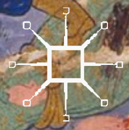
JIHAD IN PREMODERN SUFI WRITINGS

Harry S. Neale



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For my mother and father

Note on Translation, Transliteration, and Dates

All translations herein are my own. In transliterating Arabic and Persian words and names, I have—with the exception of Appendix B—dispensed with diacritics, save for the ‘*ayn*, *hamza*, and, in several instances, the macron to distinguish long and short /a/. All dates herein are Common Era; however, bibliographical dates for books published in Iran include the Persian solar calendar (SH) dates.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

It is said that each year, Abu Ishaq al-Kazaruni (d. 1035), eponym of the first Sufi order in Islam in the region of what is now the Fars Province of Western Iran, would help the local Muslim community organize a military campaign against the Byzantines in Anatolia. Shaykh Abu Ishaq would not accompany the military expedition; rather, he would remain in the town of Kazarun, from whence he would send spiritual guidance to the Muslim warriors. On one such occasion, a military expedition left for the Byzantine border and Shaykh Abu Ishaq remained behind at the local mosque where he would spend most of his time. One day while sitting in the courtyard of the mosque, he suddenly stood up, picked up a staff, and hastened to the roof of the mosque. There, he became impassioned and began vigorously flailing the staff about, this way and that, as if he were engaged in hand-to-hand combat with some unseen foe. Some of Abu Ishaq's companions, who also did not go on the military campaign, witnessed this astonishing incident. After a time, the shaykh stopped, put down the staff, and descended from the roof to rejoin his companions. He seemed to have regained his usual calm manner, so his companions asked him what this incident was all about. Abu Ishaq told them: "The army of Islam was trapped in the land of the Byzantines by the unbelievers and they called upon me to help them, so I did." His companions made a note of the time this strange event had occurred and when the Muslim warriors returned, they asked the warriors what had happened. The warriors told Abu Ishaq's companions that when they had reached the army

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of the unbelievers they saw that it was a great host and that their own force was small in comparison but they took heart and fought hard. However, the Muslims were greatly outnumbered and when the unbelievers suddenly surrounded them, the Muslims, believing they were about to be destroyed, raised their voices and called out to the shaykh to help them. All at once, a great horseman of terrifying mien appeared. He stood before the ranks of the Muslims, unsheathed his sword and faced the unbelievers. With ardent zeal, he smote the heads, arms, and legs of the unbelievers with his blade. No warrior among the unbelievers had the courage to challenge him, and the horseman continued to sunder their heads from their bodies as easily as if they were cucumbers. After one hour had passed, the miraculous horseman had routed the entire army of the unbelievers. Then, as suddenly as he had appeared, he vanished; the Muslims wondered who the great warrior was that had saved them. After the horseman had left, the Muslims, having gained the upper hand in the battle, pursued their Byzantine foes and slew many of them. Upon hearing this tale, the shaykh's companions asked the warriors when these events had occurred and on hearing the answer, they realized that the miraculous horseman had appeared at precisely the same time as Abu Ishaq had ascended to the roof of the mosque with his staff.[1]

It is also said that Junayd of Baghdad (d. 910), a highly influential figure in early Sufism, had many *murids* (Sufi initiates). Among these *murids* were eight whom he considered his best, for he could count on them to do whatever he asked. One day, the eight *murids* decided that they ought to go on jihad against the unbelievers, so they went to their shaykh and asked his leave to undertake this religious duty. Not only did Junayd give them leave to go on jihad, he decided to accompany them himself. When they arrived in the land of the Byzantines and arrayed themselves for battle, a great champion came forth from the ranks of the unbelievers and proceeded to slay each one of the shaykh's *murids*. In the midst of the battle, Junayd suddenly beheld nine camel litters and saw that the soul of each martyred *murid* was placed in one of the litters, so he said to himself: "That ninth litter must be for me." All at once, the champion of the unbelievers came before him and said: "Junayd, that ninth camel litter is not for you, but for me! Now, expound the principles of Islam to me!" Junayd did so and then the champion embraced Islam. Having become a Muslim, he picked up his sword and proceeded to slay eight warriors from among the host of unbelievers and then he himself became a martyr at their hands. Junayd beheld the champion's soul placed in the ninth camel litter, after which the litters vanished.[2]

What is surprising about these two stories from the rich Sufi hagiographical tradition? Perhaps it is that they present Sufi involvement in warfare with non-Muslims in quite a matter-of-fact way, as if Sufi participation in military activities were something commonplace. The depiction of Sufis fulfilling a martial role would seem to contradict the image of Sufis as the peaceful, introspective mystics of Islam. In the Western popular imagination, Sufis compose allegorical poetry, sing, and dance in order to achieve a trance-like mystical state and are not overly concerned with outward manifestations of religions but rather with the universal truths common to all faiths. Most importantly, Sufis exemplify the true meaning of jihad as a spiritual struggle against the lower self, which they refer to as the "greater jihad." How can these popular conceptions of Sufism be reconciled with the two hagiographical accounts that we read above? If we define Sufis simply as the mystics of Islam, these two stories would then seem to be aberrations in what is otherwise a religious tradition concerned entirely with esoteric spiritual matters.

The Sufi tradition in Islam does indeed possess a splendid tradition of allegorical poetry, and many Sufis have used and continue to use dance, music, and other rituals for spiritual purposes. Moreover, Sufism *is* primarily responsible for the development of the concept of a spiritual or "greater" aspect of jihad. However, it is also no less true that many Sufis have encouraged and taken part in the martial form of jihad, the so-called "lesser" jihad, and any thorough study of the Sufi textual tradition and the history of the Islamic world makes this quite clear. In fact, rather than standing apart from their coreligionists and preoccupying themselves entirely with mystical endeavors, Sufis have consistently played an active and practical role in Islamic society.

The Greater and Lesser Jihads

Here, we must address why Sufism is central to many of the discussions in European languages concerning Islam and the definition of jihad. The reason is that the Sufi tradition has developed and cultivated the concept of an inner spiritual jihad that complements the outer martial jihad. The spiritual jihad is termed the "greater" jihad (*al-jihad al-akbar*) in most Sufi texts whereas jihad as religiously prescribed warfare is termed the "lesser" jihad (*al-jihad al-asghar*).[3] These two aspects of jihad, that is, the spiritual jihad and the martial jihad, conform to the belief held by many Sufis that there is an inner (*batin*) and outer (*zahir*) meaning inherent in

Islamic scripture (i.e. the Qur'an and *hadith*), practice, and even the sayings and deeds of prominent Sufi *awliya'* (saints/friends of God).

This concept of the spiritual jihad is derived from a *hadith* (one of the sayings ascribed to the Prophet Muhammad) in which the Prophet of Islam, upon returning from battle with the unbelievers, said to his companions: "We have returned from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad."[4] Much is made of this *hadith* in contemporary Western discourse concerning Sufism and Islam and it is not an exaggeration to say that the majority of contemporary writing in European languages (both scholarly and popular) that discusses Sufism insists that the concept of the spiritual jihad as espoused by many Sufis is indeed the true and primary meaning of jihad in Islam.

It is worth discussing the history of this *hadith*, and we will endeavor to do so briefly here. The earliest extant source for this *hadith* is *al-Zuhd al-kabir* composed by al-Bayhaqi (d. 1066) in the eleventh century, which is relatively late in relation to the six canonical Sunni collections of *hadith*, all of which were composed during the ninth century. Bayhaqi relates the following version: "A group of *ghazis* (warriors) came before the Prophet of God and he said to them: 'you have arrived in the best way from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad.' 'What is the greater jihad?' they said. 'The servant's struggling (*mujahada*) with his passions,' said [the Prophet]."[5]

It is important to note, however, that this greater jihad *hadith* is not found in any of the abovementioned six canonical collections of *hadith*[6] and that many Muslim scholars have considered it spurious. Al-Bayhaqi, the author of *al-Zuhd al-kabir,* which contains the earliest mention of this *hadith,* himself considers this *hadith* to be weak.[7] Thus, it must be said that the influence of the greater jihad *hadith* in traditional Islamic culture—excluding Sufism—has, until recently, been negligible and ought not to be referred to as if it has been a generally accepted interpretation of jihad throughout the history of Islam, as any survey of Islamic legal, theological, and historical texts dealing with the doctrine of jihad makes clear.[8] Furthermore, even if one accepts the greater jihad *hadith* as reliable it is important to remember the context in which it was uttered—a return from the battlefield—and that it in no way implies an abandonment of the martial jihad.

This is not to say, however, that the notion of jihad implicitly containing a component of spiritual purification did not exist prior to the advent of Sufism. Indeed that the *mujahid* must engage in jihad with good intentions[9] and solely for the sake of the faith implies the necessity of selflessness, which suggests overcoming or at least bringing the passions under control before carrying out jihad. There are also examples of Muslim scholars who

were contemporaries of the early Sufi writers and—though not affiliated with Sufism—expressed a comprehensive understanding of jihad that included more than simply religiously prescribed war against unbelievers. Al-Raghib al-Isfahani (d. early eleventh century)[10] composed a lexicon of Qur'anic vocabulary (*Mufradat alfaz al-Qur'an*) in which he presents the following analysis of jihad:

> Jihad and *mujahada*: to exert the utmost of one's ability to oppose the enemy; jihad is of three kinds: fighting the outward enemy, fighting Satan, and fighting the lower self. The three aspects [of jihad] are included in what God has said: *Strive for God with the striving that is His due* [Qur'an 22:78]; *Strive with your property and your lives in God's path* [Qur'an 9:41]; *Verily those who have believed and emigrated and striven with their property and lives in God's path* [Qur'an 8:72]; and [the Prophet] said: "Fight your passions as you have fought your enemies." Striving is [accomplished] by means of the hand and the tongue, [the Prophet] said: "Fight the unbelievers with your hands and tongues."[11]

Al-Isfahani's threefold definition of jihad is similar to that of the early Sufi 'Abd Allah al-Ansari (d. 1089) of Herat, who expressed what is more or less the same threefold understanding of jihad, which we will read in Chap. 4. That al-Isfahani adduced traditions that enjoin extra-military meanings of jihad to explain his threefold understanding of the doctrine suggests that by the eleventh century, at least some Muslim religious scholars had begun to consider a spiritual interpretation of the doctrine of jihad that complemented its primary martial meaning.

Having considered the definition of jihad found in al-Isfahani's lexicon, it is befitting that we now turn to consideration of what other Arabic lexica say about jihad, for the Arabic lexicographical tradition has a long history, going back to the ninth century. Indeed, lexicography and the study of grammar took pride of place among the many sciences that flourished during the early Abbasid period (ninth-tenth centuries), as religious scholars recognized the necessity of understanding God's eternal word as embodied in the Qur'an. For this reason, lexicographers and grammarians would travel throughout Arabia, collecting words and poetry from the many Bedouin Arab tribes who still dwelt in the desert as their forefathers had since time immemorial.

Thus, if the concept of the greater jihad were indeed a central theme of Islamic practice and tradition, we could reasonably expect to find reference to it in any thorough definition of the verb *jāhada* in the many Arabic

lexica compiled by Arabs and non-Arabs alike. However, most premodern as well as contemporary Arabic dictionaries make no mention of the greater jihad when defining this term, which is yet another indication of the relative insignificance of the concept of a spiritual jihad in Islamic and Arab culture of the premodern period. We will take as our example the monumental dictionary of the Arabic language, *Lisan al-ʿArab*, composed by Ibn Manzur (d. 1311), which is the most celebrated Arabic lexicon of the premodern period and incorporates the content of the principal earlier Arabic lexica. *Lisan al-ʿArab* gives the following definition for jihad:

> Struggling against the enemy, fighting him and struggling in God's path. According to the *hadith*: "There may be no abandonment [of a territory] after conquering [it]"; rather, struggling and determination [are called for]; jihad is waging war against enemies, doing one's utmost and making every effort possible through words and deeds. What is meant by determination is devotion to God in deeds, that is, one could not abandon Mecca after it was conquered, for it had become the Abode of Islam; indeed it [means] fidelity in struggling with and fighting the unbelievers.[12]

The modern Arabic dictionary *al-Mu'jam al-Wasit* published in Cairo, defines jihad in similar terms: "Struggling with the enemy: fighting him … in terms of Islamic law: fighting whomever among the unbelievers does not have a covenant with the Muslims."[13] The recurring motif of both the premodern definition in *Lisan al-ʿArab* and the contemporary definition in *al-Mu'jam al-Wasit* is jihad as a martial endeavor. Likewise, Western Arabic lexicography does not discuss the greater jihad when defining jihad. *The Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, originally composed by Hans Wehr in German, is the definitive lexicon of Modern Standard Arabic in English; it also makes no mention of the greater jihad. Hans Wehr defines jihad as fighting and holy war against unbelievers.[14]

The definitions of jihad and its corresponding verb, *jāhada*, which are found in the above three dictionaries from the premodern and modern periods, are consistent in their explication of jihad denoting primarily the act of religiously prescribed warfare—with no mention of spiritual endeavors as a secondary meaning. These lexical definitions, especially that of *Lisan al-ʿArab*, serve as further evidence that, in general, jihad—at least insofar as its use in non-Sufi contexts is concerned—has not traditionally expressed any notion of spiritual striving. Moreover, the greater jihad *hadith* did not enjoy widespread currency in traditional Islamic culture, and the

majority of traditional religious scholars did not consider it sound; however, the majority of Sufi writings—from the eleventh century till the modern era—embrace an understanding of the verb *jāhada* that encompasses both its military meaning as well as the spiritual struggle against the lower self. These same Sufi texts also generally accept the validity of the greater jihad *hadith*. We must, therefore, take both the Sufi definition of the verb *jāhada* and the greater jihad *hadith* into consideration when examining how the Sufi textual tradition has developed and elaborated a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of jihad in the religious context.

The Practical Role of Sufis in Islamic Society

As we alluded to earlier, Sufis of the premodern period assumed an active and often practical role in their respective Muslim communities. Since at least the tenth century, Sufis have also been among the most important proselytizers of the faith and played a prominent part in the Islamization of much of the Indian subcontinent among many other significant deeds.[15] Indeed the term "Sufi" and the Arabic verbal noun *tasawwuf* (the practice of the Sufi way) designate such an array of traditions, practices, and affiliations that they defy simple definition, even though most scholarship in European languages has consistently defined and continues to define these terms as Muslim mystic and Islamic mysticism, respectively.

In the thirteenth century, the Mongols swept through Central Asia and the Iranian Plateau, leaving a path of utter destruction in their wake. They razed most of the centers of Persian-speaking eastern Islamic culture to the ground, including the splendid cities of Merv, Nishapur, Samarqand, Bukhara, Balkh, and Herat. The populations of these cities were scattered, and for a time, it seemed as if the eastern Islamic world might not recover from this calamity. In the aftermath of these catastrophic invasions it was often Sufis who provided strong, practical leadership in the Muslim communities of these regions, attending to both spiritual and mundane matters. It was also during this period that many of the significant Sufi orders crystallized.

It is noteworthy, in this regard, that many of the prominent early Sufis were also respected religious scholars in the fundamental fields of the collection, evaluation, and narration of *hadith*, *tafsir* (Qur'anic interpretation), and *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence). The vast corpus of Sufi treatises, letters, Qur'anic commentaries, et cetera, strongly reflects this scholarly tradition, both in structure and content.

Another significant role of Sufis in the premodern period was their establishment and maintenance of hospices for itinerant Sufis and other Muslim travelers, especially those traveling to the Hejaz for the Hajj.[16]

As these examples indicate, Sufis have fulfilled many duties—often of a practical nature—in Muslim society since the advent of the first Sufi order in the eleventh century. Such direct involvement in the daily affairs of their local Muslim communities also indicates that premodern Sufis did not generally keep themselves apart from their coreligionists and did not primarily concern themselves with purely mystical and spiritual matters. That Sufis trod an inner path of spiritual discipline as well as helping to maintain and foster Muslim society and Islamic culture exemplifies the Sufi adherence to a complementary understanding of Islamic spirituality and practice, which they would also apply to the doctrine of jihad.

Are Sufis Mystics?

Why is it then that Sufism is generally understood in the West to be a primarily mystical interpretation of Islam? Are Sufis mystics? One cannot deny that mysticism is an important part of Sufism; however, categorizing Sufis as simply "mystics" is both limiting and misleading. It is true that as Sufism continued to develop in the period following the Mongol Invasion its mystical and esoteric doctrines became more elaborate (e.g. the concept of *wahdat al-wujud*/oneness of being). However, the majority of Sufis never ceased to actively carry out their individual and communal duties as Muslims. If anything, Sufis have generally been exemplars of the essential Islamic piety that is embodied in the Five Pillars of Islam: the declaration of faith ("there is no god but God and Muhammad is the messenger of God"), the five daily prayers, the giving of alms, fasting during Ramadan, and pilgrimage to Mecca. Jihad is also an essential duty of able-bodied Muslims; however, traditional Islamic legal scholars have generally not included jihad among the Five Pillars, for they regard it as a communal duty (*fard kifaya*), whereas the Five Pillars are reckoned individual duties (*fard 'ayn*).[17] In other words, while all Muslims must perform the five daily prayers, give alms, and fast, not all Muslims must take part in jihad; rather, only as many as are required for the successful execution of a military campaign need undertake this communal duty, a distinction we will discuss further below.

Aims and Motivations of the Book

Although scholars writing in European languages have published much important research concerning many significant aspects of Sufism, little research has been done that considers Sufi involvement in the martial jihad and how Sufi writings portray this religious duty and other forms of warfare. This book will show that contrary to popular perception, the Sufi textual and literary tradition—including poetry—has elaborated and expounded a complementary understanding of jihad that includes unequivocal support for the martial jihad as well as depictions of Sufis as *mujahids* engaging in warfare with unbelievers.

I contend that Western scholars have, for the most part, concentrated on the aspects of Sufism (and Islam in general) that appeal most to Western sensibilities. While this is perfectly understandable and often, I believe, unintentional, it is nevertheless misleading. I also contend that some scholars writing in European languages deliberately downplay the militant aspects of Sufism—and Islam—in order to deflect potential criticism from Islam and Muslims. However, such inaccurate representations of Islam and its history are not only dishonest but also quite patronizing, for Islam deserves to be considered on its own terms. Indeed if non-Muslims truly wish to understand Islam—including why some Muslims resort to violent means for the achievement of their religious aims—then they must consider all aspects of Islam and its history in as comprehensive and honest a manner possible. Furthermore, one could ask, why must Islam conform to some kind of vague, post-modern ideology of non-violence and inclusivity in order to be palatable to contemporary secular culture? An objective review of world history shows us that violence and war have attended all great cultures and that their existence does not render the significant intellectual achievements and spiritual developments of those cultures any less valuable. It must also be emphasized that violence, war, and conquest are not incompatible with the simultaneous development of high culture (e.g. art, architecture, literature, and music), or even the elaboration of profound spiritual traditions—quite the contrary. That Sufism has produced some of the most astonishing mystical poetry while also inspiring martial zeal for both the defense of Islamic territory and the active expansion thereof should be seen neither as surprising nor contradictory. Finally, it is important to remember that premodern cultures did not share the uneasiness of contemporary secular culture regarding violent action carried out in the name of religion.[18] Throughout much of the history of Judaism,

Christianity, and Islam, the adherents of these faiths have traditionally seen no contradiction in waging war for the sake of their respective religions. Although it may be hoped that waging war for religious reasons will eventually become a thing of the past, any claim that many of the adherents of these three faiths, in particular, did not espouse and enthusiastically engage in religiously motivated wars is simply untrue.

Regarding the composition of this book, I would like to emphasize that I have not composed *Jihad in Premodern Sufi Writings* exclusively for a specialist audience, though I do hope that scholars of Islamic studies and Sufism may profit therefrom; rather, in writing this book, I have tried to keep in mind the student and non-specialist reader who are interested in learning more about Sufis, Islam, and jihad. For this reason, I have provided explanations of concepts and terminology, as well as some historical background, which the specialist in Islamic studies will find elementary, but without which, the interested non-specialist will have great difficulty understanding some of the central theses of this study. For the non-specialist reader, I have also provided a basic introduction to fundamental aspects of Islamic scripture, doctrine, and sacred history in Chap. 3, as these are often poorly understood by a non-Muslim readership. As many of the texts discussed herein are unavailable in English (or other European languages for that matter) I have provided, as an appendix, translations of passages from premodern Sufi hagiographies that portray Sufis as warriors. Thus, it is hoped that this book will also serve as a sourcebook for jihad in Sufi hagiography for students and researchers who do not have a command of Arabic and Persian.

Methodology

Insofar as the primary sources are concerned, my methodology in researching and writing this book has been to examine and compare as many different kinds of Arabic and Persian Sufi texts from the premodern period as possible. This includes texts of the learned variety (e.g. treatises, Qur'anic commentaries, and letters) as well as popular works of hagiography (i.e. stories from the lives of Sufi friends of God) and poetry. The first category of Sufi texts was generally composed for a learned audience that was familiar with technical vocabulary, Islamic scripture, Islamic law, et cetera; the second category was composed—at least to some degree—for the edification of a lay audience with little background in the traditional

Islamic sciences and very little knowledge of Classical Arabic, the language in which most legal and religious texts were written. Examining and comparing both kinds of Sufi literature offers a much more comprehensive understanding of the many aspects of Sufi thought and reveals the manifold domains of Sufi activity in premodern Islamic society.

By comparing what Sufis have said and written about the concept of jihad in the different kinds of texts that they composed from the formative period of Sufism (late tenth to early eleventh centuries) to the period immediately preceding the beginning of European colonialism (seventeenth century), we may arrive at a broad understanding of the development of the concept of jihad in the Sufi textual tradition.

