SOBRIETY AND ECSTASY: PERCEPTIONS OF CONFLICTING VIEWPOINTS REGARDING DIVINE UNION AS FOUND IN THE LIFE AND WORKS OF JUNAYD AND HALLAJ

by

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the DEPARTMENT OF ORIENTAL STUDIES In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements For the Degree of MASTER OF ARTS In the Graduate College THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

1978
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my deep gratitude to Dr. Richard M. Eaton of the Department of Oriental Studies for his valuable corrections and suggestions in the writing of this paper. I would also like to thank Mr. William R. Royce of the Department of Oriental Studies who gave generously of his time in helping me to overcome some immediate problems I incurred while preparing the thesis.
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ABSTRACT

This thesis studies two different Sufi interpretations of Divine Union as expounded in the mystical doctrines of Junayd, the proponent of sober mysticism, and Hallaj, a ninth century contemporary of Junayd, who favored an ecstatic interpretation of union with God. Since Sufis had to accommodate their doctrine to the dominant religious tradition in order to continue to practice unhampered by the religious authorities, we examine relevant developments of the established, or Sunni order, in the first three centuries of Islam. Other pertinent historical events are considered, such as sectarian challenges to the Caliphate and the formulation of Shari'ah, or Islamic Law.

Moving from the general to the specific, we examine the biographies of Junayd and Hallaj. The former was quiet and conservative, his nature reinforced by an exoteric education involving a rigorous grounding in the traditional religious disciplines -- as opposed to the brazen, self-reliance of Hallaj, who committed himself permanently to no one Sheikh, all the while traveling extensively, seeking a better method of interior realization while boldly preaching union with God.

Finally, our attention will turn to a comparison of their doctrines, the divergent ways in which they expressed man's relationship to God and, most important, their precise views on the nature of union with God.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Although religion purports to deal in absolutes, the religious establishment has never been able to satisfy man's personal quest for the ultimate, being concerned as it is with the setting of moral standards, the codifying of prescribed rites and religious obligations, and the hierarchization of power.

Ultimately however, religion does have its saving grace, for at its very heart lies the creative well-spring in which religion has its source -- mysticism, man's personal and direct communion with the Divine. Mysticism is the key to religion as it is able to satisfy man's personal quest for absolutes. In this connection, the charges laid against mysticism as being otherworldly and ahistorically oriented are decidedly unfair and narrow-minded, for in requiring man's self-purification and struggle against the ego, mysticism offers, within the context of religion, a lasting, effective cure for the betterment of society as a whole.

Yet for mysticism to be socially relevant within a given religious framework, it often elaborates a doctrine of its own. In Islam, not only did the esoteric or Sufi mystical doctrine conflict with the exoteric doctrine, but there was also a conflict within their own ranks concerning the precise nature of the mystical experience of the soul's union with God. In the Islamic context, perhaps the most famous of these
conflicts, from the standpoint both of its intensity and historical ramifications, was the contrast between Junayd, the proponent of sober mysticism and Hallaj, the type par excellence of ecstatic mysticism, that occurred around the beginning of the third Islamic century.

The aim of this paper will be to study the possible reasons for this fundamental difference in outlook between these two men. Since their mystical doctrine had a social orientation aimed at the Islamic community, it is first necessary to study the historical-intellectual milieu in which they lived in order to observe in what manner, if any, mystical doctrine had to accommodate itself to the established order. Secondly, we will turn our attention to biographical data, noting the possible effect on their doctrines of their education, travel and most important, their personal temperament. Finally, we will take up the discussion of their mystical doctrines, noting their particular coloring by historical exigencies and by individual temperament and inquiring as to whether the problem of sobriety versus ecstasy issues from a difference in mystical experience itself.

Note on the Sources:

The primary source for Junayd's doctrine is a manuscript of his letters recently discovered in Istanbul and translated from the Arabic to English by Dr. Abdel-Kader. Unfortunately, two books written by Junayd's disciples which would have been invaluable in the study of his life and doctrine have been lost, the Tabagat al-Nussak by ibn al-ʿArabi (d. 341/952) and Hikayat al-Awliya by Jaʿfar al-Khuldi (d. 348/959). Yet, fragments of these books, along with additional fragments pertinent
to Junayd are preserved in al-Sarraj’s (d. 378/988) Kitab al-Luma’
al-Makki’s (d. 386/996) Kitab Qut al-Qulub. In addition, Dr. Abdel-Kader
has made use of manuals of Sufi doctrine in which references are made to
Junayd’s life and teaching. These are: al-Sulami’s (d. 412/1021)
Tabaqat al-Sufiyya, al-Qushayri’s (d. 465/1072) Risala, al-Hujwiri’s
(d. 470/1077) Kashf al-Mahjub and al-Kalabadi’s (d. 388/998) Kitab
al-Ta’arruf. The latter two books were available to me in English trans-
lation. One final source, neglected by Dr. Abdel-Kader, is ‘Attar’s
(d. 617/1220) Tadhkira‘t al-Awliya, a biography of Sufi saints. The
accumulation of all the above material provides sufficient evidence for
citing Junayd as the great synthesizer and codifier of Sufi doctrine.
It is doubtful that we can expect any new material to turn up on Junayd
as he regarded his inner life as secret and publicly preached and wrote
with great caution.

Thanks to the laborious efforts of Louis Massignon, we have the
definitive statement of Hallaj’s life and works in the monumental four
volume work La Passion d’Hallaj. In this work are found French transla-
tions of Hallaj’s Riwayat and Kitab al-Tawasin. Another edition of
Kitab al-Tawasin (1913) contains notes by Massignon with a translation
of al-Baqli’s Persian commentary.

Although I was unable to procure accounts of Hallaj’s Baghdad
preaching, Akhbar al-Hallaj and his Diwan of ecstatic poems and prayers,
references to these works are frequently cited in La Passion. Addi-
tional sources used were the books of ‘Attar, al-Kalabadi, al-Hujwiri,
previously cited.
Note on Transliteration and Dates:

I have endeavored to make the transliteration of Arabic and Persian words as simple as possible, both for the typist as well as the reader. I have, therefore, omitted long vowel markings and diacritical dots while preserving the 'ayn notation since it is a letter. Both Muslim and Christian dates are furnished, appearing from left to right respectively.
CHAPTER 2

THE ISLAMIC INTELLECTUAL FERMENT OF
NINTH CENTURY BAGHDAD: SOCIAL PROTEST, DOCTRINAL
DIVERSITY AND THE FORMATION OF A MAJORITY OPINION

Generally speaking, societies are hierarchical and ritualistic. A society so conceived often institutionalizes redundancy and imitation but it is, on the whole, held in man's better interest, for it offers socio-political continuity (however archaic the machinery may be) and thereby provides at least a modicum of order and stability in which all men can work and live. This is not to say however, that a social order, with its code of moral behavior and rules for government, once established becomes immune from disruptive forces. On the contrary, it is that very order which becomes the target of change as each faction clamours for support in calling a halt to the present order, only to replace it with another hierarchy and its concomitant corpus of rituals. For a variety of reasons, proposals for alteration of the system, irrespective of their positive value, are almost always regarded with suspicion by members of the status quo, and while opposition to change has had the desirable effect of checking anarchic tendencies in society it has, unhappily, also obstructed the path to fresh, creative advancement. The impediment to growth often means that the individual lives for the system, government or whatever it be, and the ruling elite, for its part, satisfied with having reaffirmed the status quo, has actually signed its own death warrant toward stagnation and decay.
The vacillation between change and stability is poignantly illustrated by the example of Islam, the case becoming even more cogent by the fact that a multiplicity of groups were competing for authority at a time when a new social order was being created. Each group, motivated by an inner conviction, Marshall Hodgson rightly terms "personal piety"\(^1\), offered its particular adumbrations of a hierarchical social order based on their beliefs regarding the flow of authority from its provenance, God. During Muhammad's lifetime, the Muslim community was relatively free from discord, being small, homogeneous and geographically confined. Moreover, Muhammad, as the viceregent of God on earth, wielded absolute authority over the believers. The believers, for their part, were able to resolve problems of religious behavior, either in imitation of the Prophet or through direct questions put to him. Upon the death of Muhammad, two major problems arose which instigated both the birth of a dominant social order, i.e., Sunnism and a doctrinal basis for that order: 1) how to regulate life of the Muslim community, and 2) the question of leadership of the community.

The search for social regulation was a search for a definitive religious response to Muhammad's message. Moreover, given the special nature of Islam where no essential distinction lay between religion and moral behavior on one hand, and legal-ethical considerations on the other, it was inevitable that formulation of a behavioral code or Shari'\(\text{a}\) would entail elaboration of religious doctrine though

specific religious sciences would not appear until the third century A.H. It is important to note that development of a majority Sunni doctrine did not proceed along any one line, but grew quite adventitiously out of an amalgam of ideas from rival religious groups and the politically disaffiliated. It will suffice here to discuss only those salient points that contributed to the growth of an established Islamic doctrine.

It was not until the last thirty years of the Umayyad Caliphate (102-132/720-750) that jurists and other religious specialists became aware of the need for a uniform religious code that would have the binding effect of law. Heretofore, justice had been administered locally, employing an arbitrary admixture of Arab customary law, Koranic dictates and Prophetic practice. By 102/720 however, an expanded Islamic Empire had brought in its train new problems for which no solution could be found either in previous practice or Scripture. Moreover, pious Muslims provoked the question of correct religious behavior by protesting against the libertinism of the ungodly Umayyads. Indeed, as Professor D. B. MacDonald has noted, under the opportunistic Umayyads "a system of law was impossible". Nevertheless, speculative jurists began to discuss the application of Muslim law in a theoretical manner with a view to providing uniformity in law. Numerous "law schools" gradually came into existence in al-Kufa, al-Basra and al-Fustat. In 132/750, when the Abbasids came to power, it marked a triumph of theologians and lawyers over secular rulers and the study of law profited considerably. Henceforth, the state would rest on a pious footing. The Abbasids themselves

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encouraged legal studies. In this atmosphere of religious reformation, four major schools of jurisprudence evolved, each differing on the criteria used in determining the law. In Madina, a city where much Prophetic teaching had originated, the jurist Malik ibn Anas (d. 179/786) developed a system employing the Koran, Arab and Prophetic tradition, or sunna, and ijma or agreement of the Medinan Muslims. In Baghdad, far removed from living tradition, Abu Hanifa stressed the use of ray or personal opinion based on the Koran. Like Malik, Abu Hanifa employed the concept of istislah, that the judgement had to work in the public interest. Thus, there was a tendency on the part of both schools to compromise points of law in deference to the welfare of the community as a whole.

To al-Shafi‘i (d. 205/820) goes the credit of systematizing through compromise the sources for Islamic Law. The Koran, as the Word of God, was affirmed as the ultimate source of law and authority. Secondly, issues on which the Koran was silent or ambiguous would be clarified, by logical extension, by reports on Prophetic practice and utterance, Hadith. In insisting that only the Sunna of the Prophet be employed as a secondary source as opposed to the local use of Arab custom, al-Shafi‘i created greater uniformity among law schools and in so doing, he laid the ground work for the growth of a Sunni majority. Implicit in the recognition of the Koran and Sunna as infallible sources of law was the Muslim belief in the inadequacy of reason in distinguishing

\[3\text{Ibid., p. 94.}\]

between good and evil and the necessity of Divine Revelation to guide man aright. In consequence, the Koranic notion of an inferior and subordinate mankind duly dependent on Supreme Authority was in a sense approved, and this affirmation may have caused many to recoil from the Shi'ite idea of a Divinely guided Imam.

Of enormous importance for the formation of a Muslim majority was the systematization by al-Shafi'i of the third source of law, ijma. Ijma may have been a more democratic development of Malik's concept of istislah. In any case, ijma was the recognition in practice of the necessity for "communal solidarity" among Muslims. This communal solidarity, as Joseph Schacht has remarked, was effectively at work since al-Shafi'i had pre-empted the use of customary law as the second source of law with the Sunna, or practice, of the Prophet, thereby bringing about the triumph of community consensus over the small number of legal scholars who employed local custom. As important as it is ironic, the function of ijma is in practice absolute, legitimizing both the interpretation of the Koran and the authenticity of Hadith reports. In this connection, another important factor for the formation of a majority position was the inevitable rise of a cadre of religious specialists occupied with verification of Hadith and Koranic interpretations, the 'ulama. They would come to be a source of religious authority in themselves. They were also effective in directing and elaborating the sentiments of the Muslim populace. Such a learned religious elite was

5Ibid., p. 203.

able to respond to and guide the opinions of the masses in the case of Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 241/855).

