem.

To paraphrase Murata: without creation, God's names were latent or non-manifest, and could not be distinguished from His Essence. God created the universe in order to make manifest His Names. In the words of the well known *ḥadīth qudsī*: 'I was a Hidden Treasure, and I desired to be known'. At this level of Exclusive Oneness (*aḥadiyya*), therefore, the

12 See her *The Tao of Islam* (Albany, NY 1992, 61-8) In her explanations she frequently draws on the writings of Sa'īd al-Dīn al-Farghānī (d 695/1296), a disciple of Ibn 'Arabī's stepson and a major commentator on the poetry of Ibn al-Fārid.

names are undifferentiated. In order for them to be known they have to be differentiated and manifest their own properties in multiplicity. 'The creatures are the receptacles, the loci within which God's names are displayed. Without them, the Treasure would remain eternally hidden.'¹³ Differentiation becomes actualized in the cosmos, but its principle is found in Reality Itself, which is Sheer Being (*al-wujūd al-maḥḍ*). Being, or Existence, is strictly indefinable and unknowable. Delimitation and definition belong to quiddity (*māhiyya*). We can only know *wujūd* inasmuch as its qualities are manifested by things. Sometimes *wujūd* is described as that which in itself is non-manifest while making other things manifest, just as 'light' is invisible in itself while allowing us to see other things. Visible light is a dim reverberation of true, invisible light. What we call *wujūd* (being, existence) is, in fact, existing things, which are a dim reverberation of true *wujūd* (Being).

God is both One and Many, in that His Essence (His *wujūd*) is One, but He knows all things, and this knowledge of His of all things is concurrent for all eternity with Knowledge of Himself. '[K]nowledge and awareness are qualities inherent within Being, and Being knows every reality that becomes manifest through Its own reality'.¹⁴ While Sheer Being is absolutely undifferentiated, knowledge has many objects, and so is relatively differentiated. Hence Being is known as the Unity of All-comprehensiveness (*aḥadiyyat al-jam'*). In as much as Being and Knowledge are both one and also discernible from each other, the Real is known as the Station of All-comprehensiveness (*maqām al-jam'*). According to the school of Ibn 'Arabī, the different designations refer to different levels (*marātib*)—a term employed in line 10 of the poem under consideration—or presences (*ḥadarāt*), which, while they have no ontological distinction, may be distinguished through their effects on the cosmos. Murata

13 Murata, *Tao of Islam*, 61

14 Murata, *Tao of Islam*, 67.

quotes al-Farghānī: 'Before the level of Divinity we have the level of the Unity of All-Comprehensiveness, where the Oneness of Being and the Manyness of Knowledge are identical with each other ... Within this Presence, oneness and manyness, Being and Knowledge, entification and non-entification are all identical with each other and with the Essence, without any separation or distinction'.¹⁵ This concept seems to be embodied in the language of lines 13-14 of the poem below.

Text

The text is that of the published edition, with the readings of the manuscript text (*al-asl*) in the footnotes, except where otherwise noted.

- [1] هاج¹⁶ التفريق لوعتي¹⁷ وتشوقي وأثار دمعاً مسبلاً بتدقق
 [2] وجفا الكرى جفني وغادر¹⁸ لوعة¹⁹ في القلب غير جفائه²⁰ لا تتقى
 [3] وكسا فؤادي²¹ والجوارح جهرة²² ثوب السقام تذكري وتشوقي
 [4] لمجالس²³ الأحباب في زاوية يتداولون لذكره بتحلق
 [5] يتدارسون العلم علم حقائق يرمي²⁴ الجهول علومها بتزندق

15 *Ibid.*

16 ها حاء .

18 قادر .

20 جفائه .

22 جهرتا .

24 يرم .

17 لوعة .

19 لوعتا .

21 فؤاد .

23 يا مجالس .