A cursory glance at the primary sources for this book will reveal what may seem to be a bias toward Sufism in the eastern Islamic world. The reason for this is that Sufism first developed and flourished in Iraq and Greater Khurasan and spread thence westward into North Africa and eastward into Transoxiana and India. That this study devotes more discussion to Indo-Persian Sufi writings than it does to, say, North African Sufi writings is principally because Sufis played a key role in the Islamization of the northern Indian subcontinent, which the Indo-Persian Sufi hagiographical tradition reflects, whereas Islam arrived in North Africa and Spain at a much earlier date (late seventh/early eighth centuries), and thus before the historical advent of Sufism. In no way do I wish to ignore the contributions of North African and Sub-Saharan African Sufis both to Islamic culture in general and to the defense and expansion of the *Dar al-Islam* (Abode of Islam) in particular. Indeed, during the European colonial period, North African Sufis (e.g. ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jaza’iri d. 1883) played a key role in resisting European colonial powers. It is likely that Sufis also took part in the effort of Muslims to hold onto territory in the Iberian Peninsula during the period of the Reconquista. Furthermore, my expertise is in early Sufi texts composed in Arabic and Persian in Greater Khurasan and Transoxiana (i.e. roughly modern-day Iran and Central Asia), hence the decision to concentrate on Sufi texts composed in Arabic and Persian from the eastern Islamic world before the eighteenth century. It may be hoped that other scholars will expand our knowledge of this topic, to wit, Sufis and jihad, in other regions and periods of Islamic history; a study concentrating on the eighteenth to twentieth centuries that examines the martial role of Sufis in anti-colonial resistance in North Africa, the Caucasus, and elsewhere would be especially valuable.

In addition to the primary sources indicated above, I have also deemed it useful to provide a brief overview of scholarship concerning Sufism. The reason for this is that most Western readers with an interest in Sufism and Islam only have recourse to academic secondary sources and translations of Sufi texts and poetry. It is not an exaggeration to say that how Western scholars have chosen to represent Sufism has shaped the popular understanding of Sufism in the West. For this reason, I provide a brief history of the study of Sufism in European languages understood chiefly as a form of mysticism. In doing this, I have found it useful to compare Western scholarship concerning Sufism with the many contemporary studies of Sufism from the Muslim world that have been composed in Islamic languages (primarily Arabic) for a Muslim readership; the results are rather surprising.

Although various studies exist in Arabic that deal solely with Sufi involvement in and support for the martial jihad, a number of which we will discuss in the next chapter, no such study has existed in any European language until now. This book will provide an introduction to the fundamental Islamic doctrine of jihad as Sufi writers understood it. This book is not, however, a history of premodern Sufi involvement in jihad and military campaigns, though it does refer to relevant historical events and social circumstances. In this regard, the final chapter considers the role of several prominent Sufi figures in historical military events, especially during the Crusades and Mongol invasions. As the title implies, *Jihad in Premodern Sufi Writings* is a study of the diverse premodern Sufi textual tradition in Arabic and Persian and how these texts define and elaborate a Sufi jihad discourse. By considering numerous examples of narrative in Sufi hagiography and poetry, this book also shows how Sufi writings depict Sufi involvement in military activities.

Notes

1. Mahmud b. ʻUthman, *Firdaws al-murshidiyya* (Istanbul: Matba'at Ma'arif, 1943), pp. 197–200.
2. Farid al-Din ʻAttar, *Tadhkirat al-awliya'* (Tehran: Intisharat-i Zuvvar, 1383 SH), p. 380.
3. In addition to using these traditional Arabic terms that are derived from the *hadith* discussed in this chapter, most contemporary Arabic studies of Sufism further elucidate these two aspects of jihad as jihad *al-nafs*, that is, the jihad against the lower self or ego, and *al-jihad al-qitali* or *al-jihad al-harbi*, that is, the martial jihad or jihad as combat. For the sake of clarity,

throughout this book we will refer to the two aspects of jihad as defined in the Sufi tradition as the spiritual jihad and the martial jihad, rather than the "greater" and "lesser" jihads.

4. "*Raja'na min al-jihad al-asghar ila al-jihad al-akbar/*We have returned from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad."
5. Ahmad b. al-Husayn al-Bayhaqi, *Kitab al-zuhd al-kabir* (Abu Dhabi: Al-Majma' al-Thaqafi, 2004), pp. 294–295.
6. I.e. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, *Sahih Muslim*, *Sunan Abi Dawud*, *Sunan al-Nasa'i al-sughra*, *Jami' al-Tirmidhi*, and *Sunan Ibn Maja*. In the chapter concerning those who die guarding the frontier, Tirmidhi does include the following in *hadith* 1621: "The *mujahid* is he who strives against his own soul." Al-Tirmidhi, *al-Jami' al-kabir* Vol. 3 (Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1996), pp. 264–265. While this *hadith* does adumbrate what would come to be known as the greater jihad, it is related in the context of a longer *hadith* concerned entirely with martial activities.
7. Bayhaqi, *Kitab al-zuhd al-kabir*, p. 295. Not surprisingly, Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) also refutes the validity of this *hadith*, saying: "Regarding this *hadith* that some of [the Sufis] relate [saying] that [the Prophet] said during the Battle of Tabuk: 'We have returned from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad,' it has no basis; none of the Sufis has related it according to the words or deeds of the Prophet." Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmu'at al-fatawa* (Mansoura: Dar al-Wifa', 2005), p. 111.
8. For discussion of the absence of the greater jihad in early Islamic sources, see David Cook, *Understanding Jihad* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), pp. 165–66, and Suleiman A. Mourad and James E. Lindsay, *The Intensification and Reorientation of Sunni Jihad Ideology in the Crusader Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), p. 35.
9. Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1955), p. 86.
10. E.K. Rowson, "al-Rāghib al-Isfahānī," *Encyclopaedia of Islam* Second Edition. Brill Online, 2016.
11. al-Raghib al-Isfahani, *Mufradat alfaz al-Qur'an* (Damascus: Dar al-Qalam, 1992), p. 208
12. Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-'Arab*, Vol. Two (Beirut: Dar al-Turath al-'Arabi, 1988), p. 397.
13. Ibrahim Mustafa et al., *Al-Mu'jam al-wasit al-juz' al-awwal* (Cairo: Matba'at Misr, 1960).
14. Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (Ithaca: Spoken Language Services, 1976), p. 142.
15. For a detailed study of Sufi roles in the Islamization of the Indian subcontinent see Richard Eaton, *The Sufis of Bijapur*, which is discussed in Chap. 2.

16. See, for example, Hamid Algar, "Tariqat and Tariq: Central Asian Naqshbandis on the Roads to the Haramayn" in *Central Asian Pilgrims: Hajj Routes and Pious Visits between Central Asia and the Hijaz* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2012).
17. Emile Tyan, "Djihād." *Encyclopaedia of Islam* Second Edition. Brill online, 2016.
18. For discussion of premodern attitudes toward religiously motivated war, see Mourad and Lindsay, *The Intensification and Reorientation of Sunni Jihad Ideology in the Crusader Period*, p. 17.

CHAPTER 2

Overview of the History of Sufi Studies

The way Western scholars have portrayed and, for the most part, continue to portray Sufis and Sufism is generally in stark contrast to the way Muslim scholars, writing primarily in Arabic, portray and define Sufis and Sufism. In this chapter we will consider the development of Sufi scholarship in European languages and how it has shaped contemporary Western perceptions of Sufis and their role in Islamic society. Following this brief historical overview, we will then contrast the conclusions of Western Sufi scholarship with those of contemporary Sufi scholarship from the Islamic world. It is essential that we consider Sufi scholarship from the Islamic world, as most contemporary Western scholarship fails to cite or discuss the work of Muslim scholars published in non-European languages. Whether or not one agrees with the conclusions of contemporary Sufi scholarship from the Islamic world on methodological grounds or otherwise, familiarity with this body of writing is an invaluable source for understanding how Sunni Muslims who reject the Salafist/Wahhabist discourse, which is hostile to both Sufism and traditional Sunni Islam, view the Sufi tradition. In this regard, it is important to note that Sufism has developed since the tenth century as an integral part of traditional Sunni Islam; however, it has not played a significant role in the various forms of Shiite Islam, though there are, of course, exceptions.

Here, it is imperative that we emphasize the difference between Sunni Islam, as it has developed since at least the ninth century till the present day, and Wahhabism, which is based on the teachings of Muhammad b. ʻAbd al-Wahhab (d. 1792) of the Najd in what is now Saudi Arabia.

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The distinction is important, as Western media and governments often characterize Wahhabism as an "extreme form of Sunni Islam." Conflating Sunni Islam and the relatively recent Wahhabi interpretation of Islam does the former a great disservice, as those Muslims who espouse Wahhabism are, in fact, hostile to many fundamental aspects of traditional Sunni Islam (e.g. veneration of the Prophet Muhammad's family, visiting the tombs of figures significant to Islamic sacred history, Sufism, etc.). Indeed, Wahhabis have even gone so far as to brand Muslims who reject Wahhabi doctrines as unbelievers[1] and have declared warfare against them permissible. In this regard, the reader ought to bear in mind that all of the Sufis discussed herein were Sunni Muslims, most of whom were well versed in the traditional religious sciences and adhered to one of the four accepted legal schools of Sunni Islam. It bears repeating that the great majority of Sufis have been Sunni Muslims, for it is often mistakenly assumed that Sufism is a sect of Islam, owing to both the Wahhabi opposition to Sufis and to certain—unfortunately tenacious—popular Western perceptions of Sufis, which continue to influence the way Sufism is studied and understood.

The study of Sufism in Western scholarship spans over two centuries, coinciding with Western scholarly interest in Islam and the Orient in general. In order to understand the fundamental thesis of this study, a basic understanding of the development of Sufi studies in European languages is essential. Therefore, before embarking on our examination of the subject of Sufis in relation to the doctrine of jihad in Islam, it is appropriate that we give a brief overview of how the Western understanding of Sufis and Sufism has evolved over the last two hundred years.

The First European Studies Concerning Sufism

> There can be no doubt that [the Sufis'] free opinions regarding [Islam's] dogmas, their contempt of its forms, and their claim to a distinct communion with the Deity, are all calculated to subvert that belief for which they outwardly profess their respect.—Sir John Malcolm (*History of Persia*, 1815)[2]

> The Muslim philosophers called Sufis established a pantheistic school appropriate to Muslim ideas, a sort of esoteric doctrine of Islam … negation of human liberty, indifference to actions … Sufis are not subject to exterior law. Paradise and Hell, in fact, all the dogmas of positive religions are only allegories for the Sufi of which he only recognizes the spirit.—Garcin de Tassy (*La poésie philosophique et religieuse chez les persans*, 1864)[3]

Since its beginning, as these quotations from Sir John Malcolm and Garcin de Tassy demonstrate, Western scholarship has tended to treat Sufism as either a form of mysticism or pantheism, a tendency that has persisted, to some degree, till the present day. The choice of words used in these quotations to describe Sufis has aided in establishing and perpetuating a Western scholarly discourse that relegates Sufis to the limited realms of mysticism and philosophy with all their Western cultural connotations. Referring to Sufis as "Muslim philosophers" who have "contempt of [Islam's] forms" serves to remove Sufis from the realm of "orthodox Islam" (another Western construct) and place them in a context more familiar and appealing to nineteenth-century European tastes. Owing to typological similarities shared by theoretical Sufism, Greek philosophy (especially Neoplatonism), and Christian mysticism, most nineteenth-century European scholars of Islam assumed an a priori Neoplatonic or Christian origin for Sufi concepts and practice. This belief was present in the earliest European studies devoted to Sufism, as evinced in the two quotations above, and helped to shape the Western discourse of Sufism and Sufi studies. The other common assumption is that Sufis have somehow always existed as a reaction to the "rigidity" of orthodox, outward Islamic practice. This is an example of the subjectivity inherent in much early Western scholarship on Sufism in that it manifests the general negative attitude of nineteenth-century Europeans toward Islam as a whole. On the other hand, Sufism conceived as mysticism, as well as Sufi poetry, fascinated European scholars, who, as mentioned above, believed that Sufis had adopted and assimilated ideas and concepts from pre-Islamic sources (e.g. the aforementioned Neoplatonism and Christian mysticism). These scholars saw Sufism as a way for the individual to experience direct communion with the divine, something which would appeal to an educated European living in post-Renaissance, post-Reformation, post-Age of Enlightenment Europe, with his belief in the rights of the individual as well as the ability for each individual to have a personal experience of religion. Bearing all of this in mind, it is not surprising that the place of the martial jihad in the Sufi tradition is generally neglected in Western Sufi studies, for the idea of a mystic taking part in armed conflict contradicts the fundamental Western notion of mysticism. From this standpoint, Sufis cannot possibly play a vital role in the martial aspects and endeavors of the Islamic polity because they are "mystics," and mystics, according to Western notions, do not concern themselves with such aggressive, outward activities.

It is important to note that even the Western term "Sufism" implies certain associations and conclusions that would be utterly alien to most traditional Sufis. However, since its inception, Western scholarship has encapsulated the Sufi tradition as "Sufism." In fact, the two earliest European studies devoted to the study of Sufis also contain the first use of the term "Sufism," the "ism" of which implies—erroneously—that Sufis constitute a separate sect of Islam, or even a separate religious tradition.[4] The first Western study devoted entirely to the subject of Sufism was Lt. James William Graham's *A Treatise on Sufism, or Mahomedan Mysticism* published in 1819 (though originally composed in 1811). Shortly thereafter a young German theologian, Friedrich August Tholuck (d. 1877), published a study in Latin titled *Ssufismus Sive Theosophia Persarum Pantheistica* in 1821. These studies established the discourse of "Sufism" as a separate mystical development that opposed what their authors believed to be the dry legalism of "orthodox Islam."

The other important factor in the development of the Western Sufism discourse was the discovery of Persian Sufi poetry. The earlier British orientalists Sir William Jones (d. 1794) and the aforementioned Sir John Malcolm (d. 1833) had discussed Sufis in the context of Persian poetry, prior to the publication of Graham's and Tholuck's studies. Interest in Persian poetry is an extremely important component in the development of Western Sufi studies and thus merits some discussion.

Persian Poetry and Western Sufi Scholarship

What all of these early European scholars—who dealt with the topic of Sufis in some form or other—had in common was their introduction to Sufi ideas and concepts through classical Persian poetry. Much of the Persian poetry with which these scholars were familiar either dealt with mystical concepts (e.g. the poetry of Attar and Rumi) or employed mystical and allegorical poetic vocabulary and tropes, albeit not necessarily as an expression of mysticism (e.g. the Persian poetry of the fourteenth-century Shirazi poet Hafiz), as these had become an integral part of the general Persian poetic vocabulary by the fourteenth century.[5] This is an essential aspect of early Sufi studies that would come to dominate the discourse of Sufi scholarship in European languages for over a century. Classical Persian poetry is undeniably one of the great treasures of eastern Islamic culture and has generally captivated all who have consecrated serious time to its study. The Persian mystical poets such as Sana'i, Attar, and Rumi,

composed some of the masterpieces of Persian poetry. Their works, especially those of Attar and Rumi, were often the early Western scholar's first introduction to Sufi ideas and concepts; hence it is no wonder that many of the first European studies of Sufism relied heavily upon mystical poetry as their primary source.

Sufi Texts and Western Sufi Scholarship

By the early twentieth century, Western scholars had assembled a sort of unofficial canon (for lack of a better term, by which I do not wish to imply that any of these scholars referred to it as such) of Sufi texts, which were composed primarily in Arabic and Persian between the tenth and sixteenth centuries. No such canon ever existed, of course, in the premodern Islamic world. That these texts consisted of what are arguably the most outstanding and famous works of Sufi poetry and mystical literature from an aesthetic perspective is beside the point; no premodern Sufi would have recognized any particular list of essential reading for the Sufi initiate. Indeed, these texts could be considered a kind of orientalist connoisseur's list of Sufi mystical works. This is not to say that Sufis did not study these texts individually or that they exerted no role or influence in the development of the various Sufi orders and their modes of practice. However, there was never a consensus among Sufis regarding which texts ought to be studied; in fact, knowledge of Sufi mystical texts did not necessarily play an important role in the daily activities of many Sufis, some of whom did not know either of the classical languages of Islamic culture—Arabic and Persian—well enough to read these texts.

It must be said that much progress has been made in the domain of research regarding Sufism since Sir Malcolm and de Tassy published their studies in the nineteenth century. However, even in the early twentieth century, respected scholars of Islam still perpetuated the view that Sufism was simply Islamic mysticism, as the following quotation from R.A. Nicholson, the eminent English orientalist, shows: "What Sufism is you all know; I am using the word in its ordinary sense as synonymous with Islamic Mysticism and as denoting that type of experience with which the writings of the Sufis or Mohammedan mystics have made us familiar."[6] Nicholson's statement indicates his concept of Sufism as a primarily textual mystical tradition within Islam. Since the mid-twentieth century, however, many scholars have published research in European languages that examines other important aspects of Sufism outside of

the traditional Western approach to the phenomenon. Their research includes studies of popular shrine worship, vernacular poetry, and contemporary Sufi orders. Still, the traditional Western approach to studying Sufism as a form of Islamic mysticism continues to exert a tremendous influence on contemporary Western Sufi scholarship. Indeed many introductions to Sufism that are available in European languages devote much space to mystical poetry, especially that of Jalal al-Din-i Balkhi (whom we will discuss in Chap. 6), better known in the West as Rumi, whose poetry has become quite popular in the last two decades owing to a proliferation of translations.

The Greater Jihad in Contemporary Western Sufi Scholarship

As alluded to above, contemporary Western scholarship has tended to present Sufism as a peaceful, mystical phenomenon in Islam. In recent times, this representation of Sufism can be seen, in part, as an attempt on the part of scholars writing in European languages to counter unfavorable depictions of Muslims and Islam. For this reason, they promote the concept of the greater jihad as elaborated in the Sufi tradition in the hope of offering to their Western audience an alternative, peaceful image of Islam. After roughly three decades of vigorous promotion, the greater jihad discourse can be said to have taken on a life of its own, not only in Western scholarship dealing with Islam but also in the Western media as well. It is also true that many contemporary Muslims accept the validity of the greater jihad *hadith* and interpret jihad as a primarily spiritual endeavor. However, in considering many contemporary books and articles written in European languages that concern Islam, Sufism, and jihad, one gets the impression that the authors themselves have not actually verified the centrality and validity of the concept of the greater jihad in Islamic sources composed in Arabic, Persian, or other traditional Islamic literary languages; rather, it seems as if they are simply repeating what other Western scholars have said in secondary sources regarding the concept of jihad. Part of this is no doubt due to the inability of many contemporary scholars of Islam to read Arabic or Persian well enough to verify what the original sources actually say and in what context. This may be partially understood as the result of shifting attitudes in Islamic studies over the last three decades. Less emphasis is now placed on mastering traditional Islamic literary languages (i.e. Arabic, Persian, and—to a lesser extent—Ottoman) and reading the

fundamental religious texts such as the Qur'an, *hadith*, *tafsir*, and so on, as this is seen as the outdated "orientalist approach" to Islamic studies, which Edward Said criticized in his influential *Orientalism*. Instead, many university programs now emphasize the study of Islam in the context of race, gender, and contemporary identity politics, using postmodern theoretical and critical approaches.

Regardless of this change in emphasis, it is important to note that not all Western Sufi scholarship of the last half century avoids discussing Sufi support of and active involvement in the martial jihad; in fact, there are some notable exceptions. In particular, Richard Eaton's study of Sufis in the Deccan region of India, *The Sufis of Bijapur: 1300–1700: Social Roles of Sufis in Medieval India* (Princeton, 1978) stands out in Western Sufi scholarship, in that it argues convincingly in the chapter "Sufis as Warriors" that Sufis were at the forefront of the conquest that brought Islam to the Deccan region of India.[7] Eaton makes an important point in his book with regard to the methodology necessary for studying the social roles of Sufis in that he critiques the "classical approach to Sufi studies." What this means is that the emphasis Western scholars have placed on doctrinal and mystical aspects of Sufi texts, as discussed above, has led to the belief that the Sufi is primarily a "practitioner and transmitter of esoteric Islam [who stands] above and beyond the social order."[8] This approach "stresses not the Sufi but Sufism, not the man as a social component but the doctrine as conveyed by the man."[9] In other words, if one concentrates only on the mystical aspects of learned treatises written primarily in Classical Arabic that deal with Sufism, one is likely to consider most Sufi activities and concerns to be of an esoteric and mystical nature. However, this study will demonstrate that learned Sufi texts often contain much discourse regarding the martial jihad and warfare, even when their primary concern is expounding mystical concepts.

Eaton also points out the error of most Western scholarship in assuming that mysticism necessarily precludes martial endeavors.[10] Eaton's book was the first significant Western study of Sufis to discuss at length the phenomenon of Sufis as warriors and to make use of sources from the popular tradition, such as vernacular hagiography; however, it concentrates solely on Sufis in India and does not pretend to be a monograph on the history of Sufi jihad. Though Eaton's book was well received, it was not without its critics. Carl Ernst, author of many studies concerning Islam and Sufis, including the popular *Sufism: An Introduction to the Mystical Tradition of Islam*, while generally praising Eaton's book, took exception to his

depiction of Sufis as warriors. In his book *Eternal Garden*, Ernst criticizes Eaton's conclusions concerning warrior Sufis on methodological grounds, owing to the "unconscious projection of the image of fanaticism" of these conclusions. The only evidence Ernst cites for this criticism is not very convincing: "the concept of the Muslim fanatic is one that has a long history in European literature … [that] reached its apogee in the age of European imperialism."[11] Ernst's reference to popular notions of "Muslim fanatics" in European culture does nothing to refute Eaton's sources or his conclusions; rather, it seems to express Ernst's own irritation with a depiction of Sufis as anything other than irenic.

Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, an Indian scholar of Islam, also discusses Sufi involvement in the martial jihad. In his *A History of Sufism in India*, he devotes part of a chapter to consideration of "warrior saints." Concerning the role of Shaykh Jalal of Sylhet (d. 1347) in the Islamization of Bengal, Rizvi relates that Shaykh Jalal's *pir* blessed him that he might have success in waging war against unbelievers in the Abode of War "in the same way as he had directed him towards success in the higher (spiritual) *jihad*"[12] and then commanded a large number of his own followers to accompany Shaykh Jalal. Rizvi writes that the expedition of these Sufis under the command of Shaykh Jalal was not peaceful and that they gained many spoils from their military victories. Regarding Shaykh Jalal's efforts to convert the local population of the territories he had brought into the Abode of Islam, Rizvi relates that he would leave Sufi saints in each territory to propagate the faith.[13]

Rizvi's discussion of Shaykh Jalal's conquest of Bengal emphasizes the complementary nature of the different aspects of jihad, which Sufis and Muslim scholars writing in Islamic languages discuss repeatedly and extensively. This concept of the complementary nature of the spiritual and martial aspects of jihad is fundamental to this study and we will return to it throughout our discussion and analysis of Sufi writings.

Throughout his scholarship that concerns Sufis in India, Rizvi also emphasizes the doctrine of the martial jihad and Sufi involvement therein. In his study of the Naqshbandi Sufi and religious reformer Shah Wali Allah (d. 1762), Rizvi notes that the modern interpretation of jihad overemphasizes the defensive character of the martial jihad and that the *ʿulama* (Islamic religious scholars) considered the offensive martial jihad a collective duty until Islam became the universally dominant religion. In this regard, Rizvi states that Shah Wali Allah "pleaded that the universal domination of Islām was not possible without *jihād*."[14]

In *Sufism: The Essentials*, Mark Sedgwick also briefly addresses Sufi involvement in the martial jihad. Sedgwick mainly cites examples of Sufi warriors from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most of whom fought against European colonial rule.[15] He observes that: "Islam … does call for the 'lesser *jihad*' as well as the 'greater *jihad*.' As devout Muslims, Sufis were and are more inclined to answer that call than many of the less devout, just as they were and are more inclined to scrupulous observance of fasts and prayer times."[16] By linking the Sufi's scrupulous observance of fasting and praying to taking part in the martial jihad, Sedgwick reminds us that Sufism is firmly located in the fundamental sources of Islamic piety, that is, the Qur'an, *hadith*, and the Prophet's *sunna* (his practice and example).

Eaton and Rizvi's studies are exceptions; they also only deal with Sufis and jihad in the Indian historical context, which is not surprising, perhaps, owing to the pivotal role Sufis played in propagating Islam throughout the history of the faith in India. Sedgwick's discussion of Sufi involvement in the martial jihad is refreshingly accurate, but also quite brief as his book is intended as a concise introduction to Sufism and does not claim to deal extensively with any one topic related to Sufi history.

A more typical example of Western scholarly discussion of Sufi jihad is found in *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (1978), a comprehensive and beautifully written introduction to Sufism by the late Annemarie Schimmel (a prolific scholar of Islamic studies with a profound knowledge of Arabic, Persian, Turkish, as well as a number of Indian languages), which states that "the … [Sufi] Path … consists of a constant struggle against the *nafs* [i.e. the lower self] … [which] is the cause of blameworthy actions, sins, and base qualities … the struggle with [the *nafs*] has been called by the Sufis 'the Greater Holy War.'"[17] This is the only time the book mentions jihad, translated as "Holy War," and it does so in the spiritual context. What Schimmel says is certainly true; many Sufis have indeed described subduing the lower self as a much more difficult endeavor than military action against non-Muslims (i.e. the lesser jihad). However, in no way does the Sufi description of the spiritual jihad as being more difficult than the martial jihad imply a rejection of the latter and its attendant duties.

In surveying Western scholarship, it is accurate to say that the majority of Western studies of Sufism adhere to this greater jihad discourse as articulated by Schimmel and rarely discuss the lesser jihad in any kind of detail. Schimmel's book has been highly influential in Sufi studies, and rightly so. Her work is concerned primarily with the mystical aspects of Sufism,

especially as they are expressed in Sufi poetry, which is, in itself, a worthy subject. However, as with the majority of studies in European languages concerning Sufism, it does not offer a comprehensive introduction to the practical role Sufis have played in Muslim societies, and in this regard, it does not increase our knowledge or understanding of Sufi involvement in the martial jihad in any way.

While most Sufi scholarship, such as that of Schimmel, does tend to concentrate on the mystical aspects of Sufism, especially regarding Sufi poetry, its methodology is sound and does not exhibit an ideological bias. On the other hand, some contemporary Sufi scholarship, while generally sound in terms of its sources and methodology, attributes ahistorical concepts to Sufis and the Sufi tradition for which there is no textual evidence, especially with regard to the significance of the greater jihad. An example of this may be seen in the following discussion of the greater jihad in Scott Kugle's *Sufis and Saints' Bodies: Mysticism, Corporeality, and Sacred Power in Islam*, a book that presents an analysis of the postmodern theoretical concept of "corporeality" in the context of Sufism. In discussing how Sufis differ from mainstream Muslims in their emphasis on the "interiority of Iblis [the Qur'anic Lucifer]," Kugle states "[Sufis] take very seriously the Prophet Muhammad's teaching about the greater jihad"[18] after which he quotes the greater jihad *hadith*. He then elaborates his understanding of the spiritual jihad against Iblis, whom he describes as: "a force internal to human beings, a force that can be avoided only by introspection, thereby resisting the puritan impulse to project his dark light onto the external world in a dynamic of hatred—hatred of despised social groups, religious others, or the human body itself."[19] This rather impassioned invective against Iblis and the definition of the "dynamic of hatred" that he produces is completely anachronistic in that it employs the terminology of contemporary social-justice activism (e.g. "despised social groups" and "religious others") rather than traditional Islamic terms and concepts. Kugle provides no sources to bolster either his definition of the greater jihad or the Sufi preoccupation with "despised social groups" and "religious others." Premodern Sufi treatises and vernacular hagiography are generally quite consistent in their use of terminology to discuss or define the internal battle against Iblis and the lower self, and make no mention of this inner struggle as a means to counter the hatred of "despised social groups" or "the human body."

Sayyed Hossein Nasr has written extensively about Sufism and the meaning of jihad in the Sufi tradition. Nasr also vigorously promotes the

greater jihad *hadith*. His description of jihad as a struggle undertaken to better Muslim society and the self is echoed by other popular scholars of Islam (e.g. John Esposito[20]) in a variety of publications that seek to present Islam in a manner that is acceptable to a Western readership and with which secular readers can sympathize. In doing so they interpret Islam as a kind of spiritual movement for "social justice" and "reform,"[21] using much anachronistic terminology.

In *The Garden of Truth: The Vision and Promise of Sufism, Islam's Mystical Tradition*, Nasr refutes the meaning of jihad as war, insisting that jihad is "exertion in the path of God"[22] (*al-jihad fi sabil Allah*).[23] Later in the same paragraph Nasr does admit the existence of the "lesser jihad," which he defines as including "war to defend oneself, one's family, one's nation, and one's religion."[24] Regarding jihad as warfare, he correctly states that it must be an endeavor that is "selfless, detached, and not caused by anger and hatred."[25] In this statement that concerns the motives for jihad Nasr is in accord with Islamic legal tradition in that the legal tradition does insist that the *mujahid* wage war solely for religious purposes and never for personal gain.[26] In his book *Islam in the Modern World* in the chapter "Jihād: Its Spiritual Significance" Nasr presents a vague explanation of the meaning of jihad that takes many liberties with the traditional connotations of this term. The chapter begins by citing Qur'an 39:69 (*And those who perform jihad for Us, we shall certainly guide them in our ways*) and then follows with the greater jihad *hadith*. At one point in the chapter, Nasr insists that Muslims must engage in jihad "at all moments of life to fight a battle both inward and outward against those forces that if not combatted will destroy that necessary equilibrium on the foundation of which normal human life is based."[27] Nasr is certainly welcome to interpret jihad in any way he may wish; however, by not providing any reliable sources from the vast tradition of Islamic scholarship, which includes Qur'anic exegesis, *hadith* compendia, legal treatises, and so on, with which to bolster these claims that jihad must be waged to maintain "equilibrium," it is difficult to accept his definition of jihad as representative of anything other than his subjective interpretation of this doctrine.

In his article "Al-Jihād Al-Akbar: Notes on a Theme in Islamic Spirituality" John Renard presents the concept of the greater jihad as if it were an integral part of general Islamic belief that the majority of Muslims have practiced since the advent of Islam: "Ever since (according to a tradition) Muhammad returned from battle and declared that the greater struggle still lay ahead, Muslims have distinguished between the major and minor

forms of *jihād*."[28] By stating that *Muslims* have made a distinction between the "major and minor forms of jihad," Renard gives the impression that the greater jihad *hadith* and the distinction between the spiritual and martial jihad have played a significant role in the spiritual lives of the majority of Muslims throughout Islamic history. As indicated earlier, however, until quite recently this *hadith* and the concept of the spiritual jihad did not enjoy wide currency outside of the various Sufi traditions. Moreover, referring to the martial jihad as "minor" gives the impression to someone who is not well versed in Islamic history and doctrine that war for the sake of the faith has never been a central part of Islam, which is patently false. Renard also makes the claim that "Muslims" have developed "a language in which to speak of the subtleties and nuances of [the spiritual struggle]. "[29] While it is true that Sufis are Muslims and that Sufis have, over the centuries, developed complex and nuanced terminology for describing the struggle against the lower self, saying that "Muslims" have developed such an allegorical language gives the impression that this spiritual understanding of jihad and its attendant terminology have been a recognized and essential part of the religious life of most Muslims, which a thorough examination of Islamic history and doctrine demonstrates is not the case.

When Western scholars must discuss Sufi involvement in the martial jihad they do so almost exclusively in the context of anti-colonial resistance to nineteenth-century European colonial powers. It would appear that many Western scholars are only comfortable with the martial endeavors of Sufis when such activity can be subsumed under some kind of anti-colonial struggle, a subject that elicits much sympathy from a postmodern secular readership. An example of this anti-colonial discourse is found in Carl Ernst's *Sufism: An Introduction to the Mystical Tradition of Islam*. In his book, Ernst describes Sufis as leaders of "resistance to European conquest."[30] In particular he mentions Sufi orders as "centers of anti-colonial resistance" in Algeria, the Caucasus, and Sudan.[31] Ernst makes the important point that during the colonial period in the Islamic world Sufi orders were often the only remaining stable local institutions after European powers had removed local Muslim rulers.[32] This observation underscores the historical role of Sufis as upholders of Islamic piety and culture during times of upheaval, from the Mongol conquests of the thirteenth century till the struggle with European colonial powers during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. What is surprising, however, is that Ernst does not refer to this "resistance," which certainly involved religiously sanctioned

combat with European armies, as jihad, even though Arabic sources generally refer to it as such.[33] It would seem that he is reluctant to do so, as are many of his contemporaries, for this would reinforce the perceived negative Western connotation of jihad as holy war.

Sufi Scholarship in the Contemporary Islamic World

At this point it is both appropriate and necessary to consider the arguments and conclusions that contemporary Muslim scholarship in Arabic offers with regard to the doctrine of jihad among Sufis. Though often ignored by Western scholars of Sufism, there is a significant body of contemporary scholarship—primarily in Arabic—that addresses the doctrine of jihad in the Sufi tradition and Sufi involvement in martial activities. While much of the scholarship in European languages beclouds the question of Sufi involvement in the martial jihad, Muslim scholars, writing in Islamic languages[34] for a Muslim audience, generally insist that Sufis have always been staunch warriors for the faith and highlight the active martial role Sufis continue to play today in the defense of Islam. In this, they hark back to the authors of the earliest Sufi treatises who sought to reconcile Sufism with outward Islamic practice by demonstrating—through relating the words and deeds of the Sufi friends of God—that Sufis had always upheld the *sharia* (Islamic law) and that their teachings and precepts were in harmony with the Qur'an and *sunna*.[35] These modern scholars and their works represent a variety of different backgrounds, traditions, and approaches, which attests to the pervasive belief among contemporary Sunni Muslims that Sufis have always played an active and practical social role in Muslim society. Some of these studies are written from the academic perspective of historians and literary critics, while others are written from the perspective of Sufi and Islamic sacred history. However, what unites all of these studies and simultaneously places them at odds with most scholarship in European languages is their insistence that the martial and spiritual aspects of jihad are complementary and indivisible. In other words, what these studies suggest is that in Islamic culture there is no perceived incongruity between mysticism and warfare. It should also be noted that most of the Arabic sources under discussion make little if no reference to Sufi poetry, music, or dancing, which are, of course, precisely the aspects of Sufism that appeal most to a secular Western audience and have often been the focus of Sufi studies in European languages.

Orientalists and the Misrepresentation of Sufism

What all of these contemporary Muslim scholars have in common is the aim of reclaiming Sufism from the orientalists (*mustashriqun*), who, they claim, have distorted the image of Sufis by ignoring their central role in the martial jihad. It is ironic that these scholars criticize Western scholars in general—many of whom have adopted Said's ideology and *themselves* condemn early European orientalists as agents of colonialism—for maligning Sufism by claiming that it is a peaceful and passive interpretation of Islam. It could be said that one of the reasons Muslim scholars who write in Arabic champion and emphasize Sufi involvement in the martial jihad is to make Sufism more palatable to a contemporary Muslim audience. The reason for this is that over the last hundred years, with the rise of Salafist and Wahhabist interpretations of Islam, Sufism has lost much of the prestige it traditionally enjoyed in Sunni Islamic culture. Wahhabis, in particular, have ruthlessly pursued an anti-Sufi policy, even going so far as to destroy Sufi tombs and condemn Sufis as heretics. Thus, by highlighting the historical role of Sufis in defending the Abode of Islam and expanding its domain, these Muslim scholars and writers hope, in part, to resuscitate the image of Sufis in contemporary Muslim culture. One can also sense the indignation these scholars feel with regard to the general Western interpretation of Sufism as an irenic phenomenon; for example, "orientalists" are described as "having diluted Islamic Sufism" and "ignoring the martial Sufi jihad as if it did not exist."[36] They are further criticized for depicting Sufis as "fleeing the battleground of life for the interior of Sufi lodges" and avoiding confrontation with the enemy[37] and "distorting the Sufi movement and the jihad of the Sufis."[38] It would appear from the statements of these scholars of the postcolonial period writing in Arabic that they wish to reclaim Sufism from Western scholarship and its cultural biases. One way in which they do this is by concentrating on an important aspect of Sufism that generally makes Western scholars and a Western readership uncomfortable, namely, Sufi involvement in the martial jihad. A typical example of this approach to Sufi studies written in Arabic is the following description of Sufism from a book by a contemporary Syrian scholar of Sufism, As'ad al-Khatib. In the introduction to his study of Sufis and the martial jihad titled *al-Butula wa'l-fida' 'inda al-sufiyya* (*Bravery and Devotion Among the Sufis*), Khatib writes that to understand Sufism, one must return to the "fundamental sources" and avoid contemporary scholarship since the majority of it is of an "orientalist" nature. He insists

that there is nothing passive about Sufism and that it has nothing to do with esoteric knowledge or philosophy. Rather, Khatib claims: "Sufism is strength, courage, and fighting."[39]

Khatib's contention that Sufism is neither "passive" nor some kind of esoteric "inner knowledge" is the leitmotif of his book; indeed, he devotes the majority of his study to illustrating the practical and courageous role of Sufis throughout the history of Islam by adducing both hagiographical anecdotes and quotations from Sufi treatises. Though, to some extent, his methodology is flawed from a scholarly perspective, in that Khatib accepts a priori the veracity and historicity of hagiographical anecdotes, his study does collect and present hundreds of quotations and anecdotes in Arabic concerning Sufi involvement in and promulgation of the martial jihad. Despite the methodological flaws inherent in *al-Butula wa'l-fida' 'inda al-sufiyya* it remains an extremely valuable contribution to Sufi studies, especially considering that many of Khatib's sources only exist in unedited manuscript form.

Sufi Zeal for the Martial Jihad

While many scholars writing in European languages depict Sufism as offering a purely spiritual example of the meaning of jihad—that is, one that does not involve warfare—the majority of contemporary writings in Arabic by Muslim scholars and Sufis emphasize the Sufis' zeal for taking part in the martial jihad. Muhammad Ahmad Darnayqa's book, *Safahat min jihad al-sufiyya wa-al-zuhhad* (*Pages From the Jihad of Sufis and Ascetics*) is typical of contemporary scholarship written in Arabic regarding Sufism in that it insists that "genuine Sufis" did fight selflessly in God's path and never for worldly gain.[40] Darnayqa describes Sufis as "carrying the Qur'an and the *sunna* in one hand and the sword in the other hand" in order to defend the Abode of Islam or to spread the words: "There is no god save God."[41] Darnayqa's description of Sufis fighting in God's path depicts them as exemplary *mujahids* in that they are not motivated to fight for selfish reasons, which accords with the criteria the early Islamic legal tradition established for carrying out jihad. He also alludes to Sufi involvement in offensive jihad for the purpose of propagating Islam when he describes Sufis as fighting to spread the words of the Islamic declaration of faith. In a similar manner, the editors of an edition of the thirteenth-century Sufi treatise *'Awarif al-ma'arif* by al-Suhrawardi (d. 1234), discuss Sufi involvement in warfare in their introduction, saying that Sufis have taken

part in the martial jihad (*al-jihad al-harbi*) since the advent of Sufism.[42] To illustrate their point, they relate examples—primarily from hagiography—of well-known Sufis fighting the Byzantines, Crusaders, Mongols, et cetera.[43] They conclude that Sufis have always been exemplary *mujahids* and that history refutes any description of Sufis to the contrary.[44]

The Complementary Nature of the Two Aspects of Jihad

Muslim scholars and contemporary Sufis writing in Arabic for a Muslim audience consistently stress the complementary nature of the two aspects of jihad, as this is essential to the Sufi interpretation of jihad. This twofold, complementary representation of jihad is in stark contrast to that of Western scholars of Sufism, many of whom have made it their mission to convince a Western audience—both non-Muslim as well as Muslim—that the spiritual jihad is the primary form of jihad, not only in the context of Sufism but also in the entire Islamic tradition as well.

Examples of the twofold and complementary nature of Sufi jihad abound in contemporary Sufi scholarship in Arabic, which insists on the existence of a firm connection between the jihad against the lower self and the martial jihad[45] in the Sufi tradition.[46] Likewise, the fundamental Sufi aim is described as "strengthening the relationship with God and bravery in fighting for the purpose of jihad."[47] In other words, the spiritual jihad prepares the Sufi for undertaking the martial jihad, and indeed this is why Sufis are the ideal *mujahids*. This understanding of the relationship between the spiritual and martial jihad in Sufism is a prominent theme in all of these contemporary Arabic studies of Sufi jihad, which is not surprising in consideration of the fact that Sufis themselves have consistently articulated and emphasized the complementary relationship between the spiritual and martial jihads throughout the history of Sufism, which will become apparent in the following chapters as we survey, compare, and analyze the many genres of Sufi writings from the premodern period.

Conclusion

This overview of the history of the development of Sufi scholarship has shown that—with some notable exceptions—Western scholars have tended to portray Sufis as primarily quietist mystics whose interpretation of and involvement in jihad are generally of a spiritual nature. While on

the other hand, contemporary Muslim scholars writing in Arabic present a completely different image of Sufis, insisting—contrary to most Western scholarship—that Sufis have always been actively involved in military campaigns against non-Muslims, even going so far as to say that the spiritual jihad complements the martial jihad by preparing Sufis to selflessly wage war, either to protect the Abode of Islam or expand its domain. The contrast between the manner in which Western scholars have portrayed Sufis and the way Muslim scholars writing in Arabic for a Muslim audience have depicted them is both striking and puzzling, to say the least. Furthermore, both of these groups are almost unanimous in their respective fundamental conclusions regarding the Sufi tradition.

Where then does the truth lie? Clearly both groups of scholars agree on the importance of Sufis in the development of Islamic culture and their role in promoting and safeguarding the faith. Both groups also seek to defend Sufis and uphold their legitimate place in Islam, which is certainly laudable. It may also be said that both groups are intent upon convincing their respective audiences that Sufis are indeed the quintessential Muslims and are not some aberrant esoteric phenomenon in the history of Islam. The irony, of course, is that most contemporary Western scholars wish to convince their audience that Islam is a peaceful faith and that Sufis are the paradigmatic practitioners of the true meaning of jihad, which, they claim, is overcoming the lower self, whereas Muslim scholars writing in Arabic wish to convince their audience that Sufis are *not* esoteric pacifists but rather, stouthearted warriors who exemplify the complementary nature of jihad as both a spiritual *and* martial endeavor.

In the following chapter we will offer an overview of how the concept of jihad is developed and expounded in the Qur'an and *hadith*, which are, of course, the fundamental sources for this essential Islamic doctrine. This will necessitate some discussion of how Muslims have traditionally approached the Qur'an with regard to establishing important doctrine and developing a legal system based on scripture, as well as an introduction to the concept of abrogation as a means of dealing with conflicting revelations. Following our overview of Islamic scripture, we will move on to survey what Sufis have said about the struggle with the lower self (*mujahada*) in Chap. 4. This discussion of *mujahada* will serve as a foundation for Chap. 5, which examines how Sufis have defined and portrayed the martial jihad in a variety of learned writings, including treatises, *tafsir*, and letters, and how this understanding of the martial jihad relates to Islamic scripture and law.