An extremely conservative, pious reactionary, ibn Hanbal was the founder of the fourth school of law. Somewhat speculative in outlook and with considerably less practical law experience than his forebears, ibn Hanbal was a purist who argued that the other schools were guilty of innovation, deviating sharply from the path Muhammad had outlined. A dedicated traditionalist, ibn Hanbal preached a return to the Koran and Sunna as the sole sources of law while minimizing ijma. As for qiyas (analogy) and ray (personal opinion), he rejected them entirely. In time, however, Hanbalites had to reconcile themselves to the use of ijma where no solution was forthcoming from the primary sources. Ibn Hanbal and other traditionalists such as Daud ibn Khalaf (d. 270/883) represented a puritanical style of piety that played down the use of reason in devising a social order and emphasized fervent reliance on Revelation and divinely inspired Prophetic Tradition. A growing number of Muslims rallied around ibn Hanbal. These were the Ahl-i Hadith, so called for their singular reliance on Hadith (after the Koran) as sufficient sources of law. Hearkening back to an ideal past, they called for a return to the simple piety of Muhammad. Theirs was a religion of faith and piety and it was this personal emotional element that won them so large a popular following in the third Islamic century, especially among the poorer classes of Baghdad. Generally uneducated, these simple folk could not warm up to the dry rationalism of the Mu'tazilites and the pointless Kalam debates. Religion had to be a felt, emotive experience through obedience to the strictures of the Koran and in imitation of the Prophet. Consequently, they offered
no place in their religion for foreign studies such as Greek philosophy. Out of their emotional bent and their purely devotional attitude, they argued a personal God who was Supreme in all things. Forced to answer to opposing factions as the Mu'tazilites, they heartily affirmed an anthropomorphic, omnipotent God, and an eternal Koran. At times their quest for a personal God capable of an intimate relationship with His creatures put the Hadith people in the precarious position of reducing Him to simple human attributes. Owing, however, to the careful management of the `ulama, who toned down an excessive anthropomorphism by introducing the concept of *bila kayf* (without questioning), the Hadithi was able to avoid the supreme error of *shirk* (polytheism).

The Hadith people were a key element in the formation of a dominant religious majority. Indeed, as William M. Watt has remarked, the Ahl-i Hadith were the forerunners of the Sunnis. One reason for this has been previously adduced: their emphasis on a personal religion based on faith. Secondly, they were conscious of a broad community loyalism and expressed their concern for unity of the community by their adoption of an anti-revolutionary posture combined with, at times, begrudging recognition of the established Caliph.

Such was the case in 202/817 when the reigning Caliph al-Mamun in a breach of Caliphal authority, attempted to establish a state orthodoxy by declaring the idea of the createdness of the Koran binding on all Muslims. In order to enforce the decree, al-Mamun commissioned a *minha*, or inquisition, of simple pietists like ibn Hanbal. The inquisition had

the paradoxical effect of speeding the formation of a religious consensus. Among the non-professional classes, it forced Muslims to take sides. Surprisingly, despite the threat of persecution, most Muslims rejected Mu'tazilite doctrine, unable to accept a recondite argument employing Greek methods of defense. Conservative members of the 'ulama reacted by adopting Kalam methods to defend many beliefs held in common with the Ahli Hadith. When, in 236/850, the inquisition by the Mu'tazilites was ended under the Caliph al-Mutawakkil, Sunnism seemed to have taken definite form.

As was previously stated, a corpus of official Muslim beliefs arose out of an amalgam of factors, but probably the greatest impetus to doctrinal development was the embittered disagreement over leadership of the Islamic Community. Political arguments which initially centered around who and in what manner the Prophet's successor derived his authority, had the manifold effect of consolidating Sunni tendencies while giving birth to rival sects within Islam.

Perhaps the earliest major sect was a group of bellicose, puritanical Muslims known as the Kharijites. The Kharijites violently objected to the Caliphate being the sole prerogative of any one family, in this case the Quraysh tribe. In characteristic democratic fashion as Muslims, they argued that the leadership of the community rested on the basis of one's qualifications as a good Muslim elected by a vote of believers. If he were so qualified, even a slave could be Caliph. This issue was a desideratum for the flowering of theology for the Kharijites.

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8Ibid., p. 280.
had forced to the fore the question "What is a good Muslim?" Somewhat rigid in their definition, they declared that mere faith was insufficient for salvation, that a Muslim was enjoined by the Koran to perform good works in order to be saved. Worse still, for the unity of the community, an unrepentant sinner relinquished his right to Muslimhood and those sinners had to be combatted with the sword as infidels. Hence, the Kharijites were more than a mere doctrinal threat to the community, but openly avowed to overthrow the Umayyad regime.

Diametrically opposed to the Kharijite position were the Murjite, who declared that faith in a Muslim's heart was sufficient for membership in the community and that nothing less than shirk or polytheism would condemn him. Politically, they recognized the sovereignty of the worldly Umayyads and deferred judgment of their behavior until Judgment Day.

These early debates seemed to release a concatenation of events that ultimately led the Islamic community to define itself in theological, political and social terms. The polemics concerning faith and works spawned yet another issue: whether faith and works were a product of man's will or God's, i.e., free will versus predestination. On this issue, the Kharijites were divided. Those proponents of free will, or man's power (qadar) broke off and were henceforth called Qadarites, the forerunners of the Mu'tazilites.

The Mu'tazilites were the greatest doctrinal challenge to popular beliefs. Armed with ideas and methods of Greek philosophy, the Mu'tazilites embarked on a speculative and systematic defense of their
Muslim beliefs. They were devout Muslims concerned chiefly with safeguarding the unity and transcendence of God. By necessity, defense of such ideas drew fresh issues into the vortex of debate. In maintaining the strict "otherness" of God, they affirmed an allegorical, created Koran and that all of His qualities must reside in His essence (dhat). To some Mu'tazilites, these asseverations were little more than tautologies stating what was obvious in the light of reason. Indeed, for the Mu'tazilites it was reason that was the a priori tool, not Revelation. Reason made clear that God perforce did best for his creatures. Reason could distinguish between Good and Evil without the aid of Revelation. In fact, reason could attain to the knowledge of God. In the eyes of more faith-oriented Muslims as the Hadithi, the attempt to establish man's reason, hence man, as the law-giver of the community threatened to undermine the central role of the Koran and Sunna. The Hadith people adhered to anthropomorphic images in the Koran simply because the Word of God said it is so. No need for further discussion. Hence, in vain did the traditionalist al-Makki (d. 235/849) try to exhort the Hadithi to learn the Kalam's methods of defense. While the sincerity of the religious convictions of Mu'tazilites cannot be in question, it is clear that their approach to Islam was that of an educated elite, unpalatable to the masses. Nevertheless, there were those pious ulama who felt a disquieting need to come to terms with ilm al-kalam and ultimately the Mu'tazilites supplied their opponents with an arsenal of intellectual weapons that precipitated their own downfall, for in 301/913

MacDonald, Development of Muslim Theology, p. 135.
al-Ash'ari defected from the Mu'ātazilite camp and, using syllogistic reasoning to defend Hadithi dogma, he succeeded in establishing Sunnism once and for all as the official doctrine of Islam. As a result, many moderate Mu'ātazilites were won over to the Sunni cause providing a classic example of the catholicity of the Islamic community.

Aside from the Kharijites, another Muslim group that flatly refused accommodation in the Islamic community were the Shi'ites, or partisans of 'Ali. With respect to the number of adherents and its militant political nature, Shi'ism from its beginnings in Marwani times (73/692) posed a serious threat to the established order. Initially their discontent was political in nature, leadership of the community rightfully belonged to 'Ali (the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet) and his descendents. The attempt to restore the House of 'Ali to the Caliphate was an attempt on the part of the Arabs to return the capital to al-Kufa. Excluded from power by the Umayyads and unrewarded by their efforts in the Abbasid Revolution, Shi'ites embarked on a series of petty conspiracies and ill-organized revolts. Gradually, in defense of their claims, Shi'ites formulated an elaborate and appealing doctrine that departed radically from common beliefs. The Caliphal prerogative of 'Ali and his descendents was enhanced by the claim that there existed an esoteric interpretation of the Koran and an accompanying corpus of arcane lore transmitted from Muhammad to 'Ali through the chain of 'Alid descendents. The question of 'Ali's descendents was cause for a split among Shi'ites out of which two major groups formed: the Ithna 'Ashari, or Twelvers, and the Isma'ili. The Ithna 'Ashari held to a line of descent through the really only surviving son of the sixth Imam, Ja'far al-Sadiq.
(d. 148/765), Musa al-Kazim (d. 183/799). When the last or twelfth Imam Muhammad al-Muntazar mysteriously disappeared in 260/873, it was declared that he was in hiding and at the end of historical time would re-establish the Shi'ites to their rightful place in Islam and restore justice in the world. To the Abbasids, their threat to the order was real and on-going, and some Shi'ite Imams such as Musa spent a good part of their lives in jail.10

A more radical Shi'ite group was the Isma'ili followers of Ja'far al-Sadiq's son Isma'il, who had predeceased his father. In 250/864 the Isma'iliis appeared as a secret revolutionary organization with missionary designs. A major figure was Hamdan Qarmat who was centered around al-Kufa and propagated rebellion throughout the Abbasid Empire. By 281/894 the Qarmatians, a separate branch of the Isma'iliis, had set up a Republic in East Arabia from where they continued to spread revolutionary propaganda throughout the Abbasid Empire. On the whole, Isma'iliis developed a highly esoteric system of cosmology and cyclic history. Existence was divided into two aspects, the **zahir**, the accepted, surface meaning of religion, and the **batin**, a body of concealed truths transmitted through the seven major Prophets, the last of whom was Isma'il. When he reappeared, he would be the Divine Mahdi, "the guided one," who would bring order and justice to the world. The particulars of the doctrines of these two Shi'ite sects need not detain us here. It is important to note that the Shi'ite attribution of a Divine Imam as an authoritative source of religious doctrine was rejected by the Sunni majority as heresy.

The Shi'ite doctrine of *taqiya* or dissimulation, combined with their practice of secret teaching, was probably a perennial cause of much anxiety and undue suspicion on the part of the ruling Abbasids, since here was a case of disaffected Muslims preaching social and political reform in any number of doctrinal guises and camouflaged dress.

We have discussed the two general tendencies operating in the first three centuries of Islam along sectarian lines. The one in the direction of social regulation and legal formalism that resulted in the *Shari'a* or Islamic Law and the other, the rise of numerous minority protest groups. One effect of both tendencies was to consolidate a majority opinion, Sunni, that began to show signs of being the religion of state and society as early as 257/870\(^{11}\), though it was not until 276/889 that we find the first reference to them as Ahl al-Sunna wa'l-Jama'a.\(^{12}\)

It would not be unreasonable to assume then that by the last quarter of the third century A.H., the official doctrine of Islam was Sunnism, having asserted itself after more than 200 years of conflict, debate and some painstaking soul-searching. Rulers of state were inclined to view opposing doctrines with hostility and suspicion and with some justification, since implicit in many doctrines was a challenge to Caliphal authority. With respect to Muslim law, the 'ulama, among whom were pious theologians and jurists, formed a homogeneous body of religious judges with respect to fundamental conceptions of God's nature, the

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\(^{11}\) Watt, *Formative Period*, p. 254.

\(^{12}\) Ibid., p. 268.
Koran, and man, and by employing the generally recognized practice of ijma\(^3\), "a definite legal test of heresy was possible and applied."\(^{13}\)

The rise and development of Sufism proceeded on lines similar to the aforementioned groups, beginning in the first two centuries A.H. as a particular religious response to the Prophet's message and gradually developed a doctrine of its own. Whatever else Sufism may owe to the influence of other religions, Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism, its initial stirrings are purely Islamic, an ascetic response to the ideal of poverty and austerity taught by the Prophet. Their ranks were increased in Umayyad times since many with high spiritual aspirations withdrew from the growing materialism of the government. Perhaps the most renowned of these early ascetics was al-Hasan al-Basri (d. 110/728), who established the Sufi theory that poverty and abstinence were practiced by the Prophets.\(^{14}\) As the asceticism of the first two centuries matured into more systematized practice and greater conceptualization, it developed by the third Islamic century,\(^{15}\) ideas that challenged conventional Sunni notions. One such challenge involved the relationship between God and man. The whole tenor of the Koran and Muhammad's preaching emphasized a strongly monotheistic God, and in order to protect the idea of God's unity, literal-minded religious scholars were quick to assert an impassable gulf existing between God and man.