- [6] وترى²⁵ الشريعة كلهم متضلع²⁶ من علمها فالمهتدي²⁷ والمقتدي²⁸
 [7] يتناشدون من²⁹ القريض رقيقه³⁰ يتواجدون به بليل³¹ مشرق³²
 [8] يتجاذبون³³ الكاس لا بتكاسل³⁴ في حضرة الشيخ المربي³⁵ المرتقي
 [9] قطب الوجود وروحه وملاذه مجلى³⁶ الاله الكامل الحسن النقي
 [10] هو ذاته لا باعتبار³⁷ مراتب لتنزلات الذات فافهم³⁸ منطقي
 [11] هو شأنه³⁹ المضمور في أحدية لا حكم فيها للتجلي⁴⁰ فحقق
 [12] هو نوره فجلاه⁴¹ هو بذاته عن ذاته في وحدة بتحقق
 [13] هو منشأ⁴² الكثرات⁴³ نور⁴⁴ سماته

في واحدية جمعه المتفرق

- متضلعاً . 26
 في النص المطبوع: « المتقي » . 28
 في النص المطبوع: « رقيقة » . 30
 وترا . 25
 فل مهتدي . 27
 « من » ليس في الاصل . 29
 باليل . 31
 كلمة « مشرق » غير واضحة في الاصل . 32
 يتجادفون . 33
 المرب . 35
 بعترار . 37
 شنيهه . 39
 في النص المطبوع: « مجلاه » . 41
 الكنزات . 43
 بتكسلي . 34
 ملحا . 36
 فلا فهم . 38
 للتجل . 40
 منشؤ . 42
 قور . 44

[14] في الجمع عين⁴⁵ الذات مظهر⁴⁶ حكمها⁴⁷

في الفرق فاجمع للوجود وفرق

[15] هو جامع الأضداد ذوروح حوت سر الإله بأسره يتخلق⁴⁸

[16] روح على كل الوجود تحكمت وتصرفت⁴⁹ بالإذن⁵⁰ فيه المطلق

[17] وتسلطنت⁵¹ جلست على كرسيها

وتخلفت عن فاتح للمغلق⁵²

[18] صلى⁵³ عليه الله ما ورث الهدى عنه ابنه شيخي⁵⁴ ملاذي⁵⁵ بمضيق

[19] شيخي⁵⁶ حماه الله كل شروره وأدام⁵⁷ ربي لفيضه⁵⁸ المتدفق

[20] هو بغيتي هو منيتي وتعلقني⁵⁹ بحماه لا بحمي⁶⁰ سواء تعلقني⁶¹

[21] صلى⁶² الإله على النذير⁶³ شفيعنا

غوت الوري الهادي الرؤف المشفق

45 . غير .

47 . حكمه .

49 . وتصرفا .

51 . وتسلطت .

53 . في النص المطوع: «صل» .

55 . ملاد .

57 . في النص المطوع: «وآدام» .

59 . وتعلق .

61 . تعلق .

63 . النبي .

46 . مظهر .

48 . يتحقق .

50 . للإذن .

52 . المغلق .

54 . شيخ .

56 . شيخ .

58 . رب الفيضة .

60 . حما .

62 . في النص المطوع: «صل» .

[22] والآل آل المصطفى والصحب ما هاج التفرق لوعتي وتشوقي⁶⁴

Translation

[1] Separation stirred up my passion and my longing, and brought forth tears copiously pouring down.

[2] Sleep fled my eyelids and left behind in the heart a passion that feared nothing, except estrangement.

[3] My heart and limbs were clothed openly [?] *jahratan*] in a cloak of [spiritual] sickness by my remembrance and longing

[4] For assemblies of the beloved in a *zāwiya*, turn by turn invoking remembrance (*dhikr*) of Him in a circle.

[5] They teach one another knowledge—knowledge of mystical truths. The ignorant one condemns their knowledge as heresy.

[6] You see each one of them is deeply versed in the science of the *sharī'a*—the guided one and he who follows.

[7] They recite to one another such poetry as draws them close to God. Through it they achieve mutual ecstasy during a night that gives spiritual illumination.

[8] They clamour for the goblet (*al-ka's*)⁶⁵ energetically, not in idle fashion, in the presence of the evolved shaykh, the spiritual teacher,

[9] The axis of existence (*qutb al-wujūd*), its spirit and

64 والآل والصحب والمصطفى والآل [؟؟؟] [؟؟؟] التفرق لوعة وتشوقي .