Notes

1. Hamid Algar, *Wahhabism: A Critical Essay* (Oneanta: Islamic Publications International, 2002), pp. 1–3.
2. John Malcolm, *The History of Persia: From the Most Early Period to the Present Time* Vol. II (London: John Murray, 1815), pp. 382–383.
3. Garcin de Tassy, *La poésie philosophique et religieuse chez les persans* (Paris: Benjamin Duprat,1864), p. 4.
4. For discussion of the term "Sufism," see Michael Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1995), p. 1.
5. Wheeler M. Thackston, *A Millennium of Classical Persian Poetry* (Bethesda: Iran Books, 1994), p. xi.
6. R.A. Nicholson, *The Idea of Personality in Sufism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923), p. 1.
7. Richard Maxwell Eaton, *The Sufis of Bijapur* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 19.
8. Ibid., pp. xxvi–xxvii.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., p. 19.
11. Carl W. Ernst, *Eternal Garden* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), p. 100.
12. Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India* Vol. One (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1978), p. 314. Richard Eaton also discusses this episode from Indian Sufi hagiography in *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 73–75.
13. Ibid.
14. Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Shāh Walī Allāh* (Canberra: Ma'rifat Publishing House, 1980), p. 285.
15. Mark J. Sedgwick, *Sufism: The Essentials* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2003), pp. 79–83.
16. Ibid., p. 81.
17. Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1978), p. 112.
18. Scott Kugle, *Sufis and Saints' Bodies* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), p. 36.
19. Ibid.
20. John L. Esposito, *What Everyone Needs to Know about Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 117. According to Esposito, the Qur'an teaches that " jihad as a struggle pertains to the difficulty and complexity of living a good life; struggling against the evil in oneself—to be virtuous and moral, making a serious effort to do good works and help reform society. It can also mean fighting injustice and oppression, spreading and defending

Islam and creating a just society through preaching, teaching, and, if necessary, armed struggle or holy war." It is interesting that Esposito states, almost as an afterthought, that jihad can mean "armed struggle or holy war" as if this is an uncommon and regrettable aspect of jihad. As with many apologetic writers, he gives no documentation to back up his claims about the meaning of jihad. Any survey of Islamic historiography, juristic texts, *hadith* compendia, Qur'anic exegesis, and so on, reveals that the primary and most common—though by no means the only—meaning of jihad throughout the history of Islam is waging war for the sake of the faith.

21. Ibid., p. 9. For example, Esposito describes the Qur'anic revelations received by Muhammad as " calls to religious and social reform … that emphasized social justice ." The use of a post-modern term like "social justice" to describe activities in seventh-century Arabia—or anywhere else for that matter—shows what is probably an attempt to appeal to contemporary secular notions.
22. Sayyed Hossein Nasr, *The Garden of Truth* (New York: Harper Collins, 2007), p. 97.
23. This phrase that occurs often in the Qur'an and is quoted here by Nasr is generally defined by traditional Islamic sources as fighting/combat for the sake of the faith. For discussion of the types of jihad as presented in traditional Islamic juristic texts—none of which include the "greater" jihad as a category—see Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, pp. 74–82. Khadduri's book is still the best and most comprehensive study of the doctrine of jihad from the legal perspective available in English.
24. Nasr, *The Garden of Truth*, p. 97.
25. Ibid.
26. For an in-depth discussion of the qualifications the *mujahid* must possess for the jihad to be *bellum justum*, see Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, pp. 83–86.
27. Sayyed Hossein Nasr, *Islam in the Modern World* (New York: HarperOne, 2012), p. 44.
28. John Renard, "Al-Jihād Al-Akbar: Notes on a Theme in Islamic Spirituality," *The Muslim World*, Vol. 78, Issue: 3–4, p. 225.
29. Ibid.
30. Carl Ernst, *Sufism* (Boston: Shambhala, 1997), p. 205.
31. Ibid., p. 5.
32. Ibid., p. 205.
33. For example, Muhammad 'Abd al-Hamid, *Al-Sufiyya wa-al-jihad fi sabil Allah* (Alexandria: Dar al-Wifa', 2004), p. 87 and Barakat Muhammad Murad, *al-Amir 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jaza'iri: al-mujahid al-sufi* (Cairo: al-Sadr li-Khidmat al-Taba'a, 1990), pp. 3–4.

34. That is, languages that Muslims have traditionally cultivated as literary languages, for example Arabic, Persian, Ottoman, Chagatai, as well as modern national languages of countries in which Islam is the dominant faith, for example Urdu, Turkish, Malay, and so on.
35. This was precisely the aim of early Sufi writers such as al-Qushayri, al-Sulami, al-Isfahani, Hujviri, inter al.
36. Muhammad Ahmad Darnayqa, *Safahat min jihad al-sufiyya wa'l-zuhhad* (Tripoli: Jarus Burs, 1994), p. 22.
37. Murad, *al-Amir 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jaza'iri: al-mujahid al-sufi*, pp. 5–6.
38. Mahmud Abu'l-Fayd al-Manufi, *Jihad al-turuq al-Sufiyya fi Asya al-wusta wa'l-Qawqaz* (Cairo: 2007), pp. 3–6.
39. As'ad al-Khatib, *Al-Butula wa'l-fida' 'inda al-sufiyya* (Damascus: Dar al-Taqwa, 1997), pp. 244–45.
40. Darnayqa, *Safahat min jihad al-sufiyya*, p. 22.
41. Ibid.
42. Mahmud, 'Abd al-Halim and Ibn al-Sharif, Mahmud, "al-Muqaddama al-thaniyya: al-tasawwuf fi'l-jaw al-islami" in Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi, '*Awarif al-ma'arif* Vol. 1 (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Haditha, 1971), p. 13.
43. Ibid., pp. 13–16.
44. Ibid.
45. *Al-jihad al-qitali.*
46. Al-Khatib, *al-Butula wa'l-fida' 'inda al-sufiyya*, p. 45.
47. Ibrahim Hasan al-Jamal, *Al-Futuwa fi'l-Islam wa-silat al-futuwa bi'l-tasawwuf* (Cairo: Nahdat Misr, 1992), p. 26.

CHAPTER 3

Islamic Scripture and the Doctrine of Jihad

> The wolf that threatens the flock of Islam are the detestable unbelievers, who have become quite powerful during this era, and thus it is the duty of the king, his commanders, and his soldiers, to strive with their lives to drive back the evil of the unbelievers, for their bread and water will become lawful only when they draw their swords against the unbelievers … Even if the unbelievers cause no harm, it is the duty of the king to go to war and conquer the lands of unbelief and make Islam manifest[1] … "*So that the word of God may be supreme.*"[2] —Najm al-Din Razi, *The Path of God's Servants from Origin to Return* (thirteenth century)

In order to comprehend the doctrine of jihad in Islam a basic understanding of the Islamic scriptural tradition (i.e. the Qur'an and *hadith*) and the history of its development is essential to our study. For this reason, before examining how Sufi texts portray the martial jihad, we will begin with an overview of the Qur'an's composition followed by an introduction to the concept of scriptural abrogation in Islam. We will then consider the role of *hadith* in the elaboration of Islamic doctrine and practice. Without at least a rudimentary understanding of how Muslims have traditionally approached and understood Islamic scripture, it is impossible to grasp how the doctrine of jihad has developed since the advent of Islam in the early seventh century. To aid the non-specialist reader, we will also compare and contrast the relevant aspects of scripture and prophethood, in Islam and Christianity.

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In discussing the early history of the Muslim polity in the context of scripture and biography, we will limit ourselves to consideration of Islamic sacred history, that is, how Muslims have traditionally understood and portrayed the advent and development of Islam within the Islamic historiographical tradition. In other words, this chapter does not pretend to set forth a historically factual account of the rise of Islam in Arabia, as this is not especially relevant to our discussion.

It is hoped that this overview of Islamic scripture and historiography will not only aid non-specialist readers in understanding what Sufis have said about the martial jihad but will also provide them with deeper insight into the scriptural foundation of the Islamic tradition in general and how it differs significantly from the development of scripture in Christianity.

The Qur'an in Islam

We will begin by examining the composition of the Qur'an and the circumstances of its revelation according to Islamic sacred history, before considering the traditional Muslim interpretation thereof. Non-Muslim readers interested in learning about Islam encounter many difficulties in both reading the Qur'an and understanding its role in Islam. This misunderstanding arises from a variety of factors, including the organization of Qur'anic chapters, the concept of abrogation, Qur'anic exegesis, as well as lack of knowledge regarding the social and cultural environment of pre-Islamic Arabia.

Firstly, it must be understood that Muslims believe the Qur'an to be coeternal with God and thus, uncreated; in other words, God is uncreated and eternal and therefore his words must also be eternal and uncreated.[3] For this reason, most Muslims believe that the Qur'an has always existed and the content thereof has undergone no change.

Islamic sacred history holds that at the age of 40 (roughly AD 610) Muhammad began receiving revelations from God through the angel Gabriel (Jibra'il). He would continue to receive revelations over the 22-year period of his prophetic mission till his death in 632. The tradition holds that Muhammad was unlettered and therefore could not have composed the Qur'an himself. Muhammad was able to gain converts to the monotheistic faith, Islam, through preaching in his native Mecca and more importantly, according to the tradition, by means of the power and miraculous nature of the revelations. A tenet of Islam is the Qur'an's inimitability *(i'jaz)*; that is to say, Muslims have traditionally believed that no

one is capable of producing anything that could rival the power, beauty, and eloquence of the Qur'an. Because the Qur'an is the uncreated word of God and therefore inimitable, the tradition holds that no translation can be equal to or replace the Arabic original.

Many non-Muslims, especially those belonging to cultures that were—at least traditionally—Christian, make the mistake of equating the role of Muhammad in Islam with that of Jesus in Christianity. For Christians, Jesus is the miracle of Christianity as he is God's word become flesh, whereas the miracle of Islam is God's word become book, that is, the Qur'an (*al-Qur'an* means "the Recitation" in Arabic). For Muslims, hearing the Qur'an being recited in Arabic is, in itself, an act of worship, for the believer is experiencing God's eternal and uncreated word. Likewise, reading or reciting the Qur'an out loud is also an act of worship. Indeed, hearing a professional recitation of the Qur'an often brings devout Muslims to tears. In a way, this experience of hearing and reciting God's word is similar, though by no means analogous, to the role of Holy Communion in Christianity in which Christians symbolically receive the presence (or in the case of Catholics, the actual flesh and blood) of Christ through the Eucharist.[4] All observant Muslims perform the five daily prayers in Arabic and many Muslims can at least read aloud the Qur'anic text, though it is probably accurate to say that the majority of the world's Muslims do not know Classical Arabic well enough to actually understand the Qur'an's content without recourse to a translation. In some ways, this is similar to the way in which medieval Christians experienced the Bible; to wit, a priest would read from the sacred text, which in Western Europe would have been in Latin—a language most people did not understand by the early Middle Ages. The general Christian population received religious instruction in the form of stories from the saints' lives and miracle plays, both of which were in the local vernacular (a similar—though by no means parallel—situation obtained in premodern Islamic culture with regard to the role of the narration of the lives and deeds of God's friends in the promulgation of popular piety, a topic we will explore extensively in Chap. 6 when we discuss jihad in Sufi hagiography). The practice of reading scripture silently to oneself in one's vernacular language and pondering its meaning, developed first in Europe during the Renaissance, following the Protestant Reformation and the widespread use of the printing press.[5] Likewise, the contemporary Protestant belief in developing a "personal relationship with God" is also the result of post-Renaissance, post-Enlightenment cultural developments in the West. It is important to keep all of these phenomena

in mind as they color the way people from a Western European cultural background unconsciously approach Islam (as well as how they approach older forms of Christianity, such as Catholicism, Orthodox Christianity, Coptic Christianity, etc.).

Another fundamental difference between the Qur'an and the Bible is the composition and arrangement of the Qur'anic revelations. According to the Islamic tradition, Muhammad, who, as mentioned above, remained unlettered until his death, never compiled all the revelations into one book, nor did he instruct his followers to do so, though some traditions claim that he did indicate the order of the *ayas* and *suras*.[6] It is said that following the death of a number of early reciters of the Qur'an in the battle of Yamama, Umar b. al-Khattab (d. 644), who would later become the second caliph, urged Abu Bakr (d. 634), the first caliph, to have the Qur'an collected and written down so that it would not be lost.[7] It is said that Abu Bakr charged Zayd ibn Thabit (d. circa 660), who had been one of the Prophet's scribes, with the task of collecting the Qur'an. It is also said that Uthman (d. 656), the third of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs, bade Zayd ibn Thabit compile and write down the Qur'an, which endeavor gave the text its present form.[8] Before the Uthmanic compilation the Qur'an was primarily known orally by the original companions of Muhammad and other early converts to Islam, many of whom only knew portions thereof. Written fragments—on parchment, palm leaves, bone—were also said to have existed.[9] In compiling the definitive Qur'an it was decided, with a few exceptions, to arrange the *suras* (Qur'anic chapters) according to their length, rather than the order of their revelation. For this reason, one cannot read the Qur'an as a sacred narrative beginning with the first *sura* and ending with the last. Indeed, the Qur'an is not a narrative, though it does contain narrative, most notably the Sura of Yusuf, which relates a version of the story of Joseph in Egypt. Non-Muslim readers who are unaware of this are often baffled when trying to read and understand the Qur'an, for they expect to encounter a story that develops in a standard narratival fashion. From a doctrinal perspective, the traditional Islamic approach to the Qur'an requires precise identification of the order in which each *aya* (Qur'anic verse) was believed to have been revealed, a process referred to as *asbab al-nuzul* (occasions of revelation) in traditional Qur'anic exegesis[10] in order to accurately apply the principle of abrogation, a topic to which we will now turn.

Abrogation

Naskh (to abrogate or supersede) is a concept that early Islamic *mufassirun* (i.e. those who interpret the meaning of the Qur'an) developed in order to deal with seemingly contradictory material in Islamic scripture (i.e. Qur'an and *hadith*). The basic idea behind abrogation is that certain revelations were revealed in relation to the historic needs of the Muslim community and thus what may have been appropriate at an earlier stage in the development of the community could be superseded or abrogated by later revelations that addressed the contemporary needs of the community.[11] This is a particularly important concept when dealing with the doctrine of jihad in the Qur'an and *hadith*. It should be mentioned that most Muslim exegetes and scholars have accepted the abrogation of the Qur'an by the Qur'an and abrogation of *hadith* by *hadith*. However, the concept of abrogation of the Qur'an by *hadith* and of *hadith* by Qur'an has been a much more complicated affair about which there is no universal agreement.[12] As an example of progressive revelation, early *suras* from the Meccan period of revelation (i.e., before the Muslims' flight from Mecca to Medina) counsel the Muslim community to forbear in the face of hostility on the part of the pagan Arabs and Jews, owing to the small number and relative weakness of the *umma* (Islamic community) at that time. Later *suras*, however, from the Medinan period of revelation, such as *Surat al-Tawba*, command the Muslims to wage war against their foes until they are subdued. By the time of the Medinan revelations, the Islamic *umma* had become dominant in Medina and thus had the numbers and strength to undertake an offensive war against their enemies, the Quraysh, who are said to have violated the terms of their treaty with the Muslims.[13]

Here, let us return to the quotation with which this chapter begins. This bellicose admonition is found in the highly influential treatise that Najm al-Din Razi (d.1256) composed in Persian concerning the Sufi path, *The Path of God's Servants from Origin to Return*. Razi, who lived in Central Asia, was affiliated with the Kubravi Sufi order, the founder of which, Najm al-Din Kubra, is said to have died while defending his fellow Muslims during the first Mongol invasion of Khwarazm in 1221. Though primarily concerned with the spiritual aspects of Sufism and Sufi practice, *The Path of God's Servants* also contains some didactic discussion of the duty of Muslim rulers to undertake the martial jihad. In this regard, *The Path of God's Servants* harks back to the important Mirror-for-Princes genre that originated in pre-Islamic Persian culture and continued

to develop in Arabic and Persian during the first millennium of Islamic civilization. Mirrors for Princes are books that teach a ruler how to govern, generally through the medium of stories and anecdotes. Among the many important and practical social roles of Sufis in the premodern period was guiding and admonishing the rulers of Muslim communities, especially when they were perceived to be neglecting their religious duties. Sufi literature—hagiography in particular—abounds in anecdotes concerning encounters between caliphs, kings, sultans, and Sufi friends of God. In the majority of these anecdotes, the ruler seeks out a well-known Sufi in order to question him regarding matters of piety, and correct behavior. More often than not, the anecdotes conclude with the Sufi friend of God upbraiding the ruler for his hypocrisy and worldliness. This anecdote from *The Path of God's Servants* is clearly a similar admonishment to the local ruler to uphold his religious duty as leader of the Muslim community. It also makes clear the necessity of waging offensive jihad to spread the faith in the phrase "Even if the unbelievers cause no harm, it is the duty of the king to go to war and conquer the lands of unbelief and make Islam manifest *so that the word of God may be supreme*." We shall see that many of the other Sufi texts we will discuss in the following chapters not only promulgate the offensive jihad in the same manner as *The Path of God's Servants*, they also stress the central role of God's friends in spreading the faith through martial means.

Of particular significance in this anecdote from *The Path of God's Servants* is the last sentence, which is a quotation from verse 40 of the ninth *sura*, *Surat al-Tawba*, in the Qur'an.[14] Islamic tradition holds this *sura* to be one of the last *suras* revealed to the Prophet. It is also one of the longer *suras* in the Qur'an, consisting of 129 *ayas*, and deals primarily with the duties incumbent upon Muslims in waging war against the unbelievers. It also warns of the punishment for those who do not wholeheartedly engage in battling the unbelievers. In the context of early Islamic history, it is not possible to explain the use of verbs such as *qatala* (to kill) and *qātala* (to fight) in this *sura* as having anything other than a martial meaning. The context also makes clear the martial meaning of jihad in the oft-quoted phrase "jihad in God's path."[15] The following quotations from verses 5, 29, and 111 of *Surat al-Tawba* illustrate how this *sura* has served as a fundamental source for the development of the doctrine of jihad in its primary martial sense:

9:5:

> And when the sacred months have passed, then kill those who associate partners with God[16] wherever you find them, and seize them and besiege them and lie in wait for them at every place of ambush …

9:29:

> Fight those who do not believe in God or in the Last Day and who do not deem unlawful that which God and His Messenger have made unlawful and who do not embrace the religion of truth from those who were given the scripture—[fight them] until they give the *jizya*[17] from their hands while they are submissive.

9:111:

> Verily, God has purchased from the believers their lives and their property [in return] for which, they will have Paradise. They fight in God's path, and thus they kill and are killed …

Verse 5 of *Surat al-Tawba* in the Qur'an is often referred to in traditional Qur'anic *tafsir* as the "verse of the sword." The renowned scholar, jurist, historian, and Qur'anic commentator Ibn Kathir (d. 1373), in his *tafsir*, which is considered one of the most influential and authoritative Qur'anic commentaries in the Sunni tradition, relates the following regarding this verse: "This noble verse is the *aya* of the sword concerning which, al-Dahhak b. Muzahim[18] (d. circa 718) has said: 'verily [this *aya*] abrogated every covenant between the Prophet … and any one of those who associate partners with God, every agreement and every term.'"[19] In other words, while the earlier verses regarding unbelievers and polytheists stipulated how the burgeoning Muslim community ought to deal with non-Muslims at that time, *Surat al-Tawba*, owing to its being the final revelation concerning jihad, became the final word on this matter until the Day of Reckoning.

Many traditional *mufassirun* have accepted that Qur'an 9:5 superseded 124 earlier verses dealing with jihad.[20] Moreover, the many examples of *hadith*, which Muslim scholars began systematically collecting and evaluating in the ninth century (though oral transmission thereof probably began in the seventh century), also consistently developed and confirmed the

primarily martial nature of jihad. The narration and evaluation of *hadith* is a fundamental source for Islamic belief and it is therefore necessary at this point that we devote some discussion to its history and development.

Hadith and the Islamic Scriptural Tradition

Whereas the Qur'an is considered God's uncreated word and is accepted universally by Muslims in its entirety, the prophetic traditions, which are the second most important source of Islamic belief and practice, have necessitated an entirely different approach.

It is traditionally believed that the practice of narrating *hadith* developed soon after the death of Muhammad in 632. The unexpected death of the new religion's founder created a number of serious difficulties for the early Muslim community. The majority of the Muslims believed Muhammad had died without having clearly designated a successor, which, among other things, led to the Sunni/Shia schism; the Prophet had also been the sole authoritative exegete of the Qur'an as well as lawgiver to the Muslim community during his lifetime, and thus, his death necessitated the development of new methods of scriptural interpretation and legal methodology. As the Muslim community continued to grow and acquire new territory through conversion and military conquest, new legal and moral questions arose for which there was no immediate answer. One of the ways in which the Muslim community dealt with this challenge was to recall sayings and pronouncements attributed to Muhammad as well as the anecdotes regarding his deeds and behavior that his companions related. By the ninth century, there were thousands of these *hadith* (literally, sayings, speech acts, reports) in circulation and it was decided that they ought to be systematically collected, recorded, and evaluated. The early *muhaddithun* (i.e. those who collected and evaluated *hadith*) resolved the problem of verifying authenticity by establishing the *isnad* (chain of transmission) of each *hadith*. If they could verify the veracity and good reputation of every person who had transmitted a given *hadith*, they considered the *hadith* "*sahih*" (authentic); if there were some discrepancies regarding an otherwise sound chain of transmission, they considered the *hadith* "*hasan*" (good); if there were a number of serious flaws in the chain of transmission, they considered the *hadith* "*da'if*" (weak). Sunni Muslims have traditionally considered the compendium of *hadith* that Muhammad al-Bukhari (d. 870) composed, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, to be the most reliable in establishing the Prophet's *sunna*. The adjec-

tive, Sunni, is derived from the noun, *sunna*; thus, Sunni Muslims are those who believe themselves to be following the practice of the Prophet. In addition to their role in establishing correct behavior and practice, *hadith* were also the basis for early Qur'anic commentary. The author of what is probably the most influential early Qur'anic commentary (*Jami' al-Bayan 'an Ta'wil Ay al-Qur'an,* often referred to as simply *Tafsir al-Tabari*), the Persian Muslim scholar and historian, Muhammad al-Tabari (d. 923), relied extensively on *hadith* as his exegetical source.

In addition to the Qur'an, the various *hadith* compendia, as well as narratives of the Prophet's military campaigns in Arabia, were essential to the development of the doctrine of jihad. Each of the canonical Sunni *hadith* compendia contains an entire section devoted to *hadith* regarding jihad. As mentioned previously, the greater jihad *hadith* is not included in any of these compendia and only appears centuries later with the designation "weak." Indeed not only do the canonical *hadith* collections *not* contain the greater jihad *hadith*, the overwhelming majority of the *hadith* regarding jihad they do contain are concerned solely with the various aspects of the martial jihad and battle.[21]

Biography (*Sira*) and Military Campaign Narratives

In addition to Islamic scripture, the early genre of *sira* (biographical narratives) concerning the Prophet Muhammad and his military campaigns in Arabia has also traditionally served to provide a model for religiously sanctioned military endeavors. These idealized biographical narratives show Muhammad and his followers as zealously waging war in order to bring Arabia and the Arab tribes into the Islamic *umma*.