Moreover, as Margaret Smith points out, the eschatological teaching of the Koran emphasized that man's attitude to the Divine be one of fear and submission,\textsuperscript{16} hence the term "Muslim", one who submits. But in their efforts at self-purification, Sufis focused on a direct concentration on the Divine in an attempt to bring their every thought and action into harmony with the Divine will. Absorbed for the moment in experience with the "other", Rabi'\textsuperscript{a} (d. 185/801) expressed this experience as one of love,

\begin{verbatim}
Two ways I love Thee: selfishly,
And next, as worthy is of Thee.\textsuperscript{17}
I die, and yet not dies in me
the ardour of my love for Thee,
Nor hath thy Love, my only goal.
Assuaged the fever of my soul.\textsuperscript{18}
\end{verbatim}

This quatrain, from Dhu'\textsuperscript{a}'l-Nun (d. 246/860), more boldly proclaims that a reciprocal love existed between God and Man. Sufis employed a sensuous inspired imagery of a lover yearning for and drawn near by his Beloved. As the lover approaches closer to God, he journeys along a Path of stages and states that reveal to him higher levels of reality where a hidden wisdom or gnosis (\textit{ma\textsuperscript{c}rif\textsuperscript{a}}) is bestowed on the seeker. Claims to a Divine Wisdom frustrated the \textsuperscript{`ulama since gnosis threatened to supersede \textit{\textsuperscript{\`i}lm} or convention, conceptual knowledge. How, reasoned the \textsuperscript{`ulama could a mystic obtain knowledge in solitary meditations, bestowed gratuitously,


\textsuperscript{17}Arberry, \textit{Sufism}, p. 43.

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., p. 53.
when it had taken them painstaking years to master the religious sciences? Besides, Sunni doctrine had already established that God was ultimately unknowable and mysterious, and even the Hadith people, normally more favorable towards personal religion, rejected the claim to gnosis as direct knowledge of God. Sufis such as Ja'far al-Sadiq went on to sketch a hierarchy of the faithful based on different degrees of knowledge, placing mystic saints one step removed from the Prophets. Such exalted positioning of the Sufis as the highest living repositories of wisdom threatened to undermine the 'ulama's role as mediators between the Koran and Sunna and the people. Still more blasphemous in eyes of the 'ulama was the attribution of miracles (karamat) to the elect of God held by the religious establishment as a gift reserved for Prophets alone. Sufi claims to miracles was tantamount to assigning Sufis a Prophetic role in Islam.

A further threat to the prestige of the 'ulama was the reverence paid to the Sufi Sheikh, the Sheikh being deemed indispensable for one wishing to travel the Path. Young disciples aligned themselves with a Sheikh and would frequent the latter's residence for instruction in the religious sciences, causing apprehension on the part of the scholars who feared a shift away from the mosque as the center of instruction.

Sufis were generally careful to bring their teaching in line with Sunni dogma. Al-Muhasibi employed Kalam dialectic to defend mystic doctrines. But a confrontation between the free-wheeling individualistic Sufis and the formalistic socially-minded 'ulama was inevitable. Their

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fundamental difference lay in their response to religion. Where the mystic sought direct perception of truths via the knowledge through identity, the scholars were satisfied to operate in conceptual field where knowledge was oriented along subject-object lines. Whereas the scholar worked out an intellectual defense of accepted truths with a view to social implementation, the mystic sought in his experience a corroboration of revealed truths for each individual. Consequently, as Marshall Hodgson so aptly puts it, "Sufis had a free, creative responsiveness that risked undermining respect and commitment to established rules." Indeed, it was the rejection of formal legalism that formed the essence of the Sufi spirit. The Shari‘a did not legislate for the inner man. The Sufis, concerned more with the spirit behind the law rather than the letter of the law, were at times inclined to be lax with respect to religious duties so meticulously laid out by the Shari‘a.

al-Hallaj outlined a plan substituting the five pillars with other spiritual practices for the ill and infirm.

By the end of the third century A.H., Sunni suspicions of the Sufis was mounting. In 272/885 Ghulam Khalil brought charges against the Sufis resulting in the branding of Nuri (d. 295/907) as a heretic (Zindiq) for his impassioned preaching of his love for God. Thanks to the intercession of the Caliph, Nuri was saved from capital punishment. Amidst this rising tide of hostility, Sufis were extremely astute in keeping their doctrine of unity with God (ittihad) from public ears.

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20Ibid., p. 403.

For such an assertion shook the very bedrock on which the community rested -- the Oneness of and utter transcendence of God. Not even the Prophet himself, so the Koran informs us, had attained God, stopping at two bows-length distance from Him. More important, after two hundred years of bitter conflict involving doctrinal disputes and political challenges, Sunnism had, in the interest of communal solidarity, outlined a simple formula which was the sole criterion for membership in the community -- the Shahada, the testimony of God's Oneness. Consequently, the doctrine of ittihad and its corollary, the apotheosis of man, amounted to the most heinous crime a Muslim could commit -- polytheism (shirk). Cautious mystics like Junayd employed, indeed perfected, the art of symbolic allusion when speaking and writing on the subject. Hallaj was not so prudent.
CHAPTER 3

THE MAKING OF TWO MYSTICS:
THE LIVES OF JUNAYD AND HALLAJ

Abu'l-Qasim al-Junayd ibn Muhammad ibn al-Junayd al-Khazzaz al-Qawariri was born in Baghdad in the year 215/830. His ancestors, rugged mountain people of Jabal, Persia engaged in trading export goods in the mid-seventh century.\(^1\) Both his father and uncle were merchants and even al-Junayd himself was known as a raw silk merchant (al-Khazzaz). One might expect that Junayd, having been raised among merchants and engaging to some extent in trading himself, would have traveled extensively in his lifetime. Quite the contrary, he seldom stirred from his native Baghdad,\(^2\) having received there both his formal and mystical education.

Junayd's formative religious training is marked by a rigorous grounding in the Sunni traditionalist sciences. One reason for this esoteric education can be found in Baghdad's tradition-charged intellectual atmosphere where pious intellectuals were conscious of a need to maintain a close adherence to Koranic and Sunni principles in the nacent Islamic community. Accordingly, we find reference by al-Makki (d. 386/996), a disciple of al-Sarraj, to the advice given Junayd by his mystic


\(^2\)Ibid., p. 33.
mentor and maternal uncle, Sari al-Saqti, who said, "May God make you a traditionalist who is a Sufi and not a Sufi who is a traditionalist."³

Junayd followed his uncle's advice, for at the age of twelve he undertook the study of law and hadith under Abu Thawr.⁴ The young Junayd proved to be an excellent student. This period had a profound effect on Junayd's later mystical interpretation, nourishing it with ideas of social commitment and qualified leadership; that is, leadership grounded in the exoteric religious sciences. Later, Junayd remarked, "Whoever has not learned the Koran by heart and has not formally studied hadith, and has not learned the law before embarking on Sufism, is a man who has no right to lead."⁵

While Junayd's mystical teachers were numerous, his uncle Sari (d. 253/869) stands out as the most influential. Sari raised his young nephew after the death of Junayd's father. An affluent Baghdadian spice merchant, Sari was revered by governors, generals, scholars and the masses for his virtue, piety and continence. His abstinence was extolled by such scholars as ibn Hanbal and Qushayri.⁶ As we shall see in Junayd, Sari developed his Sufism along traditional academic lines. He attended lectures by the great traditionalists of his day, such as al-Fudayl and ibn ʿAyyash, his conclusions drawn from a mind steeped in the religious sciences.

³Ibid., p. 3.
⁴Ibid., p. 48.
⁵Ibid., p. 3.
⁶Ibid., p. 9.
The founder of the Sufi School of Baghdad, Sari is recognized by al-Hujwiri as being the first to adduce a list of stations and states along the Sufi path. Other preoccupations of Sari and his School (ones which Junayd later adopted) were the development of knowledge of unification (tawhid) and formulation of a body of symbolic locutions. Yet, in his expression of Sufism, Sari balanced his scholastic interests with appreciation for the beauty and aesthetics of Sufism for, as Annemarie Schimmel points out, Sari was the first to define mystical love as "real mutual love between man and God."8

Junayd's instruction at the hands of Sari often took the form of a Socratic dialogue where Sari would pose a question on which Junayd was required to contemplate and provide an answer, such as "What is love?" Professor Abdel-Kader likens their relationship to that of Socrates and Plato, the former expounding on, in this case, problems of Sufism while the latter encapsulated the solution in a written, systematic form. Sari no doubt saw in his nephew one to whom he could pass the torch of an evolving Sufism, keeping it as he had done, within the pale of traditional disciplines. That Sari was concerned with aligning Sufism with Sunni tradition is further evidence by his counsel to his nephew,

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8Schimmel, Mystical Dimensions, p. 53.

9Abdel-Kader, Life, Personality and Writings, p. 9.

10Ibid., p. 10.
If you begin by acquiring a knowledge of the traditions and comprehending the fundamental principles of the faith and the Sunna, and then become an ascetic and devotee, you may hope to become an adept in the knowledge of Sufism. . . . but if you begin with devotion and godliness and ecstasy, you will become preoccupied with them to the exclusion of theology and the Sunna, and you will end by becoming an ecstatic (shatih) or by going astray because of your ignorance of the faith and the Sunna. . . . 11

As a cure for the aberrant manifestation of ecstasy, Junayd is admonished to return to the study of the exoteric tradition.

Sari's influence on Junayd may have extended so far as to contribute to Junayd's specific doctrine of sobriety. Sari related a dream in which he saw his deceased teacher Ma`ruf al-Kharki (d. 201/816) in heaven. "'Meseemed he was at the foot of God's throne,' said Sari, and God was saying to his angels, 'Who is this?' They answered, 'Thou knowest best, O Lord.' Then God said to them, 'This is Ma`ruf al-Kharki who was intoxicated with love of Me and will not recover his senses except by meeting me face to face.'" 12

The notion of a state of sobriety as superior and subsequent to intoxication forms the cornerstone of Junayd's mysticism. Thus the all-important characteristics of sobriety and control of the senses as requirements for union with God may well have originated with Sari and Ma`ruf. The connection becomes all the more cogent when we are informed by Professor Abdel-Kader that all three mystics share the same

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characteristic "way" beginning with an idealistic theosophy, leading towards the Beatific Vision to the final and enduring state of unification.\(^{13}\)

When about thirty years of age, Junayd associated himself with the mystic-theologian al-Harith al-Muhasibi and remained with him for ten years. Junayd was acquainted with him well before this time, however, as frequently Muhasibi would visit at the house of Sari and would invite Junayd to join him for a walk. One such occasion illustrates Muhasibi's attempt to rid Junayd of his shy introversion.

When Muhasibi invited the budding mystic to join him for a stroll to the desert, Junayd replied, "Will you drag me forth from my life of retirement in which I feel safe about myself, out on to the highroads, with their risks and with exposure to what attracts the sensual desires?"\(^{14}\) And elsewhere Junayd complains, "My solitude has become my fellowship, but you drag me to the desert and into the sight of men and the public highroads."\(^{15}\) Notwithstanding an occasional difference, Muhasibi left an enduring mark on Junayd's Sufism. His influence extends to three aspects of Junayd's thought. Firstly, Muhasibi's method in Sufism as "a way of constant purification and mental struggle,"\(^{16}\) with its concomitant attitude of piety, morality and

\(^{13}\)Abdel-Kader, *Life, Personality and Writings*, p. 16.
\(^{14}\)Smith, *An Early Mystic*, pp. 8-9.
\(^{15}\)Ibid., p. 9.
\(^{16}\)Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 58.
self-sacrifice informed Junayd's very definition of Sufism.\(^\text{17}\) Indeed, Junayd was to give direct expression to this view, "We did not derive it (Sufism) from discussion, but from fasting and renunciation of this world and the abandonment of that to which we are accustomed and which is reckoned to be good."\(^\text{18}\) Secondly, and perhaps more significantly, Muhasibi was recognized as a staunch advocate of the "sober" type of mysticism. He eschewed all the varieties of intoxicated indulgence and rapturous utterance many Sufis of his day were wont to display. Needless to say, Muhasibi's distaste for intoxication found no greater exponent than Junayd.