65 The goblet is the goblet of divine love. The metaphor is of the goblet of wine: the goblet is 'the locus of manifestation of the divine; the wine is the Manifest within it, and the drinking (*shurb*) is that which is actualized from the Self-discloser in His locus of self-disclosure' (Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, quoted in William C. Chittick *The Sufī Path of Knowledge*, Albany, NY 1989, 109). On the goblet of divine love see already al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī in the 3/9th century; cf. Bernd Radtke and John O'Kane, *The Concept of Sainthood in Early Islamic Mysticism*, London: Curzon 1996, 185 ff., and Bernd Radtke, *Drei Schriften des Theosophen von Tirmid, Zweiter Teil*, Stuttgart-Beirut: Steiner (Bibliotheca Islamica 35b) 1996, 131 ff.

its refuge, the locus of God's self-disclosure (*majlā*), the perfect in goodness, the pure.

[10] He is His essence, but not in regard to levels of descent (*tanazzulāt*)⁶⁶ of the Essence—so understand my logic.

[11] He is His task (*sha'nuhu*),⁶⁷ concealed in His Transcendent Unity (*aḥadiyya*), which has no ruling property (*ḥukm*) for Self-disclosure, so verify (*fa-ḥaqqiq*).⁶⁸

[12] He is His light,⁶⁹ which He Himself disclosed by

66 Henry Corbin (*Creative Imagination in the Sūfism of Ibn 'Arabī*, Princeton 1969, 224) summarizes Ibn 'Arabī's discussion of the hierarchical planes of being, the *ḥaḍarāt*, or 'Presences': 'There are five of these Presences, namely the five Descents (*tanazzulāt*); these are determinations or conditions of the divine Ipseity in the forms of His Names; they act on the receptacles which undergo their influx and manifest them. The first *Ḥaḍra* is the theophany (*tajallī*) of the Essence (*dhāt*) in the eternal latent hexeities which are objects, the correlata of the Divine Names. This is the world of Absolute Mystery ('*ālam al-ghayb al-muṭlaq*, *Ḥaḍrat al-Dhāt*'). The other *ḥaḍarāt* are 'the angelic world of determinations or individuations constituting the Spirits (*ta'ayyunāt rūḥiyya*); the world of individuations constituting the Souls (*ta'ayyunāt nafsiyya*); the world of Idea-Images ('*ālam al-mithāl*') "typical Forms, individuations having figure and body, but in the immaterial state of "subtile matter"; the fifth is "the sensible and visible world ('*ālam al-shahāda*), of dense bodies'. On the system of five planes as used by Aḥmad al-Tijānī, see Bernd Radtke, 'Sufism in the 18th Century', *Die Welt des Islams*, xxxvi, 3, 1996, 352.

67 According to Ibn 'Arabī, God never displays Himself twice in the same form. 'Each day He is upon some task (*sha'n*)' (Q 55:29). See Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 96.

68 Chittick (*Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 4) defines the 'verifiers' (*al-muḥaqqiqūn*) as 'those Friends who have verified the truth of their vision on every level of existence and [have found], not least on the level of intelligence and speech, the specific marks of being human'.

69 There is a reference here to the pre-existent light of the Prophet Muḥammad, the actualization of which was the reason for the creation of the universe. This explanation was provided to Soares by Ḥamāhu 'llāh's son Muḥammad in Nioro. The apparent meaning would be that Ḥamāhu 'llāh himself is another manifestation of the Prophetic or Muḥammadan Light (*nūr muḥammadī*). On the possibility of participating in this light, see U. Rubin, 'Nūr Muḥammadī', *EI* (2), viii, 125. We are indebted to Stefan Reichmuth for drawing our attention

His essence out of His essence, in oneness through actualization.

[13] He is the source of manyness (*al-katharāt*). The light of His features (*simāt*)⁷⁰ is brought together in Uniqueness (*wāḥidiyya*)⁷¹ by what is differentiated.

[14] The entity of His Essence is [located in] undifferentiation (*jam'*), [whereas] the locus of manifestation of its ruling property is in differentiation (*farq*). So integrate and differentiate in regard to Being (*al-wujūd*).⁷²

[15] He is the integrator of opposites (*jāmi' al-aḍḍād*),⁷³ possessed of a soul that encompasses the mystery of God in

to this.