Ibn Hisham (d. 828) is credited with producing the earliest surviving biography of Muhammad (*al-Sira al-nabawiyya*), using sources compiled by his predecessor, Ibn Ishaq (d. between 761 and 770), from oral accounts. *The Book of Military Expeditions* (*Kitab al-maghazi*) of al-Waqidi (d. 823) also recounts narratives of the many military campaigns the early Muslim community waged against their enemies in Arabia. These traditional narratives relate that Muhammad engaged in as many as 27 campaigns and authorized at least 59 other such military endeavors.[22] Tabari's monumental *History of Prophets and Kings* (*Tarikh al-rusul w'al-muluk*) contains much of the material found in Ibn Hisham's biography, reiterating the importance of these narratives to the ethos of early Islamic sacred history.

Islam, Muslims, and *Salam*

The words Islam, Muslim, and *salam* are all derived from the Arabic root /SLM/, therefore it would be useful to pause here in order to consider the relation of these three words to one another. We will first examine the word that denotes the religion, Islam, and then turn to discussion of Muslim and *salam*. While some apologists have insisted—increasingly since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001—that Islam means "peace," from a lexical and historical standpoint this is implausible. For this reason, it is necessary to discuss briefly the etymology of the terms "Islam" and "Muslim." The name of the religion, *Islam*, is the verbal noun of *aslama*, which means, literally, to submit. In the context of the religion, Islam means submission to the will of God. A Muslim is therefore, literally, one who submits to the will of God. The Arabic word *salam* does indeed mean "peace" and, as we noted above, is also derived from the root /SLM/, which gives us Islam and Muslim; however, derivation from the same root is not sufficient reason to conflate the meaning of two different words. Furthermore, when the Arabic word *salam* is glossed simply as "peace" in European languages, the average Western reader unconsciously assumes a variety of connotations from his own culture such as the secular utopian concepts of world peace and peaceful coexistence, categorical condemnation of war and violence and so forth. Moreover, Islamic legal texts do not use *salam* to denote the cessation of hostilities with non-Muslims following the conclusion of a peace treaty; rather the term they consistently employ is *sulh*.[23] In an Islamic context, at least, the word *salam* has an entirely religious meaning that has nothing to do with secular, post-modern concepts of multiculturalism and non-violence; rather, the word conveys the state of well-being and safety that Muslims enjoy when living under the guidance of Muslim rule and Islamic law. Thus the universal Islamic greeting *al-salamu ʿalaykum* and its response *wa-ʿalaykum al-salam* really signify the sense of security that Muslims ideally enjoy when in the company of their fellow Muslims and do not express confessional coexistence or anything resembling the secular idea of peace. The concept expressed by the word *salam* in *al-salamu ʿalaykum* is similar in some ways to the belief many Christians hold that peace will reign on earth after the Second Coming of Christ. In other words, the concept of world peace in the context of a proselytizing universal faith—be it Christianity or Islam—is entirely dependent on that faith becoming globally dominant.[24]

Conclusion

It is hoped that this very brief introduction to Islamic scripture and early Islamic sacred history has helped to clarify for the reader how Muslims have traditionally understood and approached their scriptural tradition, and how this tradition differs from the scriptural tradition of Christianity. The reader also now has a fundamental understanding of the doctrinal and historical basis for the development of the doctrine of jihad, primarily as war against unbelievers for the defense and expansion of the Abode of Islam.

In the next chapter, we will begin by discussing the lexical background of jihad terminology in the Sufi tradition, by which we may elucidate how Sufis have traditionally referred to and explained the struggle against the lower self and its desires (i.e. the spiritual jihad) and the military struggle against non-Muslims (i.e. the martial jihad). Thence, we will proceed to an examination of how Sufi texts discuss the spiritual jihad and the way in which they consistently use specific terminology to distinguish this struggle from the martial jihad.

Notes

1. Najm al-Din Razi, *Mirsad al-ʿibad* (Tehran: Bungah-i tarjuma va nashr-i kitab, 1352 SH), p. 438.
2. Ibid.
3. It was not always so; various schools of thought during the early Abbasid period, namely, the Mu'tazilites, insisted that the Qur'an was created by God and not coeternal with Him.
4. This does not imply, of course, that the doctrine of transubstantiation, which is fundamental to the Catholic understanding of the Eucharist, pertains to Islam in any way; my purpose is to offer a familiar analogy to a Western readership.
5. For discussion of printing and its effect on reading habits, see Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 149.
6. Muhammad Hamidullah, *The Muslim Conduct of State* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1996), p. 29.
7. Montgomery Watt and Richard Bell, *Introduction to the Qur'an* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), p. 40.
8. Ibid., 40–42.
9. R.A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 142.

10. Watt and Bell, *Introduction to the* Qur'an, p. 167. However, Asbab *al-nuzul* could be problematic when more than one reason (*sabab*) was offered for the revelation of a given *aya*.
11. Reuven Firestone, *Jihad: The Origins of Holy War in Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 50.
12. John Burton, *The Sources of Islamic Law: Islamic Theories of Abrogation* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), p. 1.
13. Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, pp. 212–213.
14. Qur'an: 9:40: " … *kalimat Allah hiya al-'ulya*."
15. *Al-jihad fi sabil Allah.*
16. *Al-mushrikin*.
17. The tax People of the Book (i.e. Christians, Jews, Sabians, and Zoroastrians) who have submitted to Muslim rule must pay.
18. Al-Dahhak b. Muzahim, originally from Balkh, was an early narrator of *hadith.*
19. Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'azim* (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm, 2000), p. 864.
20. John Burton, "Naskh." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*. Brill Online, 2016.
21. Firestone, *Jihad: The Origins of Holy War in Islam*, p. 100.
22. Mourad and Lindsay, *The Intensification and Reorientation of Sunni Jihad Ideology in the Crusader Period*, p. 18.
23. Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam,* pp. 144–145. In fact, some Muslim jurists (e.g. the Shafi'is) recognized a *Dar al-Sulh* or *Dar al-'Ahd* (the Abode of Peace or Covenant) in addition to the Abode of Islam and the Abode of War, designating non-Muslim states with which the Islamic state had made a temporary peace treaty. Though others, notably the Hanifis, did not accept this third division.
24. Ibid., p. 51.

CHAPTER 4

The Concept of Spiritual Jihad in Learned Sufi Texts

In this chapter we will explore how Sufi texts of a generally learned nature (i.e. writings that would only be accessible to someone with knowledge of Classical Arabic, Islamic scripture, and the traditional Islamic religious sciences) define and portray the concept of the spiritual jihad, that is, purifying the lower self and thereby vanquishing its worldly desires. We will begin with an analysis of Arabic jihad terminology in Sufi texts, which will aid in clarifying the discourse of jihad throughout the development of Sufism. We will then proceed to an overview of how the Sufi textual tradition has elaborated the concept of the spiritual jihad.

Since its first florescence in the eleventh century through the period following the Mongol conquests of the thirteenth century, Sufism developed, and subsequently elaborated, an extensive vocabulary with which to articulate the many concepts and practices of the tradition. The majority of words in the Sufi technical vocabulary were drawn from already existing Arabic words, which then acquired an esoteric meaning in the Sufi context. As the struggle with the lower self has always been a fundamental aspect of the Sufi path, Sufis developed a specialized terminology to describe the various stages of this spiritual struggle, including terms derived from the Arabic triliteral-consonantal root /JHD/, the basic meaning of which is struggling or exerting an effort.

Although the well-known greater jihad *hadith* employs the Arabic verbal noun jihad to designate the struggle against the lower self, most Sufi discussions concerning the rigorous process necessary to subdue the lower self use the alternate verbal noun *mujahada* to refer to this essential aspect

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of the Sufi path. Understanding the difference between these two verbal nouns derived from the same verb, *jāhada*, is fundamental to the discussion of the various meanings of jihad in Sufism.[1]

Jihad and *Mujahada* in the Sufi Tradition

The terms *jihad* and *mujahada* are both verbal nouns (i.e. an abstract noun that embodies the idea of the verb) of the Arabic verb *jāhada*, to struggle. Sufi texts of the premodern period, written in both Arabic and Persian, generally make a clear distinction between the meanings of these two verbal nouns for jihad in the Sufi context. While *mujahada* refers to the austerities and ascetic practices employed by Sufis to subdue the lower self, jihad generally refers to the Islamic doctrine of jihad in its primarily martial aspect as developed and elaborated in Islamic scripture and juristic treatises. In Chap. 5 we will discuss in detail the use of the term jihad in Sufi texts to designate the martial jihad.

In the Sufi tradition, the verbal noun *mujahada* generally specifies the spiritual jihad, while jihad usually specifies the martial jihad, though there are, of course, exceptions. In his dictionary of Sufi terminology composed in Persian, the twentieth-century Iranian scholar Sayyid Ja'far Sajjadi defines jihad as "War with the unbelievers in order to spread the light of Islam [among them] or out of fear of being overcome by them" and *mujahada* as "A term for subduing the lower self through physical ordeal and opposing the passions."[2] Sajjadi's definitions are in agreement both with what the earliest Sufi treatises say about the two terms as well as how contemporary Muslim scholars writing in Islamic languages for a Muslim readership generally define them.

The use of *mujahada* to express the concept of subduing the lower self appears in many of the earliest Sufi texts in both Arabic and Persian, often together with *riyada*, meaning spiritual exercises. However, it should not be assumed that the use of these two terms, *mujahada* and *riyada*, to refer to the prolonged action of overcoming the lower self and its worldly desires is limited to early Sufi texts; rather, throughout the history of Sufism, Sufis have employed these verbal nouns when referring to the spiritual struggle. The following section will explore how Sufis have traditionally discussed and elaborated the struggle with the lower self that is fundamental to Sufi practice and how they have consistently used the term *mujahada* to refer to this spiritual struggle and continue to do so today.

What Sufis Have Said About *Mujahada*

Since the earliest Sufi writings, which consisted primarily of treatises and hagiography, Sufi writers have generally made a clear distinction between the concepts of *mujahada* and *jihad*. As discussed above, in the Sufi context, *mujahada* is a term that refers to the exertion and effort necessary to overcome the lower self and its mundane desires. In this regard then, the term *mujahada*, unlike the term *jihad*, describes an endeavor and a mode of practice, which traditionally only Sufis and Sufi initiates have undertaken. Moreover, Sufi writings do not prescribe *mujahada* for Muslims who are not following the Sufi path under the guidance of a shaykh. Furthermore, unlike *jihad*, *mujahada* is consistently described as an individual effort. Jihad on the other hand, which, since the earliest elaboration of Islamic law has generally denoted waging war for the faith, is described in Sufi texts as a communal endeavor and a duty incumbent on the the Muslim community as a whole.[3]

The focus of most early Sufi treatises is generally twofold, comprising a primary and secondary purpose. The primary concern is explaining the stages of the Sufi path to initiates. The secondary concern is to locate Sufi practice and fundamental beliefs (e.g. the seven stages of the *nafs*) in the Qur'an as well as in the various words and deeds traditionally attributed to the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, his nephew and son-in-law, Ali, the Prophet's descendent, Ja'far al-Sadiq (both of whom are reckoned Imams by the Shiites, Ali being the first Imam and Ja'far being the sixth), and the Companions (*Sahaba*) of the Prophet (e.g. Abu Bakr, whom Sunni Muslims reckon the first caliph). Indeed, most Sufi orders trace their lineage back to Ali, with the notable exception of the Naqshbandi Order, which traces its origins to Abu Bakr. In the early period of Sufism's first florescence, it was important to convince Sunni religious scholars that the Sufi path was not innovation (*bid'a*) or an aberration from Sunni Islamic practice. In doing so, early Sufi writers adduced many examples from the pronouncements attributed to the Sufi friends of God, many of whom were also known for their religious scholarship and learning, especially in the domain of evaluating and transmitting *hadith*. In another attempt to demonstrate the legitimacy of the Sufi path within Islam, early Sufi writers also claimed as Sufis the first generation of ascetics (*zuhhad*), among whom were many warriors who were known for having fought courageously and selflessly against the Byzantines during the Umayyad and Early Abbasid Periods (seventh to ninth centuries CE).[4] Regarding the role of

these ascetics in military endeavors, Shawqi Dayf (d. 2005), a prominent twentieth-century Arab scholar of Arabic literature, emphasizes the notion of asceticism in Islam and how it differs from Christian ideas of asceticism. Dayf rejects the notion that Muslim ascetics were passive and did not take part in communal duties. He criticizes Western scholars for assuming that the asceticism of Muslims cut them off from the life of the community in the same way as the asceticism of the Christian faith and its connection to the monastic tradition. Rather, according to Dayf, Muslim ascetics were an integral part of the Muslim community and played an active role in all matters pertaining thereto. Regarding their attitude toward the martial jihad, he states that they would "take their places at the head of the *mujahid* ranks, seeking martyrdom in God's path.[5] Prominent among the ascetics that Dayf mentions is 'Abd Allah b. al-Mubarak whom Dayf describes as the quintessential example of the godly ascetic who, having mastered his lower self through *mujahada*, is also an unwavering warrior, devoted to fighting in God's path.[6] Sufis have traditionally reckoned 'Abd Allah b. al-Mubarak among the immediate predecessors of the first generation of Sufis, and the Sufi hagiographical tradition narrates many anecdotes concerning his piety, asceticism, and bravery in battle. Indeed, the earliest extant treatise dealing with the doctrine of jihad in Islam (*Kitab al-jihad*) is attributed to 'Abd Allah b. al-Mubarak. It is worth noting that *Kitab al-jihad*—whoever may have composed it—is concerned entirely with the martial aspects of jihad and makes no mention of the spiritual jihad. Quoting a *hadith*, *Kitab al-jihad* expresses the following attitude toward quietism: "Every [religious] community has a form of asceticism, and the asceticism of this community is fighting in the path of God."[7]

With regard to the primary concern of early Sufi texts, that is, expounding the Sufi path to initiates, the successful subjugation of the lower self is one of the most important Sufi endeavors. Since the period of the composition of their earliest treatises and hagiographies till today, Sufis have insisted that that no one can make any progress on the Sufi path without first overcoming his lower self. Sufi texts not only describe the dangers posed by the lower self and its many ruses for distracting would-be followers of the Sufi path, they also explain how one may overcome the lower self through rigorous and disciplined self-abnegation in the form of fasting, sleep deprivation, exposing oneself to the elements, engaging in supererogatory prayer, and constant remembrance of God (*dhikr*) through chanting His name (or simply the pronoun "He"). As mentioned previously, Sufis refer to this often-harsh process for defeating the lower self as

mujahada and *riyada* (struggling and exercise, respectively). In the section that follows, we will examine what early Sufi authors have said regarding the subjugation of the lower self through engaging in *mujahada* and *riyada*. Many of these same Sufi authors also discuss and expound the duty of the martial jihad, which we will consider in the next chapter.

The earliest Sufi treatises establish the centrality of the subjugation of the lower self, which, since the eleventh century, has remained one of the chief topics of Sufi discourse and one of the primary concerns of Sufi practice. Abu Bakr al-Kalabadhi (d. 990), author of an important early Sufi treatise in Arabic, *al-Ta'arruf li-madhhab ahl-al-tasawwuf* (*Introduction to The Way of The Sufis*), described the state of concentrating one's intentions for the purpose of returning to God as *mujahada* and *riyada*.[8] Abu 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami (d. 1021) of Nishapur in Khurasan composed the earliest Sufi hagiography in Arabic, *Tabaqat al-sufiyya* (*Generations of the Sufis*), as well as a treatise on Sufi manners and practice. Al-Sulami's treatise on Sufi practice describes Sufis as persisting in *mujahada* "so that the dispositions of the lower self and nature diminish."[9] Similarly, a dictum traditionally ascribed to Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Ahmad Kharaqani (d. 1033), also an important early Sufi shaykh from Khurasan—despite the fact that he was said to be unlettered—describes *mujahada* as an effort (*jahd*) on the part of the Sufis that must persist for 40 years (a number that traditionally represents completion or maturity). This effort includes physical suffering (*ranj*) so that the Sufi's tongue, body, and heart become upright. The upshot of this struggle will be the extinction of desire.[10]

In addition to consistently employing the term *mujahada* to refer to the individual struggle with the lower self, Sufis have clearly defined the communal struggle against non-Muslims in uniform terms, often contrasting the martial jihad with the spiritual jihad in the same paragraph and generally insisting on their being complementary. We will deal extensively with the topic of the martial jihad in Sufi writings in the next chapter; however, it is worth considering several examples of what Sufis have said regarding *mujahada* and *jihad* in order to gain a better sense of how they use the two verbal nouns to define the two struggles. Like his contemporary Kharaqani, Abu Ishaq al-Kazaruni of Fars, the hero of the first hagiographical anecdote narrated in the introduction, is not known to have composed any Sufi treatises; however, an early hagiographical work dedicated to his life preserves many of his deeds and sayings. The distinction between the concepts of *jihad* and *mujahada* is manifested clearly in the text. Shaykh Kazaruni mentions *mujahada* and *riyada* together in

regard to mortification of the body for the purpose of subduing the lower self: “I bade my companions [embrace] poverty and [undertake] spiritual exercise and struggling (*riyada* and *mujahada*) [against the lower self].”[11] Concerning the martial jihad the following words are attributed to the shaykh: “We believe that performing the martial jihad is a communal duty, which means if some of the Muslims go to raid the unbelievers they [fulfill this duty] for the other Muslims ....”[12] This explanation of jihad as a communal duty, as opposed to being an individual one, accords with the opinion of most traditional scholars of Islamic law and emphasizes the Sufi tendency to cleave firmly to the *sunna* and *sharia*. Another example of a Sufi shaykh defining the martial jihad as a communal duty and exhorting his followers to uphold this duty may be found in the *Lata’if-i ashrafi* (*Subtle Insights*) of Sayyid Ashraf Jahangir Simnani (d. 1425), a Chishti Sufi and enthusiastic advocate of the concept of *wahdat al-wujud* in pre-Mughal India.[13] Regarding jihad, Sayyid Ashraf says: “Waging jihad in God’s path is a religious duty incumbent on all believers when the unbelievers come forth in a hostile manner; however, [jihad] is a communal religious duty.”[14] In other words, though jihad is a duty for every able-bodied Muslim, not every Muslim need engage in fighting; rather, only as many as are necessary to achieve the religious aim of the military undertaking.[15]

Abu’l-Qasim al-Qushayri (d. 1072) of Nishapur in Khurasan composed a profoundly influential Sufi treatise, *al-Risala* (*the Epistle*), that endeavors to expound the Sufi path while showing it to be in harmony with Sunni Islamic practice. In his treatise, al-Qushayri emphasizes the centrality of overcoming the lower self through *mujahada* in the following pronouncement: “Know that whoever does not engage in *mujahada* from the outset does not find a light from this path.”[16] What al-Qushayri’s dictum means is that the wayfarer cannot begin following the Sufi path without first overcoming his lower self.

Ali al-Hujviri of Ghazna (d. circa 1077) composed the earliest Sufi treatise in Persian, *Kashf al-mahjub* (*the Unveiling of the Concealed*). Hujviri discusses the spiritual struggle (*mujahada* and *riyada*) extensively in his important treatise, adducing many dicta attributed to the friends of God as examples. Regarding the early exemplar of “drunken,” or ecstatic Sufism Abu Sa’id Abu’l-Khayr (d. 1049) of Khurasan, Hujviri notes that he: “devoted himself to spiritual exercises and striving (*riyada* and *mujahada*) till God opened the door of guidance to him ....”[17] Hujviri also cites Sahl of Shushtar (d. 896) as a paradigm of *mujahada*, saying: “The way of

Sahl al-Tustari is exertion, struggling (*mujahada*) against the lower self, and spiritual exercises ...."[18] Like his contemporaries, Hujviri also emphasizes the centrality of *mujahada* in the Sufi tradition when he states that: "opposing the lower self is the beginning of all [forms] of worship and the perfection of all [forms] of spiritual striving (*mujahada*) ...."[19] At one point in the text, Hujviri makes a clear distinction between the meanings of the two verbal nouns in his discussion of the greater jihad *hadith*, using *mujahada* to refer to subduing the lower self and jihad to denote the martial jihad:

> ... "We have returned from the lesser jihad"—meaning from warfare—"to the greater jihad"... the Prophet regarded the struggle (*mujahada*) against the lower self as superior to jihad because the tribulation of [*mujahada*] was greater than the tribulations of jihad and military campaigns ... [20]

Hujviri's statement that the Prophet considered *mujahada* superior to *jihad* is not meant as a negation of the duty and necessity of carrying out the martial jihad; rather, it seeks to present the Prophet as the ultimate source of Sufi practice and conduct who embraced a mode of action that required great spiritual perseverance and exertion. It also exemplifies the Sufi belief that Sufis make the ideal warriors in that having subdued the lower self, which is a much more difficult task, they fight courageously and selflessly with no thought of earthly gain (i.e. spoils of war, renown in battle, etc.).

Najm al-Din al-Kubra (d. 1221) from the region of Khwarazm in Central Asia was the founder of the Kubravi Sufi order and author of several influential Sufi treatises. He was killed during the Mongol invasion of the eastern Islamic world. In his treatises, he uses the term *mujahada* exclusively to designate the spiritual struggle that Sufis must undertake: "The way to diminish [one's lower existence] ... is *mujahada*."[21] He then goes on to describe how one may carry out *mujahada*, for example, through eating little, fasting, performing ritual ablutions, remaining silent, and cleaving to one's shaykh. Nowhere in the text does Najm al-Din al-Kubra use the term jihad in reference to the spiritual struggle of Sufis.[22]

The immensely influential Sufi thinker and prolific author and poet, Ibn 'Arabi (d. 1240), whose writings and ideas had a profound impact on the development of most subsequent forms of Sufism, offers a definition of *mujahada* in his compendium of Sufi terms that conforms to the general use of this term in Sufism: "To bring to bear physical hardships

on the lower self and opposing desire in every instance."[23] Though known in the West primarily for his more theosophical and esoteric Sufi writings, Ibn 'Arabi's definition of *mujahada* succinctly expresses the universal Sufi preoccupation with subduing the lower self. His definition of jihad, which we will address in the next chapter, is also in harmony with that of Islamic law in general.