Lastly, was an aspect of Muhasibi's teaching that served to reinforce one particular aspect of Junayd's study under Sari and Abu Thawr -- that of "tradition-mindedness". Yet, at the heart of this shared view toward tradition lies a fundamental difference in mystic vision. Muhasibi was preoccupied chiefly with ethico-moral behavior, steering clear of the esoterica of Sufism. The secret of Sufism, he felt, lay in the profound depths of the Koran. Junayd, on the other hand, was concerned with the more ethereal knowledge of unification and annihilation, and consequently his Sufism led him to seek Truth in the more hidden, personal experiences of the Divine. The influence of Sari and his Baghdad School on Junayd can be seen quite clearly here.

Another teacher and one, moreover, whom Junayd cites as being his real teacher was Muhammad al-Qassab. One scholar speculates that this

\(^{17}\) Smith, *An Early Mystic*, p. 17.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., p. 28.
attribution owes to the fact that al-Qassab may have initiated him to the arcana of Sufism.\textsuperscript{19}

Junayd had associated with several other mystics whose influence seems to have been negligible. The only other noteworthy association was that of Abu Hafs al-Haddad of Nishapur (d. 260/873). It was perhaps this man, with his carefree aesthetic appreciation of life, that may have precipitated Junayd's abandonment of a hardy asceticism for a more balanced, moderate path between asceticism and luxury.

These, then, are the men, some of them the most renowned mystics of their day, who shared in the academic and mystical education of Junayd's personality. The education bestowed on him was one that, from all sides, impressed upon him the need to approach Sufism in a cautious, conservative manner forever seeking harmony with Sunnism.

Most important, the factor which made Junayd so amenable to such an education was his shy, demure nature. Sari made no attempt to discourage this, as he kept his nephew at home for his training. This shyness, this reluctance to mix with others found expression in his later life as he rarely traveled, having performed the hajj only once with Sari.\textsuperscript{20} Yet, by virtue of his occupation as head of the Baghdad School and his gifted intellect, and because Baghdad was the mystical-intellectual cynosure of the Islamic Empire, Junayd's house became a center not only for Sufis, but philosophers, theologians, poets and writers of all sorts.


The ongoing exchange between Junayd and the scholars doubtless reinforced both his belief in the importance of mastering the religious sciences and his concern not to alienate the "ulama. To this latter end, he was prudent in his speech and writings never to disclose those Sufi ideas which were unacceptable to the "ulama, such as man's union with God. Clearly, his letters are marked by an elusive, prevaricating tone. In one instance, Junayd reprimanded Shibli for his breach of the Sufi code of secrecy, "Oh, Abu Bakr [al-Shibli], be careful with the people. Always devise some means of camouflaging our words, splitting them and discussing them between ourselves, yet here you come along and tear away the veil!"21

For his part, Junayd gave few public lectures and avoided entanglement in politics. He preferred the more conservative style of a life of quiet retirement while limiting his teaching to instruction on an individual basis. He restricted the number of his students to twenty, fearing that if his doctrines were publicized, they were apt to be misconstrued and hence could be politically and religiously dangerous.22

The distinguished scholar, Annemarie Schimmel remarks that Junayd "knew very well . . . that it is dangerous to speak openly about the deepest mysteries of faith in the presence of the uninitiated (particularly

21Abdel-Kader, Life, Personality and Writings, p. 51.

22Junayd's fear was well-founded. Late in his life he underwent an inquisition of the Baghdad School designed to prosecute those who held the possibility of love between man and God. Junayd averted prosecution by claiming to be simply a jurist. However, persecution of other members of the school who refused to recant was for Junayd "an experience leading to withdrawal", from Abdel-Kader, Life, Personality and Writings, p. 40.
since orthodox circles viewed the activities of the Sufis with growing suspicion). It was for this reason that he had rejected Hallaj. . . .”

Indeed, at one point in his life, Junayd, after a period of public preaching, had roused the people against himself. Subsequently, he retired to his room and, refusing to preach, said "I cannot contrive my own destruction. I am content." Junayd died quietly in Baghdad in 298/910.

The life of Abu'l-Mughith al-Husayn ibn Mansur ibn Mahammar al-Baydawi al-Hallaj is a case study in bold, independent seeking and self-reliance. He was born in 244/857 in al-Tur near al-Bayda in Fars. While Fars was long a stronghold of Iranian language and culture, al-Bayda was highly Islamized, having been both a strategic outpost for Arab conquest and a way-station along the Shiraz-Ispahan commercial route. That Hallaj had mastered Arabic at an early age is evidenced by the fact that he thought, spoke and prayed in the Arab language.

When Hallaj was five years old, his father, a wool carder by profession, of mawali (client) Islamic status, moved to al-Wasit, a city populated predominantly by Hanbalites. In this strongly Sunni town, he received his formal education studying for ten years grammar, reading, Hadith and the Koran. He became a hafiz, or reciter of the Koran, at twelve. Professor Louis Massignon speculates that at 16, out of an "interior

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23 Schimmel, Mystical Dimension, p. 59.
24 Attar, Memorial of the Saints, p. 204.
dissatisfaction" with a desiccated religious culture, young Hallaj began to wander, seeking a method to "interiorize" the meaning of the Koran. In 260/873 he became the disciple of Sahl al-Tustar (d. 273/886) "un mystique indépendent et audacieux" who was the first to write a mystical taksir, interpretation, of the Koran. Sahl was Hallaj's first spiritual director and moreover, taught Hallaj during a crucial period of his formation. Renowned for his asceticism, Sahl stressed the continued renunciation of self and taught the idea adopted by Hallaj of the pre-eternal Muhammadan light. Annemarie Schimmel speculates that Hallaj may have borrowed Sahl's theory that the saints are an elect group predestined to attain the mystery of lordliness (sirr al-rububiya). In addition, as Professor Massignon has observed, Sahl taught his disciple a spiritual, anagogic interpretation of the Koran, the manner of fasting, especially during Ramadan, and that supererogatory fasts were the means to procuring the gift of miracles. Hallaj was to bear the rest of his life the imprint of Sahl's ascetic teaching.

Yet, Dr. Schimmel seems amiss in concluding that the strong affinity between the two men led Hallaj to follow his truth after Sahl's banishment from Wasit. Quite the contrary, as Massignon has shown, Hallaj departed abruptly from Wasit as a result of a "lack of respect"

26Ibid., P. 104.
27Ibid., p. 62.
28Schimmel, Mystical Dimensions, p. 56.
30Sahl was banished for making repentance a necessary duty.
for Sahl. Sahl was primarily concerned with intellectual exegesis of theology while Hallaj hungered for that immediate comprehension of the Divine that lay beyond the pale of reason.

So in 262/875, his quest for the Absolute led him to al-Basra, a pious Sunni center and one of the intellectual capitals of Islam. There, under his new teacher ʿAmr al-Makki (d. 297/909), an understudy of Junayd, Hallaj made Sufism his profession, donning the woolen khirqa. Shortly thereafter, Hallaj married Umm al-Husayn, the daughter of Sufi Abu Yaʿqub Aqta ʿ Basri. ʿAmr Makki seems to have become jealous of Hallaj's new alignment with Aqta ʿ since, in the eyes of Makki, Aqta ʿ coveted a man so young and destined for sainthood. Frustrated by this spiritual rivalry between ʿAmr Makki and his father-in-law, Hallaj appealed for advice from Junayd who, in characteristic fashion, advised him to be patient. Dutifully, Hallaj returned to Basra to live in his father-in-law's house while receiving instruction by correspondence from Junayd. His patience soon wore thin, however, and in 270/883 Hallaj set out on his first hajj to Mecca. Hallaj's break with ʿAmr Makki was gradual and owed in large measure to the latter's spiritual jealousy. But the final rupture was precipitated by fundamental differences in mystical outlook. Hallaj was convinced that he experienced private revelations, similar to Muhammad's, of Divine missives. Makki, prevaricating

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32 Ibid., p. 114.
33 Ibid., pp. 106-107.
34 Ibid., p. 62.
somewhat, referred to his disciple's experience as interior inspiration and cautiously avoided ascribing any practical value (for the community) to such experiences. Makki realized that Hallaj's claim, if accepted, was a usurpation of the Prophet's role and tactfully invoked the Sufi rule of secrecy, thereby choosing to avoid the question by dismissing its practical value and by prescribing guarded silence of such experiences. As a result, Professor Massignon notes, "Amr Makki was a legalist who could not (or would not?) guide Hallaj on this issue." When in Mecca, Hallaj began to proclaim his personal search for Divine Union publicly, "Amr Makki finally broke with him.

O. H. Thompson has correctly pointed out that this period was one of deep psychic involvement for Hallaj, a time of inward contemplation and not socio-political involvement. Even at this time, however, manifestations of Hallaj's social conscience appeared as he participated in the Zanj Rebellion by making a plea for improved justice. Immediately afterwards, when he departed from Basra on his first hajj, he brought with him an awareness of Shi'ite philosophical problems, to which

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35Ibid., p. 156.
36Ibid., p. 114.
38The Zanj Rebellion was a revolt of Negro slaves 'zanj' employed in swamplands of Southern Iraq. In 256/869, they revolted under a Kharijite leader, set up their own state and successfully sacked al-Basra. The above reference refers to 270/888 when the Caliph al-Mu'awwafq put an end to the rebellion and persecuted all dissidents, whence Hallaj fled.
he had already begun to address himself — such as the definition of spiritual union with the mahdi as one of love.39

A striking aspect of Hallaj's numerous pilgrimages is that each hajj was followed by a fresh increase in activity on his part, at times taking the form of a conversion mission, at other times resulting in a bolder, more vociferous proclamation and clarification of mystic goals. Subsequent to his first hajj where, seldom stirring, Hallaj fasted, prayed and followed strict observance of proscribed rites for one year, he became convinced of the possibility of a mystic science founded on introspection.

On his return from Mecca in 272/885, Hallaj became increasingly frustrated by organized Sufism in general and, as Dr. Schimmel has indicated, with the Baghdad School in particular.40 Hallaj cast off his khirqa in a striking gesture of rupture with the Sufis. External motives were his father-in-law's rejection, his annoyance with Makki's hypocrisy and the antagonism of the Sufis. More important were Hallaj's inner motives. He found the Sufis too withdrawn and detached from the maelstrom of Islamic life and, moved by spiritual realization of dogmatic truths, Hallaj sought to "teach a spiritual way of life to the laity and to preach for the purification of the individual and for restoration of the social order" among Muslims and non-Muslims.41 As

40 Schimmel, Mystical Dimensions, p. 66.
a result, he associated preferentially with the masses, but with scribes, Sultans and scholars as well.

Disguising himself in military garb to avoid surveillance by the authorities, Hallaj set out in 274/887 on a preaching tour to Khorasan. Generally, he followed Arab colonization routes, traveling in a caravan's train and sojourning primarily in Arab colonies such as Dinawar and Nishapur. His association with the scribes among whom were many Shi'ites, and his use of them as translators led to the incorporation in his thought of many words and concepts of a Shi'ite coloring. He also adopted Shi'ite borrowings of Hellenistic philosophy, medicine and alchemy. Because the entire movement of Hallaj's life revolved around the Islamic hajj and because his doctrine was devoutly Sunni in character, it is reasonable to conclude that Hallaj's thought was unaffected by alien, i.e., non-Sunni Muslim ideas. Admittedly, Shi'ite concepts and syllogistic reasoning are present in his works, but they represent a syncretistic and partly philosophical attempt to preach a Sunni-Muslim doctrine. As Massignon affirms, to be universally relevant, Hallaj was all things to all religious sects, a Mu'tazilite to the Mu'tazilites, a Shi'a to Shi'ites and a Sunni to the Sunnis. Preaching a unified God and the pre-eternal day of Covenant, he called his audience to realize the Divine within them. Union with the Divine, he asserted, would confer miraculous powers. As a heuristic device, Hallaj would often demonstrate his own miraculous gifts. In this there seems to have

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42Ibid., p. 188.