70 Chittick (*Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 62) explains the *simāt* as 'temporally originated things—the Beautiful Names'.

71 Titus Burchhardt, *An Introduction to Sufism*, Wellingborough 1990, 55: 'Uniqueness (*al-Wāḥidiyyah*) ... is in a sense a correlative of the Universe and it is in it that the Universe appears divinely. In each of its aspects, and they are beyond number—God reveals Himself uniquely and all are integrated in the unique Divine Nature.' In his glossary (p. 126) Burchhardt adds: '[Uniqueness] is to be distinguished from the Transcendent Unity (*al-Aḥadiyya*) which is beyond all distinctive knowledge whereas the Uniqueness appears in the differentiated just as principial distinctions appear in it'. Murata (*The Tao of Islam*, 61) explains this in another way: *Aḥadiyya* is 'Exclusive Unity', or the reality of God in Himself without regard to the cosmos—in other words Sheer Being (*al-wujūd al-mahḍ*). *Wāḥidiyya* is 'Inclusive Unity', or God as the source of the cosmos.

72 Chittick (*Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 214 quoting Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*): 'Though Being is One Entity, the entities of the possible things have made It many, so it is the One/Many (*al-Wāḥid al-Kathīr*)'. He points out that the word for existence—*wujūd*—also means 'finding' and is related to *wajd/wujūdān*, meaning 'passion, longing'. Hence *wujūd* is finding the Real in ecstasy. Murata (*The Tao of Islam*, 62) puts this, perhaps, more clearly: 'Differentiation becomes actualized in the cosmos, but its principle is found in Reality Itself, which is Sheer Being'. Undifferentiation is often synonymous with *jam'*, or all-comprehensiveness, whereas differentiation is synonymous with *farq* (dispersion).

73 Chittick (*ibid.*, 59): 'The name Allāh, which brings together all the divine names ... is the coincidence of opposites (*jam' al-aḍḍād*)'.

its entirety, assuming the [divine] traits.⁷⁴

[16] A spirit that imposed itself on all creation, and acted within it with unrestricted authority (*idhn muṭlaq*).⁷⁵

[17] [His spirit] assumed power [like a sultan] and sat on its throne,⁷⁶ acting as the successor to him who opened that which was closed.⁷⁷

[18] May God bless [the Prophet] so long as his son,⁷⁸ my shaykh, who is my refuge in distress, inherits guidance from him,

[19] My shaykh—may God protect him (*ḥamāhu 'llāh*) from all evils that beset him—and may my Lord cause his effusion [of blessing] constantly and abundantly to overflow.

[20] He is my desire, he is my wish, and the one to whom I cleave. I cleave to his protection not to the protection of any other.

[21] May God bless the warner, our intercessor, the succour of mankind, the merciful solicitous guide,

[22] And the family, the family of the Chosen One and the Companions, so long as separation stirs up my passion and my longing.

74 Chittick (*Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 43): '[The] friends of God assume His character traits (*takhalluq*) by gaining nearness to Him'.

75 His being a spirit that imposed itself on all creation would follow from his being the axis of existence (line 9 above), where he is also described as the 'spirit' and 'refuge' of existence. The axis of the age is the head of the saintly hierarchy to whom all Friends of God are subservient, and he is the locus of God's surveillance (*mawḍi' nazar Allāh*) of the world ('Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyya*, ed. A. Sprenger, Calcutta 1845, 141).

76 It is not clear, gramatically, what the feminine pronoun 'its' in the phrase '*alā kursiyyihā*' refers to.

77 In the celebrated Tijānī prayer *Jawharat al-kamāl* the Prophet Muḥammad is referred to as 'he who opened that which was closed' (*al-fātiḥ li-mā ughlaq*).

78 The word 'son' is to be understood here in the meaning of 'descendent'. In as much as Ḥamāhu 'llāh was a *sharif*, he was in this sense a 'son' of the Prophet. Cf. the poem in praise of Ḥamāhu 'llāh by Thierno Ahou Bouba Dian in Traoré, *Cheikh Hamahoullah*, 231, where he is referred to as *ibn rasūl Allāh*.