The concept of *mujahada* in the Sufi context has changed little over the centuries, with the definition of *mujahada* in Sufi texts remaining uniform for almost a thousand years. Here, we will pause to consider an example of how *mujahada* continues to signify the Sufi struggle with the lower self in a modern study concerning Sufism, titled *Rabbaniyya la rahbaniyya* (*Godliness, Not Monasticism*)—a book that concentrates on the active role of Sufis throughout the history of Islam. In this book, the prolific Indian Muslim religious scholar, Abu Hasan 'Ali Nadwi (d. 1999), writing in Arabic, discusses extensively the Sufi role in the martial jihad. The following excerpt explains how the Sufi's subjugation of the lower self ultimately prepares him for the martial jihad and makes him the ideal *mujahid*:

"The truth is that these exercises and exertions[24], purification of the lower self, and the relationship with God, bring forth in man a wondrous state … The upshot of this spiritual journey … is love of martyrdom, and the ultimate purpose of this [spiritual] struggle and exertion (*mujahada* and *riyada*) is [performing] the [martial] jihad (*jihad*)."[25] Nadwi's view of the complementary nature of the spiritual and martial forms of jihad is consistent with that of his Sufi predecessors as well as his contemporaries writing about Sufism in Islamic languages; however, it is clearly at odds with the irenic view of jihad that Western scholars of Sufism generally propound.

Having examined how influential premodern Sufi writers have described the Sufi's spiritual struggle, which is necessary for overcoming the lower self, we may conclude that Sufi writers have consistently used the term *mujahada*, rather than jihad, to designate this inner struggle. These writers reserve the term jihad for referring almost exclusively to the communal military endeavors undertaken either in defense of Muslim territory or for adding new territory to the Abode of Islam and spreading the faith thereby. In this they are in agreement with the majority of premodern Muslim religious scholars and jurists regarding the primary meaning of jihad as waging war against non-Muslims for the defense or expansion of the faith.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have demonstrated how Sufi writers have consistently distinguished between the inner spiritual jihad and the outward martial jihad against the enemies of Islam, even going so far as to employ two different verbal nouns, *mujahada* and *jihad*, to designate the two different, but complementary, aspects of struggling.

Since the composition of the earliest Sufi texts, *mujahada* has signified the struggle with the lower self, while jihad has consistently referred to the duty of waging war against unbelievers, either to safeguard Muslims and the Abode of Islam—or, in some cases, to expand the territory thereof. The Sufi texts we have considered in this chapter do not use the terms *mujahada* and *jihad* interchangeably; indeed, the statements (quoted above) of both Hujviri and Shaykh Abu Ishaq al-Kazaruni—author of the earliest Sufi treatise in Persian and eponym of the first Sufi order, respectively—demonstrate the clear distinction between the meaning of these two terms.

In the next chapter, we will explore and analyze what Sufi writers have said about the martial jihad and warfare in a variety of learned writings, including treatises, Qur'anic *tafsir*, and letters—encompassing the eleventh through the early eighteenth centuries—with the aim of presenting a distillation of the Sufi position regarding the martial jihad and dealing with non-Muslims. By considering what Sufis have said in learned writings concerning the martial jihad we will clarify Sufi textual support for religiously prescribed military activity.

Notes

1. For discussion of form-three verbal nouns in Arabic that denote forceful action, see Appendix B.
2. Sayyid Ja'far Sajjadi, *Farhang-i ʿirfani* (Tehran: Kitabkhana-yi Tahuri, 1354 SH), pp. 159 and 412.
3. For example al-Shafi'i's *Risala* and Tabari's *Kitab al-jihad*.
4. For discussion of these ascetics as warriors (e.g. Ibrahim b. Adham, Sufyan al-Thawri, and Abdullah b. al-Mubarak, etc.), see Alfred Morabia, *Le Gihad dans l'Islam medieval* (Paris: Bibliothèque Albin Michel, 1993), p. 329.
5. Shawqi Dayf, *Tarikh al-adab al-ʿarabi: al-ʿasr al-ʿabbasi al-awwal* (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif bi-Misr, 1966), p. 403.
6. Ibid.

7. ‘Abd Allah Ibn al-Mubarak, *Kitab al-jihad* (Cairo: Al-Azhar, Majma’ al-Buhuth al-Islamiyya, 1978), 37–38. This *hadith* first appeared in *al-Siyar al-kabir* of the early Hanafi scholar, Muhammad b. al-Hasan Shaybani (d. 189/805).
8. Abu Bakr al-Kalabadhi, *al-Ta’arruf li-madhhab ahl-al-tasawwuf* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2001), p. 138.
9. Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami, *Jawami’ adab al-sufiyya* (Cairo: Dar Jawami’ al-Kalim, 1999), pp. 16, 45–46, 98.
10. *Kitab Nur al-‘ulum*, Persian text in E.E. Bertels, *Sufizm i sufiskaya literatura* (Moscow: Izdatelstva Nayuka, 1965), p. 242.
11. Mahmud b. ‘Uthman, *Firdaws al-murshidiyya*, p. 103.
12. Ibid., p. 397.
13. For a discussion of Sayyid Ashraf and the Indo-Persian Sufi textual tradition in general, see Bruce Lawrence, *Notes From a Distant Flute: Sufi Literature in Pre-Mughal India* (Tehran: Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1978), pp. 53–56.
14. *Lata’if-i Ashrafi,* p. 165.
15. See also Qur’an 9:122: “It is not fitting that the believers go forth [to war] altogether … ”
16. Abu’l-Qasim al-Qushayri, *al-Risala* (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-‘Arabi, 1957), p. 57.
17. ‘Ali al-Hujviri al-Ghaznavi, *Kashf al-mahjub* (Tehran: Intisharat-i Tahuri, 1380 SH), p. 207.
18. Ibid., pp. 244–45.
19. Ibid., p. 246.
20. Ibid., p. 252.
21. Najm al-Din al-Kubra, *Fawa’ih al-jamal* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Press, 1957), p. 2.
22. However, the term *badhl al-jahd* (taking pains to do something) is used. *Jahd* is derived from the same triliteral root as *jihad* and *mujahada*.
23. Ibn ‘Arabi, *Kitab istilah al-sufiyya* in *Rasa’il Ibn ‘Arabi* (Beirut: Dar Sader, 1997), p. 534.
24. *Al-mujahadat wa’l-riyadat.*
25. Abu’l-Hasan ‘Ali Nadwi, *Rabbaniyya la rahbaniyya* (Beirut: Dar al-Fath, 1966), p. 105.

CHAPTER 5

The Martial Jihad in Learned Sufi Texts

In the foregoing chapter we considered how learned Sufi texts have developed the concept of the spiritual jihad as a uniquely Sufi concept with its own distinct vocabulary. In this chapter we will continue our examination of learned Sufi treatises and texts but will concentrate on how Sufis have approached and understood the doctrine of the martial jihad in the wider context of Islamic practice. The aim of this analysis is to establish that there is a more or less uniform narrative of the doctrine of jihad in the Sufi tradition that conforms to the traditional Islamic legal understanding thereof.

In addition to treatises written by Sufis in Arabic and Persian, we will also consider Sufi letters and epistles, as well as important *tafsir* composed by Sufis. In discussing Sufi interpretations of the martial jihad, this chapter will also devote some discussion to the related topics of relations with non-Muslims living under Muslim rule, as well as *ghazw* (religiously sanctioned warfare) against non-Muslims and how this practice intersects with the martial jihad and differs therefrom. In examining Sufi discourse regarding the martial jihad the distinction must also be made between engaging in jihad for offensive and defensive purposes, a topic which both Islamic legal scholars and Sufi writers have addressed.

Before commencing our discussion of what Sufis have said about the martial jihad in learned Sufi texts, it must be said that Sufi texts *do* generally devote much more time to discussing and elucidating the spiritual jihad. This has led many scholars writing in European languages to assume that Sufis are either not concerned with the martial jihad or that they consider

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it of little importance in relation to the spiritual jihad, which, as we shall show, is an erroneous conclusion. In examining this fact, we must bear in mind that the Islamic legal and exegetical tradition had already thoroughly established and explained the criteria for the martial jihad and the communal duty of Muslims in this regard. Therefore, it was unnecessary for Sufi texts to concentrate on expounding this fundamental doctrine, as it was already such an integral part of Islam with which most Muslims would have been familiar. In other words, Muslims living during the premodern period would not have needed to be reminded of the importance of the martial jihad nor would they have had a moral aversion to carrying out this communal duty. Thus, rather than downplaying the doctrine of jihad in its primarily martial sense, Sufi writers have generally discussed the spiritual struggle with the lower self, for this is the aspect of jihad that is unique to Sufism.

The Complementary Nature of Jihad in Premodern Sufi Writings

In our earlier discussion regarding contemporary Sufi scholarship in Islamic languages, we established that Muslim scholars and contemporary Sufis in the Islamic World, who are writing (primarily) in Arabic for a Muslim audience, consistently express the notion that the martial and spiritual aspects of jihad are intertwined and complementary. We will now concentrate on how premodern Sufi writings of a learned nature have discussed and defined the martial jihad. In doing so, we will endeavor to establish that these premodern Sufi writings also insist on the complementary nature of the martial and spiritual aspects of jihad.

Sufi *Tafsir*

As alluded to previously, al-Tabari composed what is probably the most influential early Qur'anic exegesis, which dates to the late ninth/early tenth century and relies primarily on *hadith* as its exegetical source.[1] Tabari's *Tafsir* established the classical genre of Qur'anic exegesis, which flourished during the early Islamic period and has continued to be cultivated into the modern period.[2] As noted earlier, many prominent Sufis were active in the field of traditional Islamic scholarship (e.g. the collection and narration of *hadith*); thus, it should be no surprise that Sufis also composed a number of significant *tafsirs*. These *tafsirs* are of particular importance regarding the question of the complementary nature of the various aspects of jihad in that they provide an interpretation of both the outer and inner meaning of each Qur'anic verse.

Sufi Qur'anic commentaries are an important but often overlooked source concerning the interpretation of the doctrine of jihad in the Sufi tradition. Among the most significant Sufi *tafsirs* are al-Qushayri's *Lata'if al-isharat* (the Subtleties of the Allusions) and al-Maybudi's *Kashf al-asrar* (the Unveiling of the Mysteries). In what follows, we will examine both of these important Sufi *tafsirs* with regard to their elucidation of Qur'an 9:5, which, as we discussed in Chap. 3, is the *aya* Ibn Kathir referred to as the "verse of the sword." We will begin by considering al-Qushayri's *tafsir* and will then proceed to examine the *tafsir* of Maybudi.

Abu'l-Qasim al-Qushayri of Nishapur, who composed the *Rasa'il*, which we mentioned in the previous chapter, was one of the greatest early Sufi thinkers and writers and his *tafsir* is an important early example of Sufi Qur'anic commentary that influenced all subsequent works of Sufi *tafsir*. Qushayri's *Lata'if al-isharat* gives the following interpretation of Qur'an 9:5: "[In] God's words: 'kill those who associate partners with God (*al-mushrikin*) wherever you find them'… [God] commanded them (i.e. the Muslims) to use every means of fighting with the enemy."[3] After explaining the outward meaning of this *aya* the text then discusses the spiritual jihad: "The worst of your enemies is your lower self, which is inside of you and the path of the servant in carrying out the greater jihad with his lower self is to restrain it through using every manner of spiritual exercise …."[4] Although the aim of this *tafsir* is ostensibly to explain the allegorical meanings of the Qur'an according to the Sufi tradition, the fact that the text gives equal time to both the outer and inner meanings exemplifies the Sufi claim that the two aspects of jihad are complementary. Nowhere does the text of *Lata'if al-isharat* claim that the outward meaning of scripture is annulled by esoteric interpretation. The lower self is the *worst* enemy, not the *only* enemy.

If we consider another important early Sufi *tafsir*, *Kashf al-asrar* (the Unveiling of the Mysteries) composed by Rashid al-Din al-Maybudi (d. early twelfth century), we see a similar example of this complementary approach to Qur'anic exegesis. Maybudi's *tafsir* is one of the most extensive Persian commentaries on the Qur'an. It exhibits a threefold structure in that it first gives a Persian translation of the literal meaning of each verse, then the conventional interpretation of the outer meaning of the verse, followed by an interpretation of its inner meaning.[5] The outer interpretation that *Kashf al-asrar* gives for Qur'an 9:5 differs little from that of al-Qushayri's *Lata'if al-isharat*—or other non-Sufi Qur'anic commentaries (e.g. Ibn Kathir's *tafsir* discussed previously). Similar to what

Ibn Kathir's *tafsir* says over 200 years later, Maybudi's *Kashf al-asrar* remarks that some religious scholars hold that verse 9:5 abrogates the 124 earlier verses regarding relations with non-Muslims. The fact that an early twelfth-century Sufi *tafsir* as well as a non-Sufi *tafsir* from the fourteenth century both discuss the abrogation of earlier Qur'anic verses dealing with the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims suggests that Qur'anic exegetes considered this opinion legitimate and well established.[6] The inner interpretation given by Maybudi is also similar to that of Qushayri's *tafsir*: "In the greater jihad with the greater foe—which is the importuning lower self—one must employ spiritual exercises and the arts of *mujahada* till [the lower self] is vanquished …."[7] In discussing the inner meaning of this verse, other than the initial use of the term "greater jihad," *Kashf al-asrar* consistently uses the term *mujahada* to describe the struggle to subdue the lower self, and in this, it is in accord with the other Sufi texts we examined in the previous chapter, all of which use this term, rather than jihad, to designate the spiritual struggle. Neither of these Sufi Qur'anic commentaries questions, downplays, or ignores the outward martial meaning of Qur'an 9:5. The inner meaning of the verse complements the outer meaning for those who are initiated in the Sufi tradition, which is consistent with the general Sufi approach to Islamic scripture and practice.

The Complementary Nature of Jihad in Sufi Treatises

As we have noted in Chap. 2, the complementary nature of the martial and spiritual struggles is the leitmotif of contemporary Muslim scholarship in Islamic languages regarding Sufism. The examples from Sufi *tafsir* that we have examined also vindicate this claim in that they offer both a literal and a spiritual or allegorical interpretation of the "verse of the sword" in *Surat al-Tawba*. In the following section, we will examine what premodern Sufi treatises and letters say about the complementary nature of jihad. We will also investigate how leading Sufi thinkers have approached the purely martial aspects of jihad, which will include some discussion of military campaigns and relations with non-Muslims.

We will begin by considering a quotation from a treatise attributed to 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (d. 1166), who was an important early Sufi thinker as well as the eponym of the Sufi Qadiriyya order. In his treatise, *al-Fath al-rabbani* (*The Sublime Revelation*), al-Jilani discusses the complementary nature of the two aspects of jihad:

> God has informed you of two jihads: the outer and the inner. The inner is the jihad against the lower self, the desires, the natural disposition, and Satan … the outer is the jihad against the unbelievers who offer stubborn resistance to Him [God] and His Messenger [Muhammad] … the inner jihad is more difficult than the outer jihad because it is something that must be repeated … [It entails] sundering the habits of the lower self from what is forbidden … and obeying the commandments of the Law of Islam ... Whoever obeys God's commandment concerning the two jihads receives rewards in this life and the hereafter.[8]

Likewise, 'Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi (d. 1731), a prolific Sufi author and poet and a member of the Qadiriyya and Naqshbandiyya Sufi orders, echoes the words of his spiritual predecessor, al-Jilani, in his treatise, *Bayan al-jihad li-ahl al-widad* (*The Explication of Jihad to the People of Friendship*):

> There are two aspects of jihad: a lesser jihad and a greater jihad. As for the lesser jihad, it concerns man fighting his enemies among the unbelievers, for fighting them is an individual duty if they attack a stronghold of the Muslims. As for the greater jihad, it is among the most important commandments for one who is obligated to adhere to the precepts of religion and is [also] an individual duty. The believer is engaged in a constant jihad with his lower self, in order to protect himself against its malicious ruses, until he dies. [This is] in contrast to the jihad against the unbelievers, for the persistence of the unbelievers in their unbelief in this world does not impair the Muslims in their faith.[9]

Although they lived in different regions of the Islamic World, and over six hundred years separated them, both al-Jilani and al-Nablusi are in agreement regarding the essential meaning and complementary nature of jihad. The great similarity between the statements of al-Jilani and al-Nablusi underscores the uniformity of opinion among Sufis regarding the doctrine of jihad in Islam. In common with most Sufis, they both insist that the spiritual jihad is more difficult than the martial jihad in that the struggle with the lower self is ongoing, whereas the struggle against unbelievers is not; however, they also clearly express the importance of the martial jihad as an endeavor in which all observant Muslims, at least in theory, must engage. Furthermore, al-Jilani emphasizes adhering to the dictates of Islamic law as an essential aspect of the greater jihad, which contradicts the idea that Sufis are unconcerned with the fundamental outer aspects of Islam. Though traditional scholars of Islamic law have generally considered the martial jihad a communal duty, al-Nablusi makes

the point that when it is a matter of the Muslims being under attack, fighting and repelling the enemy becomes an individual duty, an idea that is also found in Islamic jurisprudence. What this then implies is that the martial jihad remains a communal duty when the Muslims wage it offensively in order to expand the territory of the Abode of Islam. Al-Nablusi states that the spiritual jihad requires unwavering effort in order to keep the lower self from distracting the believer from his religious duties. The martial jihad he describes as limited in that the unbelief of the unbelievers does not hinder the Muslims from practicing their faith. In this sense, the spiritual jihad does require a much greater effort, whereas the effort necessary to fulfill the requirements of the martial jihad is less demanding.

It is worth repeating that though Sufi writings have generally considered the spiritual jihad more difficult than the martial jihad, it does not mean that the spiritual jihad supersedes the martial jihad. Likewise, the terms “greater” and “lesser” do not refer to some hierarchy of importance; rather, as al-Nablusi’s pronouncement implies, they refer to the greater effort required to subdue the lower self.

We have alluded to the Sufi interpretation of jihad sometimes including a third—or even a fourth—aspect. Ansari’s *Rasa’il* (Letters) offer an example of a threefold definition of jihad, which, as we discussed in the introduction, is similar to the threefold definition al-Raghib al-Isfahani expounded in his Qur’anic lexicon. Khwaja ‘Abd Allah al-Ansari (d. 1089), the Shaykh of Herat, was an important and influential figure in the development of early Sufism in Khurasan. A number of significant works in Arabic and Persian are attributed to him, most notably a Persian version of Sulami’s hagiography, *Tabaqat al-sufiyya* (Generations of the Sufis),[10] *Munajat* (*Supplications*), and the aforementioned *Rasa’il*. In his *Rasa’il*, Ansari gives the following succinct threefold definition of jihad:

> Jihad is resisting the lower self, the Devil, and the enemy … jihad has three aspects: [struggling with] the enemy with a sword, [struggling with] the lower self with constraint, and [struggling with] the Devil with patience.[11]

While most Sufis generally discuss the twofold aspect of jihad, some Sufis have broadened the definition of jihad to include struggling with Satan, and even admonishing a tyrannical ruler, of which there are many examples in the popular hagiographical tradition.[12] Ansari’s rather terse explication of jihad is threefold; it is also unequivocal concerning the meaning of the martial jihad. Rather than elevating the struggle with the

lower self above the martial jihad, Ansari, much like the other Sufi writers we have discussed thus far, presents the three aspects of jihad as equally important.

Thus far in this chapter, we have considered how the learned Sufi textual tradition sets forth and describes the complementary aspects of jihad. While these texts by no means constitute an exhaustive survey of Sufi *tafsir*, treatises, and letters, they do provide a distillation of Sufi thought regarding how the spiritual and martial jihad are intertwined. The authors of these sundry writings composed them in different eras, locations, and languages, and yet they are unanimous in their conclusions—even employing the same terminology with which to explicate the spiritual and martial jihad. It now remains to examine what premodern Sufi writers have written concerning the purely martial aspects of jihad, as well as the related topics of warfare and relations with non-Muslims.

Sufi Exhortations Regarding the Martial Jihad

So far, we have surveyed what Sufis have said regarding the spiritual struggle, as well as their insistence on the complementary nature of the various aspects of jihad. Though the martial jihad is rarely the primary concern of Sufi writings, many well-known Sufis have addressed and elucidated the martial aspect of jihad, exhorting their audience to carry out this communal religious duty. We will now consider some examples of what outstanding premodern Sufi figures have written regarding the duty of carrying out the martial jihad.

Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 1111) of Khurasan is considered one of the most important and influential figures in Islamic history. In addition to being a Sufi, he was also a religious scholar of the Shafi'i school of Sunni Islamic law. In the Sunni tradition many consider Ghazali to be the *mujaddid* (renewer of the faith) of his era. A prolific writer and scholar, his many works combine his profound knowledge of Islamic law and jurisprudence with his spiritual perspective as a Sufi. His best-known work is the monumental *Ihya' 'ulum al-din* (*The Revival of the Religious Sciences*) in which he sought to invigorate the Islamic faith through a synthesis of Sufism and the traditional religious sciences. In many of his works, including *Revival of the Religious Sciences*, al-Ghazali refers to and discusses the doctrine of jihad and martyrdom. Regarding the duty of taking part in martial endeavors for the sake of the faith, Ghazali rebukes those who would turn from fighting, as worldly and fainthearted hypocrites with regard to the

religion: "As for the hypocrites they flee from soldiery, fearing death and preferring existence to martyrdom …."[13]

In the following pronouncement that extols the virtues of martyrdom, Ghazali's description of the ideal *mujahid* accords with what contemporary studies written in Arabic say about Sufis as warriors:

> [God] has perfected the pleasures for the martyrs who have fought in God's path, for they have not embarked boldly upon fighting, save that they [first] sundered their attention from worldly affairs, desiring [only] to meet God, [they are] willing to be killed for His satisfaction … blessed is the paradise that the martyr reaches … [14]

Ghazali's attitude regarding the necessity of the martial jihad does not differ from that of his predecessors and contemporaries—both Sufi and non-Sufi. He also alludes to the Sufi idea that the spiritual jihad is a prerequisite for engaging in the martial jihad in his comment that the martyrs have "sundered their attention from worldly affairs, desiring only to meet God" and their being "willing to be killed for His satisfaction," for such selflessness and devotion would require the subjugation of the lower self and its desires. In accordance with the other Sufi authors whose explications of the spiritual jihad we have read, Ghazali makes no claim that the internal spiritual jihad supersedes or takes precedence over the martial jihad against unbelievers.[15]

Ghazali did not compose *Ihya' 'ulum al-din* as a text for Sufis; rather, as the title suggests, he was seeking to bring to life the inner dimensions of the traditional religious sciences for all Muslims. However, the fact that he created a synthesis of inner spiritual cultivation and outer Islamic practice in accordance with Islamic law exemplifies the Sufi belief in the twofold and complementary nature of all facets of Islam.

If Ghazali was the renewer of Sunni Islam during his era for having synthesized for Muslims outward Islamic practice with the inner spiritual dimensions of this practice, Ibn 'Arabi could be said to have transformed Sufism through his prolific theosophical writings. Ibn 'Arabi is considered one of the greatest Sufis; indeed he is often referred to as *al-shaykh al-akbar*, the greatest shaykh. His profound influence on the development of all subsequent forms of Sufism is unparalleled. Though his work is generally concerned with the esoteric aspects of Sufi thought, he does address the necessity of the martial jihad and the role of Sufis therein. In his vast work, *al-Futuhat al-makkiyya* (*the Meccan Revelations*) he describes the friends of God as the quintessential *mujahids*:

> And among them [i.e. the friends of God] are the wayfarers[16], and they are the ones who wage jihad in God's path, for indeed in the perilous wastelands far from civilization there is no one who remembers God. Some of the [Sufis] have persevered in wayfaring … and waging jihad in the land of unbelief, in which the oneness of God Almighty is not proclaimed. Wayfaring in connection with jihad is preferable to wayfaring on account of anything other than jihad.[17]

Presumably, the friends of God make the best warriors precisely because they have subdued the lower self and its passions through *mujahada*, a concept that we have encountered in much of the literature discussed thus far. This quotation also alludes to offensive jihad when it refers to "waging jihad in the land of unbelief in which the oneness of God Almighty is not proclaimed," which is to say, war waged against non-Muslims in order to expand the Abode of Islam. The phrase "Where the oneness of God is not proclaimed" refers to the Muslim declaration of faith "There is no god save God," which, as we previously noted, is also one of the Five Pillars of Islam. The central tenet of Islam is that God has no partners. Those who associate partners with God are termed *mushrik* and are guilty of *shirk* (polytheism; associating partners with God), which some interpret to include Christians, for many Muslims consider the Christian belief in the Trinity to contradict God's oneness.[18]

Here we will pause briefly in order to consider the Qur'anic term *Ahl al-Kitab* (People of the Book) before returning to Ibn 'Arabi's discourse on jihad. *Ahl al-Kitab* is a term the Qur'an uses to refer to religious communities with a recognized scriptural tradition. Though *Ahl al-Kitab* generally denotes Jews and Christians—as these two religious communities were by far the most common in seventh-century Arabia—the term also includes Sabians and, occasionally, Zoroastrians.[19] Islam recognizes Judaism and Christianity as having a legitimate social existence as religions with a claim to scriptural and prophetic origins; however, this does not mean that Islam accords them validation; rather, Islam tolerates these religions. Christians and Jews who submit to Muslim rule and agree to pay the *jizya* are allowed to continue practicing their faith and receive protection from the Muslim ruler. Members of all other religions (e.g. the pagan Arabs of Muhammad's time, Hindus, Buddhists, Animists, etc.), at least in principle, may either accept Islam or face war.[20] In practice, members of other religions have, under a variety of historical and political circumstances, also been granted status as People of the Book for practical

reasons. The attitude toward Christians and Jews encountered in much premodern Islamic literature is that they, above all others, ought to recognize the legitimacy of Muhammad's prophetic mission and acknowledge the Qur'an as God's final revelation. Najm al-Din Razi expresses the consternation felt by many Muslim authors in this regard in the following pronouncement from *The Path of God's Servants* in the chapter "The Abrogation of Previous Religions": "The People of the Book have accepted Jesus and Moses as prophets on account of the traditional relation of their miracles, thus, they should gladly accept the prophethood of Muhammad, were they not so stubborn."[21] That is to say, from an Islamic perspective, Christianity and Judaism have a number of important things in common with Islam owing to their having developed—albeit in a corrupted manner—from earlier revelations. Islam shares many prophets with the two religions (e.g. Abraham, Noah, Moses, etc.), as well as believing in Jesus as a prophet. Therefore, Christians and Jews have no excuse for rejecting Islam, as they ought to be able to see not only the similarity between Islam and their respective faiths but also the ultimate superiority of Islam as the perfection of God's revelation to man.

Contemporary apologists of Islam often attempt to present the term "People of the Book" as an example of Islam's inclusive recognition of a state of religious brotherhood between Muslims, Christians, and Jews. However, as Najm al-Din Razi's discussion of the term suggests, the historical and doctrinal meaning of *Ahl al-Kitab* is much more complicated and is certainly not an inclusive multicultural term.

To return to Ibn 'Arabi's discussion of jihad, we will now consider his *Wasaya* (*Admonitions*), a text in which he further elucidates the complementary nature of the spiritual and martial jihads as well as exhorting his audience to engage in *ghazw*:

> I counsel you to fear God and uphold the requirements of the outer aspects of the *sharia* and its statutes. The greater jihad is incumbent upon you, which is the jihad against the passions, and when you wage this jihad against your lower self the other jihad against the enemies will be [easy] for you, for if you should be killed [in the martial jihad] you will be among the living martyrs for whom God provides. The merit of the one who wages jihad (*mujahid*) in God's path is like that of the devout one who fasts in God's signs … strive to participate actively [in jihad] in God's path … beware … if you do not take part in military campaigns and if you are not resolved to go forth [for this purpose] then you will be among the hypocrites … [22]

This passage is significant not only for offering yet another clear exposition of the Sufi belief that the spiritual jihad is the best preparation for the martial jihad and that the two are complementary but also in that it insists upon the centrality of cleaving to Islamic law as embodied in the *sharia*. Ibn 'Arabi's admonition regarding jihad ends with an exhortation to undertake military campaigns (*ghazw*), an aspect of Islamic martial activity that we will now consider in relation to jihad.

From a doctrinal perspective, the martial jihad ought only to be waged for the purpose of either defending the Muslim community from attack or for expanding the Abode of Islam by making God's word reign supreme in the *Dar al-Harb* (Abode of War), that is, lands ruled by non-Muslims. Jihad cannot be waged for the purpose of acquiring spoils, though the latter may occur as a result of war.[23] The concept of *ghazw*, or military campaigns against the unbelievers, is encountered frequently in Sufi writings, especially poetry and hagiography, an example of which we encountered in the anecdote concerning Abu Ishaq al-Kazaruni in the Introduction. *Ghazw or ghazwa* originated in pre-Islamic Bedouin Arab culture when inter-tribal warfare was an accepted part of life and raids were undertaken primarily for the purpose of acquiring camels.[24] The earliest use of the term *ghazw* in the Islamic context refers to the Prophet's military expeditions against the unbelievers during the Medinan period.[25] *Ghazw* is not as limited in Islamic law as the martial jihad; thus, it was easier to organize religiously sanctioned campaigns against non-Muslims for the purpose of harassing them and acquiring booty.[26] One who undertook military campaigns against unbelievers was referred to as a *ghazi*. Corporations of *ghazis* existed at least since the ninth century in both the Samanid realm of Transoxiana and Khurasan as well as along the Arab-Byzantine border, where a continual state of war had existed since the Umayyad period.[27] The *ghazis* who raided and fought the Byzantines lived in frontier outposts, commonly referred to as *ribats*. Many of the early ascetics, whom Sufis have traditionally considered as being among the first generation of Sufis, took part in these raids and would dwell in these fortified outposts.[28] Later, the term *ribat* would, among other terms, be used to refer to Sufi hospices.[29] We will return to the topic of military campaigns in the next chapter that will deal with Sufi writings composed with a popular audience in mind, as these writings—principally hagiography and poetry—contain many anecdotes regarding Sufis either taking part in military campaigns or exhorting others to do so.

Having discussed the various aspects of the martial jihad as well as the related practice of undertaking military campaigns as presented in Sufi treatises and *tafsir*, we will now turn to the topic of the martial jihad and relations with non-Muslims in the letters of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1624) of the Naqshbandi Sufi order. Many Indian Sunni Muslims considered Ahmad Sirhindi to be the renewer of Islam in the second Islamic millennium (*mujaddid-i alf-i thani*). Although Sirhindi wrote a number of treatises on Sufi themes, he is best known for his letters (*maktubat*) to various Sufi shaykhs and Mughal dignitaries, which have been regarded as a turning point in the development of Indo-Muslim religious thought.[30] Sirhindi's insistence on strict adherence to the *sharia* was at least partially responsible for inspiring the Mughal emperor, Awrangzib, to carry out orthodox reforms that reversed the heretical developments of his predecessor, Akbar's rule.[31]

Sirhindi, who wrote in Persian, composed many letters concerning Sufi concepts and themes; for example, he was the first to discuss the prophetic way and the saintly way and he closely examined the relationship between the Sufi path and *sharia*.[32] Sirhindi also wrote a number of letters concerning the martial jihad and relations with non-Muslims under Muslim rule. In these letters, Sirhindi consistently advocates a harsh and uncompromising stance toward the Hindus under Mughal rule. Concerning the martial aspect of jihad, Sirhindi's pronouncements are unequivocal: "Fighting the unbelievers and treating them harshly is one of the requirements of religion."[33] Although his contempt for unbelievers is generally directed at Hindus he also expresses the following opinion regarding Jews: "Whenever a Jew is killed it is to the benefit of Islam."[34] Sirhindi repeatedly insists that the glory of Islam requires the humiliation of unbelievers: "The honor of Islam is in the degradation of unbelief and the people of unbelief."[35] He considers the taxing of non-Muslims who have accepted Islamic rule as a means through which to further humiliate them and keep them in a constant state of fear: "The original aim of taking the *jizya* from [unbelievers] is for their degradation and this degradation [ought to be] to the extent that they cannot wear nice clothing for fear of the *jizya* … and that they are always fearful and trembling …."[36] Sirhindi's harsh stance with regard to the martial jihad and the subjugation of those who refuse to embrace Islam is no less uncompromising than that of his Sufi spiritual predecessors al-Jilani, al-Ghazali, and Ibn 'Arabi. Like the other Sufis whose writings we have examined thus far, Sirhindi exemplifies the Sufi synthesis of the spiritual path with outward doctrinal concerns in that in his writings he

addresses esoteric spiritual topics (e.g. the aforementioned prophetic and saintly ways) as well as practical matters concerning the Muslim conduct of state with regard to non-Muslims.

Another prominent Indian Naqshbandi Sufi, Shah Wali Allah al-Dihlawi (d. 1762), who was also an influential Muslim thinker and reformer, as well as a prolific author, lived roughly a century after his spiritual and political predecessor, Sirhindi. Shah Wali Allah's attitude regarding how Muslims ought to deal with unbelievers who reject Islam echoes the harsh words and militant stance of Sirhindi. In his treatise, *Hujjat Allah al-baligha* (*the Eloquent Proof of God*) in the chapter dealing with jihad, Shah Wali Allah compares the duty of Muslims with regard to implementing the *sharia* to the duty of a servant in his master's household: "God has charged His servants with what He has commanded and forbidden [and in this] He is comparable to a man whose slaves have become ill and bids a man of his household make them drink medicine—even if he compels them to drink it or forces it into their mouths—this is just; however, mercy (*rahma*) demands that he explain to them the benefits of the medicine so that they will desire to drink it, and mix honey with [the medicine] to assist in rendering the desire natural and sensible."[37] Shah Wali Allah believed, however, that a kind approach was useless regarding those who backslid into the customs and habits of the religion of their forebears:

> Then there are many people who are dominated by base inclinations, beastly morals, and the temptations of Satan … and the customs of their forefathers cleave to their hearts, [such people] do not heed the benefits and do not obey that which the Prophet commanded and do not reflect upon the superiority [of what the Prophet commanded]; mercy for them is that belief should be forced upon them, despite themselves, like bitter medicine; there is no subjugating [them] save through killing him among them who is strongly prejudiced and stubbornly refuses, dispersing their power, and dispossessing them of their property until they become unable to do anything, only then will their followers and their offspring willingly and obediently embrace the faith.[38]

Shah Wali Allah's statements regarding those who return to the faith of their forefathers clearly refers exclusively to Hindus, which restricts his discourse to the Indian environment. Hindus are not traditionally included among the People of the Book and therefore are not accorded the option of keeping their religion under Muslim rule. Shah Wali Allah's stance regarding Hindus is quite harsh, owing in part to the period during which

he lived when Muslim power in India was waning, and Hindus and Sikhs had succeeded in conquering much territory that had been under Mughal rule. Overall, however, Shah Wali Allah's attitude regarding forced conversion was that it was not effective and, more often than not, resulted in apostasy. For this reason, he advocated convincing non-Muslims through rational argument of the superiority of Islam to other religions, if possible.[39] Though some of his pronouncements are extreme and not necessarily representative of the Sufi tradition as a whole, they do have a doctrinal basis in both Islamic scripture and in the words of his many Sufi predecessors who had also dealt with the topic of the martial jihad and relations with non-Muslims.

Conclusion

On the basis of our survey of Sufi writings thus far, we may state with some confidence that Sufis have consistently embraced and propounded a twofold (sometimes even three or fourfold), complementary interpretation of jihad. Despite the multiplicity of Sufi orders and the differences in practice (e.g. vocal versus silent *dhikr*, the permissibility of *sama'*, etc.), the many examples of Sufi writings we have examined in the foregoing chapters present a surprisingly uniform understanding of the doctrine of jihad, even when separated by time, distance, or language. The myriad Sufi dicta regarding jihad generally employ the same terminology and are similar in tone. Among other things, this uniformity of opinion regarding the doctrine of jihad underscores the essential unity of Sufi thought with regard to fundamental Islamic doctrinal matters, regardless of affiliation. We have examined writings by Qadiri, Kubravi, Chishti, and Naqshbandi Sufis, as well as early Sufi authors unaffiliated with a particular order. Many of these authors are among the most celebrated and prominent figures in the history of Sufism, while some are more obscure. Although not exhaustive, this survey of Sufi treatises, letters, *tafsir*, as well as writings composed by Sufis for a non-Sufi audience (e.g. Ghazali's *Ihya' 'ulum al-din*) is representative of the tradition as a whole with regard to the doctrine of jihad. Moreover, these authors and their texts are in harmony with the scriptural, exegetical, and legal traditions of Islam as they developed during the formative centuries of the faith (i.e. the ninth-thirteenth centuries). We have observed that these Sufi texts do not differ from non-Sufi Islamic texts—especially Qur'anic exegesis—in their discussion of the martial jihad. Indeed it is clear that premodern Sufi authors did not see the Sufi path as something separate from the Islamic tradition as a whole;

rather they viewed the inward spiritual journey along the Sufi path and adherence to the principles of the *sharia* as indivisible. The key concept that animates Sufi discourse as well as action is the complementary relationship of the inner and outer facets of Islamic scripture and practice, regarding which, Najm al-Din Razi says:

> Religion possesses an outer aspect and an inner aspect. The outer aspect of religion is preserved by the learning of God-fearing scholars and the inner aspect of religion is [preserved and] practiced by [Sufi] shaykhs who, having traveled the [Sufi] Path, serve as guides, for "The shaykh among his followers is like the prophet among his religious community." God Almighty in His benevolence has made obligatory the preservation of religion through these two groups, for He says: "*It is We Who have sent down the Remembrance, and it is We Who shall keep it.*"[40]

In the next chapter, we will endeavor to explore the vast and immensely popular genres of Sufi hagiography and poetry and how they portray the doctrine of jihad. Popular Sufi hagiography, especially, had an important didactic role in premodern Islamic culture, as it was often the most accessible source of religious instruction for many Muslims. Sufi poetry is often assumed to be of an entirely esoteric and spiritual nature, and indeed much of it is; however, it also contains many references to jihad as well as military campaigns and attitudes regarding relations with non-Muslims. It may be hoped that by considering Sufi writings that served to edify and—at least to some degree—entertain popular audiences, and comparing them with the learned Sufi writings we have examined in this chapter and those previous to it, we may provide a complete picture of how the premodern Sufi textual tradition—in all its manifestations—presents what is essentially a uniform understanding of the doctrine of jihad as something complementary with regard to both its spiritual and martial components.

Notes

1. The earliest *tafsir* is said to be *Tanwir al-miqbas*, which is traditionally attributed to Ibn 'Abbas (d. 687); it was not collected, however, until much later and was certainly not as influential in the development of the genre as Tabari's *tafsir*.
2. Notable twentieth-century examples include the *tafsir*, *Fi zilal al-Qur'an/In the Shade of the Qur'an* of the seminal Islamist thinker and prolific writer, Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966), as well as the Shiite *Tafsir al-mizan*, of the Iranian religious scholar Tabataba'i (d. 1981).

3. Abu'l-Qasim al-Qushayri, *Lata'if al-isharat* (Cairo: Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabi, 1968), p. 8.
4. Ibid.
5. Annabel Keeler, "Meybodi, Abu'l-Fazl Rashid al-Din," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition, 2016. For a detailed study of Maybudi's Persian Sufi *tafsir* see Annabel Keeler, Sufi Hermeneutics: *The Qur'an Commentary of Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī*, (London: Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2007).
6. Abu'l-Fazl al-Maybudi, *Kashf al-asrar* (Tehran: Intisharat-i Danishgah-i Tihran, 1332 SH), pp. 92–93. Other important premodern *tafsirs* also discuss Qur'an 9:5 in the context of abrogation (e.g. those of Tabari and Qurtubi).
7. Ibid., p. 96.
8. 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, *al-Fath al-rabbani* (Cairo: Matba'at Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi, 1968), p. 63.
9. 'Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi, *Bayan al-jihad li-ahl al-widad* Arabic MS (Damascus: Maktabat al-Asad, manuscript no. 4008), p. 21 B. For discussion of the legal aspects of jihad see Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, pp. 51–137 and Hamidullah, *The Muslim Conduct of State*, pp. 159–278. For discussion of the difference between offensive and defensive jihad and the *Dar al-Islam* vs. *Dar al-Harb* see Hamid Algar, "Dār al-Ḥarb" in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Vol. VI, fasc. 6, pp. 668–669.
10. The text of *Tabaqat al-sufiyya* was most likely composed by one of Ansari's disciples to whom he dictated the various anecdotes of God's friends while both adding to and commenting on the earlier Arabic text of Sulami.
11. Khwaja 'Abd Allah al-Ansari, *Majmu'a-yi rasa'il-i Farsi* (Tehran: Intisharat-i Tus, 1372 SH), p. 264.
12. Echoing the *hadith*: "*Afdal al-jihad kalimat 'adl 'inda sultan ja'ir/*The best jihad is a just word to a tyrannical ruler." Related in *Sunan Abi Dawud* Vol. 6 (Damascus: Dar al-Risala al-'Alamiyya, 2009), p. 400.
13. Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'ulum al-din* Vol. 4 (Damascus: Dar al-Fikr, 1994), p. 242.
14. Ibid., p. 528.
15. Alfred Morabia, *Le Gihad dans l'islam médiéval* (Paris: Bibliothèque Albin Michel, 1993), p. 329.
16. The term *al-Sa'ihun* (the wayfarers), among other meanings, refers specifically to " … those who journey to war against unbelievers … " Edward W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, Vol. 4 (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1968), p. 1482.
17. Ibn 'Arabi, *al-Futuhat al-makkiyya*, Vol. 2 (Beirut: Dar Sader, 1968), p. 33.
18. Mahmud b. 'Uthman, *Firdaws al-murshidiyya*, p. 169. The figure of Abu Ishaq al-Kazaruni, for example, implies the Byzantine Christians are guilty of *shirk* when he proclaims—brandishing a sword—to a host of *ghazis*: "If this moment I were to behold someone claiming there are three persons in God, I would smite him."

19. See Harry S. Neale, "The Zoroastrian in ʿAṭṭār's *Taḏkiratu'l-Awliyā',*" Middle Eastern Literatures Vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 137–156.
20. Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, p. 75.
21. Razi, *Mirsad al-ʿibad*, p. 140.
22. Ibn 'Arabi, *al-Wasaya* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-'a'lami, 1993), p. 36.
23. See Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, pp. 55–73.
24. T.M. Johnstone, "Ghazw." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*. Brill Online, 2016.
25. Ibid. The term *maghazi*, derived from the same triliteral root /GHZW/, is also used to refer to the Prophet's military expeditions of the Medinan period. The earliest work on the subject, *Kitab al-maghazi* by al-Waqidi (d. 207/823), employs the term *maghazi* to refer to especially important *ghazwat* (e.g. Uhud, Khaybar, Mecca, etc.). M. Hinds, "al-Maghāzī." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*. Brill Online, 2016.
26. Nile Green, Sufism: A Global History (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), p. 135.
27. I. Mélikoff, "Ghāzī." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.
28. For example, Ibrahim-i Adham, 'Abd Allah al-Mubarak, et al. See J. Chabbi, "Ribāṭ" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*. Brill Online, 2016.
29. Ibid.
30. Yohanan Friedman, "Aḥmad Serhendī (1)", *Encyclopaedia Iranica* Vol. I, fasc. 6, pp. 654–657.
31. For a detailed discussion and assessment of Sirhindi's place in Indian Islam, see Yohanan Friedmann, *Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī: An Outline of His Thought and a Study of His Image in the Eyes of Posterity* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1971).
32. Demetrio Giordani, "Aḥmad Serhendī (2)", *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition, 2009.
33. Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindi, *Maktubat-i rabbani* Vol. 1, letter 193 (Istanbul: Maktabat al-Haqiqa, 1977), pp. 307–310.
34. Ibid., letter 163, pp. 272. "*Juhud har ki shavad kushta sud-i Islam ast.*"
35. Ibid., p. 270.
36. Ibid., p . 271–72.
37. Shah Wali Allah, *Hujjat Allah al-baligha* Vol. 2 (Beirut: Dar al-Jil, 2005), p. 263.
38. Ibid.
39. Rizvi, *Shāh Walī Allāh*, p. 286.
40. Razi, *Mirsad al-ʿibad*, pp. 159–60.