43 Ibid., p. 237.
been a bit of the showman in Hallaj, always playing to the gallery. This earned him the wrath of Mu'tazilite and Sunni theologians who accused him of charlatanism and conspiring with jinn.\(^4^4\) Even more brazen, no longer hindered by Makki, Hallaj fanned the fire of their wrath by preaching personal hadiths, *hadith qudsi*, where Hallaj, inspired by natural phenomena such as rainbows and clouds, preached as God in the first person.\(^4^5\)

After five years of preaching, Hallaj returned to his wife in al-Basra and fathered a third son. The following year in 281/894, he performed a second hajj, accompanied by 400 disciples. In Mecca he was credited (or discredited) with performing fantastic miracles such as conjuring sweets and elaborate dishes and was promptly attacked by both friends and Sufis for conspiring with jinn. In 282/895, he moved to Baghdad where he frequently saw his close friends Shibli (d. 334/945) and Nuri (d. 295/907).

In 283/896, prompted perhaps by greater inspiration from his second hajj, Hallaj set out via caravans for Sind (ruled by Qarmatians), Turkestan, North India and Khorasan for six years with the confessed goal of conversion of the Turks and to preach against the Manichean dualist heresy of good versus evil.\(^4^6\) In an illustrative but possibly apocryphal account, Hallaj is reported to have said en route to India,

\(^4^4\)Ibid., p. 65.

\(^4^5\)Ibid., p. 95.

\(^4^6\)Ibid., pp. 66, 227.
"Now I am going to the lands of polytheism to call men to God."\textsuperscript{47} Doubtless owing to his growing spiritual awareness and his own daring nature, he showed little tolerance for pseudo or quasi-realized Sufis. When in Ispahan he overheard 'Ali ibn Sahl preaching on ma'rifah, Hallaj rebuked him, exclaiming, "You dare to speak of ma'rifah while I am living and there is between sobriety (sahw) and rapture 700 degrees of which you have neither sniffed the odor nor understood the sense."\textsuperscript{48}

This conversion tour is followed by a third hajj, for two years of strict observation of the Koran and rites and rigorous ascetic practices. Professor Massignon has remarked that during this final hajj, Hallaj finally realized the true spirit of the hajj as "a call to the surpassing of ourselves".\textsuperscript{49}

The year 292/904 finds him in Baghdad where he built a home on the left bank of the Tigris in which he constructed a miniature Ka'ba.

The Baghdad period marks the culmination of Hallaj's mystical thought. His mysticism having fully blossomed, Hallaj began to preach that renouncement and fervent humbleness was the formula for Divine Union. Surpassing the ecstasy of Bistami, he taught that the human personality was not shattered by the influx of the Divine; rather it was purified, deified.\textsuperscript{50} Not only was he criticized by the theologians for reducing God to human terms, but he piqued the anger of the Imamites who argued, 

\textsuperscript{47}Atta\c{c} Memorial of the Saints, p. 226.
1) that he usurped the right of public preaching reserved solely for the deputy (naib) of the Shi'ite Imams, and 2) that he assumed the right to command as God, a privilege not even the Imam himself could claim. With respect to his public performance of miracles, the Sufis charged him with violating their code of secrecy. Hallaj had little respect for a code that seemed to hide the truth rather than proudly proclaim it. On one occasion, he recited a sarcastic eulogy on the arcane discipline professed by the Sufis. But it was not until Hallaj claimed to a Divine mission for his miracles that Sufis like Shibli and ibn Fatik finally openly abandoned him while continuing to maintain secret contact.

Preaching a message of Divine union, Hallaj effectively appealed to Muslims of all social ranks and stations. In the marketplace he was impassioned and charismatic: "Quant à moi, voici qu'il n'ya plus de voile entre Lui et moi." Among high society, he appealed to their desire for the ecstasy of Divine beauty by "manifesting boldly the presence of God." In the majlis, or meeting-house, he healed the sick and preached to the Sheikhs of his importance. And in the mosque, he revealed that he would stand as the Eternal Witness of the Divine Essence: "Sachez que Dieu a rendu mon sang licite pour vous. Tuez-moi donc! Vous en aurez recompense,

51Ibid., pp. 321-22.
52Ibid., p. 329. Credit must be given to Professor Louis Massignon who has translated Hallaj's writings and utterances from the Arabic, rendering them in a beautifully poetic and effusive style.
53Ibid., p. 326.
et moi, j'y gagnerai le repos car vous aurez combattu pour la foi et moi je serai mort martyre.”

By far the most daring utterance of the Baghdad period was his famous theopathic locution, "Ana'î-haqq" (I am the [Creative] Truth, God). His dramatic exclamation evoked mixed reactions from the community, judgments ranging from intellectual self-delusion to fana or annihilation of the personality, but clearly Hallaj implied his doctrine of Divine incarnation (hulul).

The arrest, conviction and execution of Hallaj was a drama in every sense of the word. The initiative was taken by the Zahirite canonist ibn Dawud, who argued on orthodox religious grounds. Both the legalist conception of love formed by the Muslim community (based on the Koran and Sunna) and the savagery of primitive Arab poetry, ibn Dawud felt, were negated by Hallaj's preaching of the "Essential Divine Desire". According to ibn Dawud, love was a mental malady, a libidinous urge that in no way could divinely transform the personality. Because Hallaj's Baghdad sermons were often laced with extremist Shi'ite terms, Dawud was convinced that Hallaj was a Qarmatian agent in disguise, fomenting a social insurrection.

Soon after, Hallaj was implicated, by virtue of his own reformist writings, in a Sunni reform movement that unsuccessfully attempted to overthrow the Caliph al-Muqtadir. Subsequently, his arrest was

54Ibid., p. 335.

55Ibid., p. 175.

56Ibid., p. 387.
ordered by the vizier ibn Furat in 298/910. Although several of his disciples were imprisoned, Hallaj succeeded in escaping to Sus with his brother-in-law. In 301/913, by a fortuitous turn of events, Hallaj was discovered by the police and imprisoned along with his brother-in-law for nine years in Baghdad on charges of 1) usurping Divine authority, 2) preaching hulul and 3) being a Qarmatian.

Unable to prove the charge of zandaga, or free thinking, the new vizier 'Ali ibn 'Isa (partial to his case for his cousin, Hamd Qanna'i, was a Hallajan) ordered Hallaj put on the pillory for four consecutive days and returned to prison. Shortly thereafter, the sympathy of the Chamberlain Nasr al-Qushuri moved him to bring Hallaj to the palace where a cell was constructed for him. The chains were removed and Hallaj was permitted to see visitors and disciples among whom he propagated his mystic writings.

Hallaj's influence in the court was growing, especially after he miraculously cured the caliph and the queen-mother of an illness.

Favors won at the court moved his opponents to action. The new vizier in 306/918, Hamid ibn al-Abbas, was determined to secure his execution. Convinced that Hallaj would overthrow the state, he secretly used Hallaj's disciples as spies and intercepted letters from other disciples in which Hallaj was referred to as "Essence of Essences" and the "Creator". When Hamid learned that Hallaj had revived a dead bird

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in prison he exclaimed, "O émir des croyants, mon avis est qu'on le tue sinon il y aura une séditation."58

The trial was reopened in 308/920. During the examination, when asked what proved the existence of God, Hallaj replied, "The Grace of God invested in pure believers as witnesses united with God."59 Sunni and Mu'tazilite theologians viewed this as heretical free-thinking and pressed the head judge Abu 'Umar for a conviction. Fearing governmental reprisal against Sufis, Juraryi and Shibli cast off their tunics. Juraryi, when interrogated in connection with Hallaj's doctrine of hulul, declared "This man is an infidel, you must kill him."60 Even his long-time friend Shibli said, "If one speaks like al-Hallaj, he must be forbidden."61 Only ibn 'Ata was faithful to Hallaj, at the cost of his life.

When writings of Hallaj were produced in which he adumbrated spiritual substitutes for the five pillars of Islam in special cases of illness, Abu 'Umar exclaimed, "Ce livre est la destruction des canons de l'Islam. O toi dont le sang peut-être versé sans peché!"62

Although ibn Surayj was successful in 301/913 in arguing that it was beyond the jurisdiction of the court to judge Hallaj's mystic states, by 309/922 events had reached such a pitch of fervor that his protestations were to no avail. As Massignon points out, Hallaj was no

59 Ibid., p. 569.
60 Ibid., p. 576.
61 Ibid., p. 576.
62 Ibid., p. 590.
longer a "simple preacher on the crossroads" or a "thaumaturge of the countryside."\(^{63}\) By 309/922, the cynosure of public attention and with strong influence among the people, doctors and state officials, Hallaj was advocating what was tantamount to altering the legal ceremonies of Islam. Accordingly, a fatwa of Abu 'Umar declared Hallaj a zindiq and called for his capital punishment, declaring "It is now licit to take the blood of Hallaj."\(^{64}\) It was signed by 84 witnesses.

When Hallaj learned of this he cried, "Mon dos est interdit (à vos fouets), mon sang inviolable. Il ne vous est pas permis d'user d'interprétation rendant licite de le verser; ma croyance, c'est l'Islam, ma règle de conduite c'est la tradition, ..."\(^{65}\) affirming for all time his Sunni Muslimhood. On Tuesday the 24th of Dhu'l-Ka'\(\text{a}^\text{da}\) 309 (March 26, 922), Hallaj was whipped 1,000 lashes, his hands and feet were cut off. After that, he was crucified. The following morning when he was removed from the gibbet, he uttered his final words, "Son tout pour l'extatique, c'est l'esseulement de son unique, en soi."\(^{66}\) He was then decapitated, his body burned and the ashes scattered from a minaret into the Tigris.

By way of summary, it is useful to note the distinction drawn by Gershom Scholem, of two contradictory but complimentary aspects

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\(^{63}\)Ibid., p. 591.

\(^{64}\)Ibid., p. 591.

\(^{65}\)Ibid., p. 593.

\(^{66}\)Ibid., p. 663.
of mysticism: the conservative and the revolutionary. The conservative mystic is he who, like Junayd, imbued with traditional attitudes and symbols, recognizes the validity of both traditional authority and the source of that authority, Scripture. At times, this entails a compromise in mystic doctrine, effected for the most part consciously and this, as we shall see, is applicable to Junayd.

The revolutionary mystic's attitude to authority is diametrically opposed. He either attempts to re-interpret religious authority, to establish a new religious authority or claims simply to be above authority altogether. From the standpoint of the established religious community, Hallaj's theopathic phrase "Ana'il-haqq" threatened to do all these things.

Yet Dr. Scholem sees the function of these two types of mystics as resulting from their education and spiritual teacher and, although this is corroborated by the evidence in the case of Junayd and Hallaj, I would hasten to add a third element — that of the mystic's personality which often directs the aspirant mystic's choice or rejection of a spiritual guide and predisposes him toward one or another type of education. Thus, barring differences in the mystical experience itself, these are some of the ingredients that make up mystic doctrine.

CHAPTER 4

MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE AND HOW TO DESCRIBE IT:
EXPRESSING ESOTERICAIMS TO THE EXOTERIC COMMUNITY

In the mysticism of Junayd and Hallaj, two general aspects can be discerned: the experience itself, including those lesser degrees of rapprochement towards Divine Union, and the interpretation of the experience or its conceptualization. With respect to the first aspect, the experience, it might seem that to judge the validity of Junayd's and Hallaj's claims to Divine Union is beyond our limitations as these are subjective states whose ultimate test lies in self-verification. Admittedly this is so, but acceptance of their claim to have realized the final goal need not be a matter of blind belief on our part, for anyone even mildly conversant with mysticism will find in the records of these Sufis mysticism's universal characteristics of ineffability, oneness, loss of ego, and so forth. Moreover, and highly significant, both men demonstrate their awareness of the pitfalls along the mystic path that can delude the seeker, causing him to fall short of total realization. Such is the case of Abu Yazid al-Bistami (d. 261/874), regarded by both Junayd and Hallaj as one who failed to reach the highest goal.

If, by relying on their claims as well as on our own good judgment, that in attaining the highest Sufi goal their experience was similar if not identical, then we may expect to find the cause of the
conflict between the sobriety of Junayd versus the ecstasy of Hallaj stemming from differences in interpretation. Both men, having sought for and found personal corroboration of Divine Revelation, wished to redefine the community's prosaic interpretation of the Koranic assertion of God's Oneness, that tawhid was more than a conceptual recognition of God's transcendence and, in fact, meant that this transcendence could be a personal, emotive experience for Muslims with God in a kind of Divine Embrace. The manner in which Junayd and Hallaj responded to the need for a better understanding of the Islamic religion reflects their education and especially their individual temperaments.

Quite in keeping with his character, Junayd's mystic doctrine accurately reflects his cautious, conservative disposition, ever striving toward harmony with the established order and the law. "Sufism," said Junayd,

is the purification of the heart from material characteristics, suppression of human qualities, avoiding the temptations of the carnal soul, taking up the qualities of the spirit, attachment to the sciences of reality, using what is more proper to the eternal, counselling the community, being truly faithful to God, and following the Prophet according to the Law.\(^1\)

Nowhere in this rather lusterless definition do we find mention of union with God or the passionate imagery of the lover yearning for his Beloved. Junayd's concern for the law was real and enduring and he consequently wrote little, fearing no doubt that his works would be publicly circulated. He requested that at his death his books be buried with him. These books, such as Kitab al-Fana and Kitab al-Mithaq, along with some

letters written to his disciples, total about eighty pages. Even these secret communications to his disciples are glossed with an enigmatic style that often betrays the sublime joy of the mystic life. Dr. Schimmel remarks of these letters that "this language of exquisite beauty rather veils than unveils the true meaning."2

Junayd's concern that mysticism conform to the law is symptomatic of his vision of the social role that the mystic plays in the life of the community. In a revealing letter to Ḍāmūr Makkī,3 Junayd relates the story of a scholar who discourses with the sage on religious issues. As a result of this discourse, the scholar becomes painfully cognizant of his shortcomings and begs the sage to "save me from the confusion which you know so well to be hidden in my secret soul, and from those evil desires concealed within me." The sage puts the scholar on the path to God by instructing him to pray and be humble. The scholar, in his gratitude, praises the mystic, "That which God has endowed me with through you is a gracious gift. He has raised my appreciation of the teaching for which he has found you a fit and worthy channel." Hence, God acts through the mystic to instruct the community. The mystic seems, for the most part, passive in that he does not publicly exhort the masses but acts as a doctor to whom world-weary patients come. Such a social role Junayd sees as incumbent on the Sufi, "The prerogative of knowledge carries with it the responsibility of instructing the laity."4

2Schimmel, Mystical Dimensions, p. 59. See p. 56 for an example of Junayd's writing.
4Ibid., p. 134.
mystic is a knowledgable guide on the path, for he is "an expert in the law and in all matters pertaining to Islam." Moreover, the Sufi "holds the view that authority must be obeyed nor will he separate himself from the community." 

Junayd, much like al-Ghazali after him, strove to establish a viable (hence subordinate) relationship of the esoteric to the exoteric in Islam. Junayd employed the concepts of *sidq* and *ikhlas* in order to codify, so to speak, the co-existence of these often antagonistic aspects of Islam. Sidq, or "unquestioning submission to God", represented the ethical, outward aspect of a believer's actions, the performance of duties and observance of the law. Ikhlas, on the other hand, constituted a man's inner state, his personal relationship with God. Although ikhlas was the chief goal of the worshipper, he nevertheless was forced to be faithful to the law, for the qualities of sidq were perforce present in a *mukhlis*, one who is sincere. Inwardly, the mystic strives toward self-purification, while outwardly he is an exemplary model of social behavior that Junayd felt would have ramifications as guidelines for posterity.

Finally, even when the scholar requests initiation to the Path and its secrets, the sage prevaricates, instructing him to prove himself through devotional exercises.

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5Ibid., pp. 142-43.
6Ibid., p. 143.
7Ibid., p. 167-71.
8Ibid., p. 143.
Junayd's caution is motivated by an admixture of discretion and fear, as is illustrated in his letter to Husayn al-Razi. The mission to teach, Junayd asserts, is a privilege and a duty; this raises one point "which I had first to learn myself and which I now venture to pass on to you. . . . Be cautious with your fellow men . . . and speak only after you are sure that you know your listeners." The ethical complexion of his teaching renders his public doctrine conciliatory while, at the same time, giving rise to numerous contradictions with his more concealed teachings.

For instance, publicly Junayd held 'ilm (knowledge) higher than ma'rifah (gnosis), but this view is reversed in his writings. Occasionally, Junayd's real attitude toward the exoteric surfaces, as in this passage on fana. "God manifests Himself through the human qualities and the seeker in uniquely happy, sure of access to God, they are free from formal obligations and will not be called upon to give account of their actions. . . ." Such ejaculations are rare and the bulk of his doctrines are subdued and compromising. Junayd's fundamental doctrine of the Covenant (Mi'thaq) provides clear evidence of this. It is important for it prepares the basis for the development of his mysticism and also because Hallaj later reworked it, adding to it a newer and bolder element. The idea of a covenant between man and God is drawn from the Koran (VII, 172) and Junayd's interpretation, as Dr. Zaehner notes, is an attempt to build a bridge between God and creation without impairing the absolute

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9Ibid., pp. 150-51.
10Ibid., p. 158.
unity of God.11 Junayd posits God in eternity, existing quite alone and in perfect knowledge of Himself. God then created souls in "a state of spiritual abstraction,"12 these souls existing as concepts endowed with Divine qualities and reveling in the knowledge of God. "He gave them knowledge of Him when they were only concepts which He had conceived."13

From this primordial state of timeless union with God, the souls are separated and given corporeal existence, i.e., individuality, in the time-bound world. God separates these elect with the intention of testing them, after which they will be returned to their incorporeal first existence. This first existence is "completely real," timeless and one of bliss.14 Return to this state is a return to eternal life in God, not as God. Thus deification is rather innocuously presented as becoming "once again an idea in the Divine mind."15

Know that God has made a covenant with those who know Him, who have knowledge of Him . . . those whom He has specially selected and endowed with the ability to interpret the Koran to the masses . . . it is with these that He has made his covenant, that in return for this knowledge of God they should impart to their fellow men and not withhold it.16

The entire journey of the soul from its initial separation through its travails (bala) on earth to its return is moved entirely by God's actions.

14Ibid., p. 162.
15Zaehner, Hindu and Muslim Mysticism, p. 140.
The trials are preordained, designed to offer man the opportunity to free his soul from attachment to created existence in order to unite with God. Unification (tawhid) Junayd defines as "the separation of that which has from that which was originated in time." Junayd postulates four stages of tawhid: a) that of the common people who pay lip-service to His Unity but lack control over desires and passions, 2) that of the religious scholars who combine performance of religious duties with intellectual testimony to God's Oneness, 3) that of the novice Sufi who obeys the law and has awareness of God within and without, 4) that of the divinely illuminated man whose individuality is annihilated (fana) in God. Fana is outlined as having three general stages: 1) the ascetic-moral training aimed at controlling man's passions and concupiscent desires, 2) the self, as a result of its privations, experiences 'the dark night of the soul' where it is suspended in a state of utter isolation unable to enjoy worldly pleasures and yet, separated from God, 3) the influx of God's grace that results in the extinction of individual consciousness wherein the Beatific Vision is beheld. Thus, it is through the loss of self that the mystic discovers the True Reality, or God.

Junayd's exposition of the stages of mystical experience is, at times, extremely vague and elusive. The distinguished scholar R. C. Zaehner himself acknowledges the difficulty in interpreting Junayd's doctrine. One of these vague allusions, and crucial for our study, is

17 Ibid., p. 70.
18 Zaehner, Hindu and Muslim Mysticism, p. 123.
the state of en-stasis the soul achieves in trying to regain the experience of union that God grants to the mystic for a fleeting moment as a kind of taste.

According to Junayd, the mystic's progress is not one of uninterpreted advancement towards the Godhead. He must brave trying setbacks that threaten to prevent the attainment of the object of his desire. Usually, the experience of union comes in a flash of intuition where the seeker suddenly realizes the co-existence of his eternal soul with God. Subsequently, however, God deprives the mystic of union and returns him to his normal state as a test (bala) designed to incite the mystic to consummate his self-purification in order to become closer to God.¹⁹

The test (bala) overtakes a man "because of their human qualities which still persist, because of their enjoyment of worldly pleasures."²⁰ Those who undergo these trials fall into two categories: "Those who are at home with their bala and live constantly with God's desire . . ." (in order to regain the experience of fana), and as for "those not spiritually elevated, it is said that the reason for their departure from the state of grace is their lack of spiritual competence and the weakness of their spirit."²¹

Consequently, the first fana is a pure gift of God's grace aimed at spurning the mystic on to greater efforts. Faced with loss of

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 152, 158-60.
²⁰Abdel-Kader, Life, Personality and Writings, p. 157.
²¹Ibid., p. 159.
God's presence, the mystic tries to regain proximity to Him by his own efforts. But without God's grace, the mystic can only achieve a state of solitude or isolation of its own soul. Junayd calls this state "awwal tafrīd al-tajrid" or the "first isolation in separation."\(^2^2\) Professor Louis Gardet correctly perceives this state as a terminal one of aloneness where the mystic achieves a kind of closed isolation of the soul without communion with the "Other".\(^2^3\) He labels this inferior experience natural mysticism (as opposed to supernatural mysticism), the former, he adds, being the constant tendency of Sufism. For Junayd, it is a trap dually designed to reveal the residues of egoism that persist in the mystic and to demonstrate the mystic's utter dependence on God.

In this state it thinks itself independent of God, loses all sense of awe, and behaves with coquettish boldness towards Him. God, however, now visits the mystic, thus drunk with spiritual pride, again; and his soul, confident though it is in its timeless being, is utterly humbled, made to suffer agonies, but made also, in and through its very agony, to thirst for God who, it now sees, in its only true goal and perfect satisfaction."\(^2^4\)

So concludes Dr. Zaehner. The second visitation by God is the same as the first, that through the obliteration of the personality and the annihilation of their human attributes (fana), the elect enjoy union (tawhīd) with God. In Junayd's words,

What they have perceived is through God who unites each one's perception of Him and retains His separate entity.

\(^2^2\)Zaehner, *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, p. 152.


\(^2^4\)Zaehner, *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, p. 152.
God has so inspired the elect that they can appreciate fully the significance of *uluhiya* that He has brought them near unto Him.\(^{25}\)

These are cautious words indeed, for even at the soul's highest ascent, prudence is exercised by Junayd in marking off a degree of separation from God. Furthermore, Junayd is careful to point out that fana is not a passing away of man's being in God's, i.e., that man's soul was identical to God's (ittihad), the charge of hulul -- the un-Islamic belief in Divine Incarnation. Rather, Junayd claimed fana is a passing of man's will in God's.

While fana then would seem to be the final state, Junayd, the theoretician that he was, devised the existence of a crowning state, baqa or subsistence in God. It is this latter state on which Junayd hinges his doctrine of sobriety (sahw) for in baqa, the mystic recovers from the momentary stupification of fana and its accompanying ecstasy to live a life of exemplary piety while continuing in the life of God.

Before considering whether baqa represents a real, subjective state for Junayd or whether it was merely a device employed in order to regulate the social behavior of the divinely realized mystic, it is of interest to note the pronouncements of Junayd in the case of the ecstatic mystic Bayazid Bistami. Bistami was the first Sufi to preach union with God through an identity of being (ittihad). As a result, Bistami actually claimed to be the God of the Koran, "Verily, I am, there is no God but

me so worship me."26 "Glory be to me. I am the Lord most High."27 Surprisingly, Junayd recognized this latter statement as being consistent with fana. Elsewhere, he notes, "I saw that the utmost limit of his state was one which few could understand from his own words when they heard them and which few could interpret because only those who knew the meaning of his sayings and had access to the source of his inspiration could bear with him."28 Thus far, Bistami's experience would seem to correspond with the first visitation by God as an illuminative flash of union that is not stabilized. The test is administered, God's grace is withdrawn and Bistami requests to be restored to His Oneness. Here, Junayd comments, "This is the way a person talks whom [God] has not clothed with the realities of the ecstasy of isolation in perfect and true union. When [Bistami] says, 'I entered into His unity' this represents his first glimpse of unity."29 An inclusion of Junayd's comments would avail little as they are self-contradictory and highly cryptic. Suffice it to say that I am in accord with Dr. Zaehner's interpretation that in his longing to return to God, knowledge of which was revealed to him during the first fana, Bistami achieved the static state of natural mysticism and falsely attributed it to God or rather as God.30 Junayd viewed his experience as incomplete, lacking the Grace necessary for

26Zaehner, Hindu and Muslim Mysticism, pp. 112-114.
27Ibid., pp. 121-22.
28Ibid., pp. 121.
29Ibid., pp. 122.
30Ibid., p. 124.
complete and stable union. Hence Junayd says, "... but [the mere fact] that he asked for this [at all] shows that he was near to attaining his goal; but a person who nearly gets to a place is not the same as one who is actually in it." 31 Junayd sums up the entire progression of the mystic who, owing to God's grace, reaches perfect union with God,

After their union with Him, He separates them from Himself (and grants them their individuality again), then He makes them absent (from this world when they are in union with Him), and makes them present (in this world) when He has separated them from Himself (and granted them their individuality again). Thus, it is that their absence from this world is but a facet of their presence with God and their presence in this world is a necessary cause of their absence from God. (As sentient individuals) they are dazzled by the sight of the emanations from Him, but with the passing of the faculty of rational perception, their individuality passes too, and so He removes them from this world. He grants perfection to their fana by granting them the state of baqa and perfects this baqa after fana by fana. 32

The states of fana and baqa are in only one way different, that baqa represents an enduring state of fana but the qualities inherent in these states are identical. Elsewhere Junayd refers to fana which "utterly overwhelms and stupifies the human perception of those God marks out by piety." 33 And in his more rapturous moments he exclaims,

I have realized that which is within me,
And my tongue has conversed with Thee in secret,
And we are united in one respect,
But we are separated in another.
Although awe has hidden thee from the glance of mine eye
Ecstasy has made thee near to my inmost parts. 34

31 Ibid., p. 122
33 Ibid., p. 147.
34 Ibid., p. 91.
Reality unites me with God, and Ritual separates me from God.  

Yet in his doctrine Junayd elevates baqa as superior to fana, baqa being a state wherein the mystic's individuality is restored to the mystic, albeit with divinized characteristics of generosity, kindness and love. With the return to individuality, the mystic becomes sober while continuing (baqa) to live in God. Clearly, the idea of baqa was a requirement that the ecstatic mystic conform to the law. With respect to Bistami, Junayd perceived that any mystic in a state of supposed or incomplete intoxication could proclaim to be God and thereby open the door to every madman and their flagrant excesses such as pantheism. Equally, Junayd wished to apply this condition to those divinely realized mystics and for those men, as Professor Hartmann so aptly puts it, the return to sobriety from intoxication "is a figment devised to let Sufis pass as Moslems." As Professor Abdel-Kader has noted, to be in fana and remain sober is a strain on the self and Junayd constantly admonished his disciples to exercise continence, evidenced by his letter to ibn Mu'adh, "May you not change when God translates you from your present state, and may your state remain essentially constant when God translates you from your normal self."  

Hujwiri tells the story of his own sheikh, Hasan al-Khattali, who, under Junayd's influence, was converted from

\[ ^{35} \text{Ibid., p. 173.} \]


\[ ^{37} \text{Abdel-Kader, Life, Personality and Writings, p. 91.} \]

\[ ^{38} \text{al-Junayd, "Letters of al-Junayd," p. 123.} \]
ecstatic to sober mysticism. Yet, there were doubtless many disciples who refused to conform to Junayd's wishes. Chief among those was Hallaj who, on his visit to Junayd in 264/877 was asked by the latter why he came.

The following exchange ensued:

"For the purpose of associating with the Sheikh." "I do not associate with madmen;" Junayd responded, "Association demands sanity; if that is wanting, the result is such behavior as yours in regard to Sahl ibn Abdullah Tustari and Amr." "Oh Sheikh, sobriety and intoxication are two attributes of man, and man is veiled from his Lord until his attributes are annihilated." "Oh son of Mansur," said Junayd, "you are in error concerning sobriety and intoxication. The former denotes soundness of one's spiritual state in relation to God, while the latter denotes excess of longing and extremity of love, and neither of them can be acquired by human effort. O son of Mansur, in your words I see much foolishness and nonsense." From this exchange it may be inferred that Hallaj also viewed intoxication (sukr) of the soul as a sign of incomplete union, i.e., the en-stasis of the soul in isolation. Like Junayd, Hallaj singles out Bistami as the prototype of this inferior experience. Commenting on Bistami's utterance, "Praise be to me!" Hallaj remarks,

Pauvre Abu Yazid! Il était arrivé au seuil de l'élocution inspirée. C'est bien de Dieu que lui venait ces paroles (aux lèvres). Mais il ne s'en rendait pas compte, aveuglé qu'il était encore par sa préoccupation de "Bayazid" (son moi, qu'il voyait encore se dresser comme un obstacle imaginaire) dans l'entre-deux (entre Dieu et lui). Tandis que le Sage, qui écoute Dieu former ces paroles, (en son coeur), ne considère plus "Bayazid" (son moi) - et ne se préoccupe plus, ni de rétracter ces paroles, ni de s'affrayer de leur énormité (ce que Bistami faisait).


40Ibid., p. 189.

Hallaj goes well beyond Junayd's recognition of Bistami's initial state as one of union for Hallaj asserts that the author of the phrase "Praise be to Me!" was God Incarnate. The matter of the Divine Locution will be taken up later. Here we are concerned with Hallaj's attitude towards intoxication. Bistami's state of inebriation and resultant inability to sustain union was caused by the persistence of ego consciousness. In this connection, Hallaj sketches two states preparatory to union: tajrid, from the triliteral root "j r d" to be stripped, signifying the mystic's ascetic detachment from the world and tafrid, which derives from the root "f r d" to be alone, to isolate oneself. In the latter state, the seeker becomes intoxicated from his soul's isolation and unification within itself, viz., Bistami's experience. So Hallaj instructs, "The first step in unification is the annihilation of separation (tafrid) because separation is the pronouncement that one has become separated from imperfections, while unification is the declaration of a thing's unity."^42 Hallaj likens Bistami to a bird who refuses to cut its wings (selfhood) and instructs him to "coupe-toi l'aile avec les ciseaux de l'anéantissement, sinon tu ne pourras pas me suivre."^43

Yet, Hallaj recognizes these inferior states as useful insofar as they are a call from God inspiring the mystic to further action. Junayd, on the other hand, cautiously refuses all reality to mystic states in an attempt to control the mystic's behavior during these states. In point of fact, Junayd emphasizes the negative aspect of all

^42Hujwiri, Kashf al-Mahjub, p. 281.

^43Hallaj, in Massignon, La Passion d'Hallaj, p. 318.
states leading to God whereas Hallaj, more unrestrained in his expres-
sion, stresses their positive value. Rapture is a purification, not a
destruction of memory; illumination is a transfiguration, not a "blind-
ing stupification of intelligence." Thus, Hallaj pronounces, "L'appel
de l'amour appelle au désir, l'appel du désir au ravissement, et l'appel
du ravissement appelle en Dieu." The call to rapture, ushering in the
final experience, Hallaj viewed as part and parcel of the unitive state.

Thus, in union, one enters the essence of ecstasy. Professor Gardet
points out that ecstasy (or wajd) connotes three nuances of meaning in
Arabic: "finding" -- finding God; "mental shock" -- the shock of the
intrusion of the uncontingent Real in the contingent world; "Existence"
-- the life of the mystic, through union, has become real and permanent
in God.

45 Ibid., p. 34.
46 Ibid., p. 58.
Hallaj's ecstatic doctrine is not the product of unsound religious beliefs and practices as Hujwiri would have us believe. But the result of a free, untrammelled spirit giving unabashed expression to the beauty of life in God. As Professor Nicholson remarks, "Hallaj was so deeply in earnest, that it was impossible for him to compromise with his conscience." His writings testify beautifully to his rapturous, unrestrained feelings for a life in God. Written at the beginning of his literary career (282/895) was the Riwayat, a collection of twenty-seven traditions written in the form of hadith qudsi where Hallaj, drawing from direct revelations, has God speaking in the first person. Chronologically, his next work was the Diwan, a collection of ecstatic poems and prayers forming an endearing dialogue between the Beloved with His own Divine Soul. Lastly came his dogmatic exposition Kitab al-Tawasin, written during the latter days of his imprisonment. The Kitab, though brief, is the best source for Hallaj's doctrine and offers a clear indication of the dramatic manner in which he would relate to the community his realization of the truth.

There seems to be a close affinity between the doctrines of Hallaj and Junayd. Indeed, Professor Massigmon has gone so far as to say that Hallaj made Junayd's doctrine his own, albeit devoid of the

47 Hujwiri, Kashf al-Mahjub, p. 152.
euphemisms that mark Junayd's thought. Hallaj boldly asserted the superiority of wisdom (ma'rifah) over the conventional religious sciences (ilm). In order to uphold the primacy of gnosis, Hallaj, in a discursive tour de force, argued: that all religious sciences were reducible to the Koran; that the Koran reduced to the science of isolated letters; that the letters were based on the science of "lam" "alif" of absolute negation; that the negation lay in the primordial point; that the point reduced to the wisdom that resides in the Divine Essence. As will be recalled, Junayd openly held to the superiority of ilm over gnosis while in secret maintaining the reverse. Hallaj, however, railed against anything that did not lead directly to a life in God. Sadness and suffering love, the universal means to union, existed for Hallaj apart from the revealed law. Suffering love, in the face of vicissitudes and temptations is the only path that leads to God. But man cannot choose to suffer for it is God who chooses the elect on the Day of the Covenant. Expectedly, Hallaj's doctrine of the Covenant departs considerably from that of Junayd's. Whereas Junayd posits the creation of man as an idea sharing in the knowledge of God, Hallaj daringly presents man as an irradiation of God's form and essence. In His desire to see Himself, to contemplate the splendor of His Essence which is Love,

50 The monotheistic formula: the negation of all real existences but God's in the Shahada, "la illa illa Allah" "There is no God but God. . . ."


God extended, in an act of pure generosity and love, all of His names and attributes to a being created in His image. He called this form Adam, glorified him, and saluted him as "Huwa, Huwa" (He, He). The theory of huwa, huwa forms the kernel of Hallaj's radical mysticism for it is an assertion (based on Koran LXXXII, 8) that man was essentially Divine, that his being was coterminous with God's. While Junayd's doctrine pointed in this direction, he was much too demure a mystic to express man's relationship with God as one of identity of essences; rather he preferred the less radical notion of man's essential self as an idea in the Divine mind. Hence the mystical path was negatively expressed as a dehumanizing process through suffering in order to return to one's former state. Hallaj went much further, infusing the theory of the Covenant with more poetic beauty and heightened expression. Man's fulfillment of the Covenant, through suffering, meant a positive deification of the mystic in his realization of his essential Oneness with the Divine. In the mystical cleansing of the soul, man was not simply being dehumanized but deified as well.

In an elaborate theoretical sketch, Hallaj developed the conception of the dual nature of man: the lahut or human nature composed of gross corporeal matter and the nafs or lower appetitive soul; and the nasut or the immaterial, divine principle in man located in the heart (qalb). The heart must divest itself of its temporal conditioning, its selfhood by interior purification. Through successive stages of self-denial, the seeker uncovers the veils that obscure his sIRR, or secret cell wherein lies man's true self, his Divine "I".
Los à Dieu qui a fait voir (aux anges) que Son humanité
Était le mystère de la gloire de Sa Divinité étincellante!
Et qui, depuis, s'est montré à Sa création, sous la forme de
Quelqu'un qui mange et qui boit. Si bien que sa création a
Pu L'apercevoir—comme sous la paupière filtre un clin d'œil!\(^\text{53}\)

Junayd was flatly opposed to a deification of man, adhering as
he did to the atomistic theory propounded by the majority of theologians.\(^\text{54}\) This theory denied any permanent reality to man's body or soul.
Man was composed of an aggregate of atoms sustained from the outside
entirely by the will of God. An obvious logical inconsistency arises in
connection with Junayd's Doctrine of the Covenant. Hallaj, however, un-
compromising as he was, encountered no such difficulties. The experience
of Divine Union, he noted, is brought about by a fusion (hulul) of the
active intellect (ruh) and the Divine Spirit, thereby precipitating a
sudden transposition of roles between man and God.

\[\text{Ton esprit s'est enmêlé à mon esprit, tout ainsi}
\text{Que se mélangé le vin avec l'eau pure.}
\text{Aussi que'une chose Te touche, elle me touche.}
\text{Voice que "Toi" c'est "moi" en tout!}\(^\text{55}\)

\[\text{Je suis devenu Celui que j'aime, et Celui que}
\text{j'aime est devenu moi!}\(^\text{56}\)

In this state of Oneness, where man's former self is annihilated,
he re-emerges with a transfigured personality, one invested with Divine
qualities,

\[\text{53\textbf{Hallaj, Kitab al-Tawasìn, texte arabe, p. 130.}}\]
\[\text{54\textbf{Massignon, La Passion d'Hallaj, Vol. III, p. 22.}}\]
\[\text{55\textbf{Ibid.}, p. 49.}}\]
\[\text{56\textbf{Ibid.}, p. 50.}}\]
0 essence of my being, 0 goal of my desire,
0 my speech and my hints and my gestures!
0 all of my all, 0 my hearing and my sight,
0 my whole, my element and my particles.57

The Divine personalization of the Saint whose creaturely characteristics are replaced with Divine attributes corresponds neatly with Junayd's conception of baqa or lasting union with God, albeit with a major interpretative difference -- Hallaj views man's personality in this state of union as becoming divinized where man's acts accordingly become humano-divine; by contrast, Junayd holds that in the state of lasting union, man's former human personality is restored, but with attributes that are divine-like but not issuing from the Divine. Junayd argued on ontological grounds that God could not manifest Himself by a created sign. Hallaj was strongly at variance with this, for he held that God could speak and act through the mystic employing him as a testimony, a Divine sign by which the hidden message within the Koran could be vitalized and revealed. For Hallaj, it was by becoming the Divine Sign, the Eternal Witness to the unicity of God, that his entire doctrinal system would be brought to a dramatic and logical climax.

To understand fully the manner in which Hallaj chose to communicate the message of Divine Union to the exoteric community warrants a closer look at his doctrine. In characteristic, passionate style, Hallaj employs the exquisite imagery of the moth attracted to the candle's flame in order to illustrate the stages of the mystic journey.

57Hujwiri, Kashf al-Mahjub, p. 259.
The science of reality implies the worshipper's understanding of the goals of Sufism and his subsequent renouncement of the world in his desire to see God. This corresponds to the stage of the disciple (murid). The warmth of the candle symbolizes the purging heat of self-purification where, thanks to his labors, the disciple has become a friend (siddig) of God and experiences fleeting, unstable glimpses of Divine Union. When the moth, in utter self-annihilation caresses the flame, his union with God, the Real, is consummated and he becomes a muqta, One whom all things obey. From the standpoint of the material world, the "Real" is completely unqualifiable and ineffable. It does not adhere to created nature. The Real or haqq indicates the pure essence of God, the transcendent Creator as opposed to khalq, His creatures.

Hallaj resumes his discussion of the moth to explain his dissatisfaction with accounts of previous mystics and to intimate his solution for communicating the secret.

Il ne se satisfait pas de sa lueur, ni de sa chaleur, il se précipite tout entier en elle. [Pendant ce temps], ses pareils attendent sa venue; qu'il leur explique ce qu'il a vu lui-même, puisqu'il ne s'est pas satisfait des recits qu'on lui avait faits. Mais lui-même, à ce moment, se consume, s'aménuse, se volatilise (dans la flamme y) demure sans traits, sans corps, sans nom, sans marque reconnaissable. Et puis, dans quelle intention s'en retournerait-il vers ses pareils, et dans quel état, maintenant qu'il possède!59

58 Hallaj, in Massignon, La Passion d' Hallaj, p. 307.
59 Ibid., p. 307.
In discussing Moses' confrontation with God on Mount Sinai, Hallaj is more explicit. At Sinai, Moses, conversing with God manifest in the Burning Bush, was invested with the mission to guide the people towards the proof (revealed law, i.e., indirect information), as opposed to the Object of proof, or God. This very Object of proof was represented by the Burning Bush and Hallaj claims, "Mon propre rôle est de représenter ce Buisson."\(^{60}\) Just as the flame found its created counterpart in Hallaj's corporeal existence, the uncreated voice found its counterpart in Hallaj's famous theoplastic locution "Ana'l-haqq" — "I am the Creative Truth." Thus, Hallaj wished to actually be God's External Witness for the Islamic community.

Depuis, c'est (moi), Ton Témoin actual, que Tu as investi de l'essentielle personnalité! Et, tout ainsi que Toi, autrefois, Tu élus mon essence pour qu'elle Te représente (parmis les hommes), — quand, grâce après grâce, Tu en vins à faire reconnaître (et proclamer) mon essence comme l'essence suprême, — et que moi je faisais voir les réalités de mes connaissance et de mes miracles, — et que je m'élevais, dans mes "ascensions", jusqu'aux trônes de mes prééternités, d'où j'ai prononcé le mot créateur de mes créations.

De même, maintenant, me voici moi, (encore à Ta disposition) — pour être exposé en public, exécuté, mis au gibet, brulé — mes cendres livrées aux vents et aux courants.\(^{61}\)

Professor Nicholson appropriately sums up Hallaj's life and work in his comment on the divine locution which is "not ejaculation of visionary enthusiasm, but the intuitive formula in which a whole system of mystical theology summed itself up."\(^{62}\) For Hallaj, the proof of God's

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\(^{60}\)Ibid., p. 310

\(^{61}\)Hallaj, Kitab al-Tawasin, texte arabe, p. 207.

\(^{62}\)Nicholson, Idea of Personality, p. 27.
Oneness and Transcendence lay not in a clever dialectical argument, in the mechanical performance of rites and duties, nor ultimately in the subtle persuasion of a theoretical mystic doctrine, but in the interior realization of one's essential Divine nature. To revitalize what he felt to be the fundamental Koranic given, Hallaj selflessly offered his own life as testimony.

It is interesting to speculate just what Junayd's real attitude toward Hallaj's doctrine and behavior really was. For, as Professor Massignon points out, their basic conception of fana as being the annihilation of thought in its Object was identical. Indeed, stripping away for the moment the euphemisms of Junayd and the provocative raptures of Hallaj, Professor Arberry is thus able to note that "fundamentally, there appears to be little to choose between Hallaj's 'unification with God' and al-Junayd's 'passing away and continuance in God'. . . . "

Professor Massignon seems to think that when the case of Hallaj arose, Junayd suffered a conceptual crisis. I prefer to think that in his heart of hearts, Junayd recognized Hallaj's self-appointed mission as a valid, albeit dangerous one. For, according to `Attar, Junayd once kissed the feet of a hanged thief in Baghdad and, upon being asked the reason for this unusual behavior, Junayd replied, "He did his work so perfectly that he gave his life for it."


64Massignon, Essai sur les Origines, pp. 305-06.

65`Attar, Memorial of the Saints, pp. 207-08.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

For Junayd and Hallaj, the problem of sobriety versus ecstasy can be viewed in terms of the antinomy between the conservative and radical mystic and the particular mode each chose to express esoteric aims to the exoteric community.

During the first three centuries of Islam, the exoteric community had worked out a fairly complete corpus of religious doctrine based largely on a literal interpretation of the Koran and Sunna. The formulation of an established doctrine was perhaps inevitable and those specific factors that instigated its development were: the need to regulate the religious behavior of the Muslims resulting in the Shari'ā, the rise of numerous rival groups, some of which were preoccupied chiefly with questions of doctrine, others, at least initially, disgruntled over the less religious question of leadership of the community, and finally, a core group of Muslims, the Ahli Hadith, whose simple piety won them a large popular following. The 'ulama, or religious scholars, formed a symbiotic relationship with this latter group, responding to and directing to some extent, the religious sentiment of the people.

As a result of the complex interaction of these elements, there arose a certain set of beliefs held sacrosanct, such as God's Transcendence and distinct "Otherness" from His creatures, which were often shared
by the religious sects. By 275/888, Sunnite beliefs had become the de facto beliefs of the state and all opposing viewpoints, both from the standpoint of their threatening political nature as well as their doctrinal religious challenge, were looked upon with hostility.

In this tense religious atmosphere, Sufism, with its egregious doctrines of inner revelation, Sheikhi supremacy and union with God, seemed to rail against conventional notions with an intensity that bordered on crisis. Yet, Sufism in fact did not gainsay Sunni beliefs, but actually sought to convert those beliefs into inner realities. Thus, the problem facing Sufis in the third century was how to reconcile the inner esoteric aspect of Islam with the literal-minded exoteric sphere.

For his part, Junayd responded in a manner reflective of his shy, reclusive nature. Moreover, his education at the hands of Sari, stressing adherence to the law, served to encourage and give shape to his retiring disposition. Adding still further to this confluence of events was the fact that Sari had trained his intellectually precocious nephew to succeed him as head of the Baghdad School which had as its aim the careful and conservative elaboration of Sufi doctrine. Thus, so perfectly fitted for the task at hand, Junayd developed a system that aimed at establishing a "peaceful co-existence" of the esoteric with the exoteric. Co-existence necessitated compromise and Junayd employed, indeed perfected, the art of speaking and writing in subtle allusion to the Truth. In this way, anxious detractors and the 'ulama would be deprived of a cause for quarrel while those more open-minded were provided with at least an intimation of true Sufi goals. Junayd expressed union with God (tawhid) as union in God as a Divine idea as opposed to union as God (ittihad)
through an identity of essence with God. Most important, he employed
the concept of baqa, or continuance in God, wherein the mystic could
only achieve true and lasting union with God when in a state of sobriety.
In this state, the mystic remained quiet about his interior life while outwardly he continued to perform religious duties. Essentially, baqa relied on external behavior as indication of one's inner state; as such, it was an attempt to curb the extravagances of the ecstatic mystics whose vociferous proclamations of union with God could only increase the 'ulama's animosity toward the Sufis.

Graphically, the relationship between the esoteric and exoteric is traditionally depicted by two concentric circles, the inner circle representing the esoteric. Junayd's efforts consisted in stabilizing and contracting the inner circle's position vis-à-vis the outer circle. The relationship of the two circles is never fixed and, at times, the inner circle expands, sets aside its elitist world-view and aims at reaching a larger number of people of all ranks and stations. This expansion is personified by the radical mystic Hallaj. Bold, assertive and self-reliant, Hallaj traveled extensively, refusing to establish any long-term commitment to Sufi Sheikhs which would impinge on his search for the absolute. His abrupt departure from 'Amr Makki over the question of his inner revelations on the one hand, and Makki's spiritual jealousy on the other, testifies to Hallaj's self-reliance regarding his inner states and to his refusal to commit formal allegiance to a Sheikh when no spiritual gain was forthcoming. Clearly this was a case of the spiritually gifted disciple outstripping his teachers, combined with a strong personality that refused to submit to anything that did not lead directly
to a life in God. This explains his formal rupture with the recalcitrant
Sufis of Baghdad.

Unwilling to compromise and unafraid to speak, Hallaj subsequent-
ly traveled to Iran, Central Asia and India indiscriminently preaching
union with God to people of a variety of religious affiliations.

Equally unabashed in his doctrine, Hallaj taught ecstatic union
through an identity of essences (ittihad), an identity that allowed
Hallaj to proclaim "I am the Creative Truth" to a community largely un-
comprehending of the import of Hallaj's Divine testimonial.

It might be conjectured that secretly Junayd may have agreed
with Hallaj that the nature of the unitive experience was one of ecstasy
since not only did they claim to have reached the highest peak in mys-
ticism, but Junayd, as we have seen, often showed a certain ambivalence
to the nature of the experience of fana. Moreover, mystical experience
is a process of deconditioning, an annihilation of subject-object con-
sciousness wherein the mystic's personality is regarded as an unwanted
intrudes and must be laid at the threshold before entering the gate to
Divine Union. Beyond this gate, Hallaj and Junayd might look at one
another and everywhere, seeing only the image of their own Self.
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