CHAPTER 6

Representations of Jihad in Sufi Hagiography and Poetry

In the foregoing chapters we have read excerpts from a variety of learned Sufi writings and concluded that they are generally in accord—both in their tone and terminology—regarding the complementary nature of the spiritual and martial aspects of jihad. While early Sufi treatises, *tafsir*, et cetera, do elaborate the spiritual jihad and emphasize the great difficulty involved in successfully overcoming the lower self, many of these same writings also discuss the martial jihad and military endeavors as an essential duty of the Muslim community. Indeed not only do these writings expound the inner and outer facets of jihad, many of them conclude that Sufis are the quintessential *mujahids*, which dispels the notion that Sufis have generally espoused a purely irenic interpretation of jihad.

In the introduction, we began by reading two anecdotes from the Sufi hagiographical tradition that portrayed important Sufi figures encouraging and carrying out military campaigns against the Christians of the Byzantine Empire. The Sufi hagiographical tradition offers abundant examples of Sufis as *mujahids* and *ghazis* and it is therefore necessary that we consider this indispensable genre of Sufi writings in our analysis of Sufi jihad discourse.

Sufi poetry is the genre of Sufi writings that has garnered the most acclaim in the West. Sufi poetry is by far the most enigmatic genre of Sufi literature and for this reason has led many to assume that Sufis espouse a doctrine that is of an entirely esoteric and mystical nature. While it is certainly true that Sufi poetry often expresses mystical and spiritual concepts

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in symbolic form, it nevertheless also contains many examples of jihad and *ghazw* imagery. Though these occurrences of martial imagery in Sufi poetry, more often than not, serve an entirely allegorical function, they do attest to a certain familiarity with the concrete meaning of these terms. Sufi poetry—especially extended didactic narrative—also contains anecdotes regarding jihad and *ghazw* that are similar to those found in Sufi hagiography. For this reason, we will consider Sufi hagiographical writings and poetry with the aim of examining their use of jihad and *ghazw* terminology, as well as their portrayal of the various aspects of jihad (i.e. the spiritual and martial aspects) and warfare. Analyzing Sufi hagiography and poetry with regard to their representation of jihad, *mujahada*, and *ghazw* and comparing this representation to that of the other genres of Sufi writings we have read in the previous chapters will permit us to conclude whether or not premodern Sufi writings present a uniform understanding of jihad.

As we alluded to earlier, Sufi literature may be roughly divided between works composed for a Sufi audience, familiar with Sufi terminology and concepts, and works composed for a popular audience. Most of the Sufi writings we have discussed thus far belong to the first category of writings, to wit, writings for Sufis and initiates treading the Sufi path. Sufi writings composed for a popular audience consist primarily of vernacular hagiography and poetry and have been immensely influential as a didactic medium; they were also, undoubtedly, an important source of entertainment in much the same way that miracle plays in medieval Europe were. Such Sufi literature is generally less concerned with explaining difficult or arcane concepts, whereas Sufi literature composed with Sufis and religious scholars in mind, often is. This is not to say, of course, that all Sufi hagiographies and poetry were composed for a popular audience or even that the two audiences are mutually exclusive. Indeed, we ought not to seek clearly defined parameters for what constituted literature composed for a popular or exclusive audience any more than we should seek to separate the profane from the religious, as all of these categories intersect and intermingle in premodern literature and poetry. In any event, much of Sufi hagiography and poetry is certainly more accessible to an audience that is not familiar with the more complex and esoteric concepts and vocabulary of theoretical Sufism.

We have considered briefly how Sufis played an important role as leaders and guides in spiritual as well as practical matters in their respective communities throughout the premodern period, in particular, following the upheaval and instability that resulted from the Mongol conquests of

the thirteenth century. Though Western scholarship has tended to concentrate on the more esoteric and theoretical aspects of Sufism, in traditional Sunni Muslim culture, Sufis are often remembered as diligent proselytizers, teachers, and leaders in their respective communities, as well as being exemplary *mujahids* during times of war. Popular Sufi narratives reflect this more multifaceted view of Sufis and their social roles, and for this reason, the significance of popular Sufi literature and poetry in Muslim society cannot be overlooked in any thorough study of premodern Islamic culture.

Sufi Hagiography

Throughout the history of many of the world's religions, hagiography in particular has traditionally served as a medium through which to teach ordinary believers. What is meant by "ordinary believers," is adherents of a given faith who are either not versed in scripture and dogma, owing to their being unlettered, or because they are unfamiliar with the sacred language of the faith (e.g. Classical Arabic in Islam, Sanskrit in Hinduism, Latin in Catholicism, etc.), or because of the abstract nature of the sacred texts and dogma. The general nature of hagiography is universal (i.e. its tropes and miraculous motifs)—whether it be Islamic Sufi hagiography, medieval Christian hagiography, Buddhist Jatakas, or Sikh Janamsakhis—in that it is usually composed in simple, uncomplicated language—often in the vernacular—and teaches fundamental precepts and beliefs through stories and anecdotes.

The earliest Sufi hagiographies were composed in Arabic and are generally more concerned with bolstering the doctrinal legitimacy of Sufism as an integral aspect of Sunni Islam than they are with providing engaging narratives for the edification of ordinary believers or Sufi initiates. From a structural perspective, these first hagiographies (e.g. Sulami's *Tabaqat al-sufiyya*) owe much to the science of *hadith* collection and narration as developed and elaborated by al-Bukhari and other early *hadith* transmitters (i.e. Muslim, Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi, etc.) in their seminal *hadith* compendia. Sulami's hagiography provides chains of transmission for each anecdote regarding God's friends, while concentrating on the religious scholarship and piety of his subjects, rather than their miraculous deeds. The fact that a hagiography like Sulami's made use of chains of transmission and emphasized the piety and formal religious learning of the early Sufi and ascetic archetypes suggests that its intended audience was indeed a more learned one, rather than a popular one. Other early Sufi treatises, while not con-

ceived as hagiography per se, make use of much hagiographical material in their presentation and elucidation of various Sufi concepts and practices, for example, Kalabadhi's *al-Ta'arruf li-madhhab ahl al-tasawwuf*, Hujviri's *Kashf al-mahjub*, Qushayri's *Risala*, and al-Makki's *Qut al-qulub* (*Sustenance of the Hearts*). Thus, it may be said that hagiography has always been an essential component of Sufism and continues to be so even in the present era, especially with regard to worship at saints' tombs and the traditions surrounding these saints throughout the Islamic world.

As Sufism became accepted as an integral component of Sunni Islam, the need to bolster its legitimacy as such became less of a concern. Thus, over time, Sufi hagiography developed into a means of providing a foundational narrative for specific Sufi orders, that is, the life and miraculous deeds of a given order's namesake, as well as becoming a medium for popular religious instruction.

Although it does not dispense with chains of transmission, *Hilyat al-awliya'* (*Adornment of God's Friends*) of Abu Nu'aym al-Isfahani (d. 1038) is the earliest Sufi hagiography in Arabic to adopt an anecdotal format that presents the miraculous deeds of God's friends in a manner that is more accessible than the *hadith*-like format of Sulami's earlier *Tabaqat*. The lively—and occasionally humorous—anecdotes of *Hilyat al-awliya'* represent a shift in the composition of Sufi hagiography that signals the transition from reliance on chains of transmission and details regarding the formal religious learning of a given friend of God, to compelling narratives concerning the wondrous deeds of God's friends. This narratival structure would become the standard in Sufi hagiography composed in Persian (as well as the Islamic literary languages influenced by Persian), especially following the appearance of the immensely popular hagiography, *Tadhkirat al-awliya'* (*Memorial of God's Friends*) composed by Farid al-Din Attar of Nishapur (d. early thirteenth century).

Tadhkirat al-awliya' is probably the best known and most influential hagiography in the Persian tongue and Isfahani's hagiography was certainly one of its inspirations. Attar's hagiography is especially important for a number of reasons, including the fact that he identifies the didactic potential of the stories of God's friends in the introduction to his hagiography, where he explains: "After the Qur'an and *hadith*, I consider the best words to be those of God's friends, for I consider their words to be an explanation of the Qur'an and *hadith*."[1] In other words, God's friends embody the essential teachings of the sacred scripture in both their words and deeds. Furthermore, their words are "the result of their deeds and

ecstatic states" and God's friends are "the heirs of the prophets." This last point is especially important in that it establishes a direct link between the archetypes of the Sufi Path and the Prophet of Islam and his predecessors. While certainly not claiming prophethood for God's friends, Attar *is* going so far as to say that their authority and ability to teach Islam's fundamental precepts are part of the spiritual continuum that includes the early ascetics, the *Tabi'un* (i.e. the generation born after the Prophet's passing, but who knew some of his companions), the Companions of the Prophet, and, ultimately, the Prophet Muhammad himself, as well as his prophetic predecessors in Islamic sacred history.

Regarding his reasons for composing his hagiography in Persian, rather than Arabic, as many of his predecessors had done, the author of *Tadhkirat al-awliya'* says that in order to read the Qur'an and *hadith*, one must be well versed in Arabic language and grammar, an ability that most people did not have—at least in Khurasan and the rest of the eastern Islamic lands, the inhabitants of which, for the most part, spoke either Iranian or Turkic languages. For this reason, he sets forth the words of God's friends in Persian for the ordinary Muslim of Khurasan as these words are an explanation of the scriptures and all may benefit therefrom ("Even though most of these words are in Arabic … I have rendered them into Persian").[2] The decision to translate Sufi writings and stories into Persian required some justification as Arabic was not only the sacred language of Islam but also the language of learning in the early Islamic period (much as Latin was in pre-Renaissance Europe); for this reason, early attempts to write in other languages, using the Arabic alphabet, resulted in much discussion regarding whether this was permissible or not. In a manner similar to Attar, the author who rendered the hagiography of Abu Ishaq al-Kazaruni into Persian says: "This noble book was [composed] in the speech of the Arabs, therefore, they have rendered it into Persian for the common people so that they might benefit therefrom."[3]

In hagiography that was most likely composed primarily for the edification of the ordinary believer, the deeds of God's friends embody the fundamental principles, beliefs, and practices of Islam. Thus, in a way, God's friends serve as a living *tafsir* of the Qur'an and *hadith*, which we mentioned above when discussing *Tadhkirat al-awliya'*.[4] One could compare the stories of God's friends to the role of visual storytelling in medieval Western Europe where the stained glass and sculpture that adorned Gothic cathedrals told the stories of the Bible through images, thereby making the essential truths of these stories from scripture accessible to the humblest unlettered believer.

In what follows, we will examine how Sufi hagiography depicts and explains the concepts of *mujahada*, *jihad*, and *ghazw* through stories and anecdotes from the lives of God's friends. There are a number of prominent motifs concerning these three concepts that recur throughout the Sufi hagiographical tradition, and for this reason, we will approach our discussion of them thematically. Although hagiography cannot be considered accurate history by any means, it does provide us with much information regarding daily life, as well as beliefs, prevailing attitudes, and perceptions of historical events, that would have been important to an audience of ordinary believers. God's friends in these stories and anecdotes perform miracles[5] and teach fundamental truths and precepts through pithy utterances or symbolic deeds. Popular hagiography also exhibits humor, and even obscenity on occasion, which further underscores its role as a multifaceted and inclusive literary and didactic medium in premodern Muslim culture.

As far as their structure is concerned, hagiographical works tend to present the lives of God's friends in chronological order and often include early Muslim archetypes of piety and asceticism among the first generation of Sufis. For example, Attar's *Tadhkirat al-awliya'* begins with the life of Ja'far al-Sadiq (d. 765), whom the Twelver Shia consider the sixth Imam, and Sunnis consider both an important transmitter of *hadith* and descendent of the Prophet. Other early Muslim archetypes such as the ascetic, Hasan of Basra; the eponymous founder of the Hanafi legal school, Abu Hanifa; and the ascetic warrior, 'Abd Allah b. al-Mubarak, are also included in *Tadhkirat al-awliya'*. Though anachronistic from a purely historical perspective, the inclusion of these figures situates Sufism in the spiritual history of early Islam by connecting it to the earliest paradigms of piety, asceticism, and bravery.

There are also some hagiographies that concentrate on the life of only one of God's friends, generally the eponym of a Sufi order, such as Jalal al-Din-i Balkhi (Rumi) in *Manaqib al-'arifin* (*The Deeds of the Knowers*), Abu Sa'id in *Asrar al-tawhid* (*The Mysteries of Oneness*), and Abu Ishaq al-Kazaruni in *Firdaws al-murshidiyya* (*Paradise of Sufi Guidance*). Although the authors of these monographic hagiographies undoubtedly sought to bolster the legitimacy of the respective Sufi orders to which they were connected, they generally adhere to the same themes as other hagiographies in their emphasis on miracles and dicta. We will consider both kinds of hagiography in this chapter.

Sufi Poetry

Of all the Sufi contributions to Islamic culture, the one with which non-Muslims are most familiar is Sufi poetry, owing to the popularity of translated works of Rumi and other Sufi poets. Indeed, it is probably accurate to say that most non-Muslims in the West, who are acquainted with Sufism to any degree, owe their knowledge of the phenomenon almost entirely to translations of Sufi poetry. While interest in Sufi poetry ought to be welcomed, it must be pointed out that a number of the most popular translations, in particular those of Rumi's poetry, are of dubious accuracy.[6] Furthermore, without a basic knowledge of Islam and fundamental Sufi concepts, it is easy for readers to misconstrue the meaning of Sufi poetry or ignore its thoroughly Islamic historical, cultural, and spiritual context.

Sufis have cultivated poetry as a medium for elucidating the Sufi path since the first florescence of Sufism in the tenth and eleventh centuries. As with Sufi writings in general, there is Sufi poetry that is clearly composed for a Sufi audience, for example, Mahmud Shabistari's fourteenth-century Persian *mathnavi*, *Gulshan-i Raz*, which is essentially a concise text in rhyming couplets for teaching Sufi concepts,[7] as well as the Arabic poetry of Ibn al-Farid (d. 1235), which presents abstract mystical concepts in poetic form, using much pre-Islamic and wine-ode poetic imagery. Ibn al-Farid's poetry is especially complex and demands of the reader mastery of the classical Arabic language as well as familiarity with the conventions of its poetic tradition, including the pre-Islamic odes. The frame tales of Attar's *mathnavis* and the quatrains of Abu Said, on the other hand, are much more accessible to a non-Sufi audience and were probably composed to appeal to, and thereby edify, a broader audience; in the case of the *mathnavis*, by teaching through stories; in the case of quatrains, by teaching through concise, simple metaphors.

In discussing the thematic content of Sufi hagiography and poetry, both in terms of narrative as well as terminology, we will proceed in the same manner as we did when analyzing the other genres of Sufi writings. Thus, we will first deal with how these texts portray the spiritual jihad before considering the ways in which these texts represent the martial jihad and Sufi involvement in military campaigns (*ghazw*).

The Demarcation of *Mujahada* and *Jihad* in Sufi Hagiography

Sufi hagiography is, for the most part, in accord with the other Sufi writings we have examined in the previous chapters (i.e. Sufi letters, treatises, *tafsir*, etc.) in that it makes a clear distinction between *jihad* and *mujahada*. A good example of this distinction may be seen in the taxonomy of the early Sufi compendium of hagiographical anecdotes by an unknown author, titled *Hazar Hikayat-i Sufiyan* (*The Thousand Tales of the Sufis*). *Hazar Hikayat-i Sufiyan* is divided into one hundred chapters, each one dealing with a fundamental Sufi concept, for example, *dhikr* (remembrance of God), *tawakkul* (reliance on God), *wara'* (extreme piety), and so on. Each chapter begins with a quotation in Arabic from the Qur'an and *hadith*, the meaning of which it then explicates through relating ten anecdotes in Persian from the lives of God's friends. *Hazar Hikayat-i Sufiyan* separates the concepts of *mujahada* and jihad, by assigning them their own chapters; the ninth chapter deals with *mujahada* while the sixty-third chapter deals with warfare and jihad (*al-ghaza' wa'l-jihad*). The ninth chapter opens with Qur'an 39:69: "*And those who perform jihad for Us, we shall certainly guide them in Our ways*," followed by the greater jihad *hadith*, "We have returned from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad." The sixty-third chapter begins with an excerpt from Qur'an 9:111: " … They fight for the sake of God and they kill and are killed … ," which is followed by the *hadith*: "Whoever is killed for naught save his religion is a martyr." In this manner, *Hazar Hikayat-i Sufiyan* clearly distinguishes between the spiritual jihad and the martial jihad in its separation of the two concepts, presenting them as completely different chapters. It also distinguishes between the nature of the two aspects of jihad through the choice of scripture with which it introduces these chapters, as well as consistently using the term *mujahada* to refer to the struggle with the lower self, rather than jihad.

The first anecdote in the chapter on *mujahada* in *Hazar Hikayat-i Sufiyan* concerns Bayazid-i Bastami (d. 874), an early archetype of ecstatic Sufism whom we will discuss further below. It is typical of hagiographical anecdotes that deal with God's friends and overcoming the lower self in that it employs allegory as well as emphasizing the almost superhuman physical and spiritual strength of Bayazid:

> Bayazid-i Bastami—may God have mercy upon him—said: 'I acted like a blacksmith and melted my lower self in the forge of *mujahada* so that I might produce a mirror therefrom suitable as a viewing place for the heart. For one year, I looked at my heart's eye in that mirror. When I looked carefully, I saw a *zunnar* around my visible waist; I engaged in *mujahada* for twelve years so that I might sever that outer *zunnar* from my waist. I looked at my inner waist and also beheld a *zunnar*, so I engaged in *mujahada* for another five years so that I might sever that inner *zunnar*. I looked upon all that was inferior to God and saw them all as dead, so I uttered *Allahu akbar* four times for them.'[8]

Bayazid engages in rigorous *mujahada* in order to remove all manner of infidelity, that is, aught save God, from his heart. The anecdote expresses this by using the metaphor of the *zunnar* (ultimately from Greek *ζωνη*, belt), that is, the belt Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians were sometimes required to wear in lands under Muslim rule to distinguish them from Muslims.[9] Bayazid's describing all save God as dead indicates that God is the ultimate reality, hence, the necessity of the Sufi's engaging in *mujahada* in order to become free of all worldly distractions that keep him from experiencing this truth (the word used in this anecdote is *haqq*, which may mean both truth and God). The other nine anecdotes in this chapter of *Hazar Hikayat-i Sufiyan* similarly describe the deeds of God's friends as they struggle to subdue and purify the lower self. Nowhere in this chapter is the term jihad used to describe the spiritual endeavors of God's friends, save in the greater jihad *hadith* that is quoted at the beginning of the chapter.

An important Arabic hagiography from the early Ottoman Period, *al-Kawakib al-durriyya* (*Resplendent Stars*), offers another example of how Sufi hagiography juxtaposes *mujahada* and *jihad*. *Al-Kawakib al-durriyya* uses both terms in a brief anecdote regarding the life of 'Abd al-Rahman al-Nuwayri (d. mid-thirteenth century) who fought against the Crusaders in Egypt. In this anecdote, al-Nuwayri is described as being "prodigious in *mujahada* and leading an ascetic life, and remarkable regarding abstinence and restraint." Concerning his martial endeavors, al-Nuwayri is said to have "engaged in military campaigns" as well as "participating in jihad when the Franks took the city of Damietta."[10] This anecdote illustrates well the distinction in the Sufi tradition between *mujahada*, which here, clearly denotes the austerities and spiritual struggle to subdue the passions and purge the lower self of desire; and jihad, which refers here to the

martial struggle of the Muslims against the Crusaders. It also underscores the important connection between the spiritual and martial struggle, for it suggests that al-Nuwayri's first having subdued his lower self and disciplined his passions by means of *mujahada* makes him an exemplary *mujahid* when facing the invading Crusaders.

These examples from two Sufi hagiographies—one in Persian, the other in Arabic—show that the Sufi hagiographical tradition is in harmony with the Sufi treatises and other writings we have considered thus far in its use of *mujahada* to refer to spiritual struggling and jihad to denote military struggling. The second example regarding 'Abd al-Rahman al-Nuwayri in particular not only distinguishes between the two forms of struggling but also emphasizes the connection between the two, by suggesting al-Nuwayri's spiritual struggle prepared him for combat with the Crusaders.

The Struggle with the Lower Self in Sufi Hagiography

Having discussed how Sufi hagiography consistently distinguishes between *mujahada* and *jihad*, even going so far as to deal with them as separate endeavors, we will now consider how Sufi hagiographies portray the spiritual struggle of God's friends and the terminology they employ in this regard. By considering examples from a variety of notable hagiographies in both Arabic and Persian that span the entire period of premodern Sufism (i.e. the eleventh through seventeenth centuries), we may accurately assess how the Sufi hagiographical tradition has portrayed the different aspects of struggling, both spiritual and martial.

We will begin our survey of *mujahada* in the Sufi hagiographical tradition by considering an anecdote regarding *mujahada* in a hagiography concerning the early Sufi shaykh, Ibn Khafif of Shiraz (d. 981–982), which the Sufi writer al-Daylami of Fars composed in the late tenth century. Although this hagiography was originally composed in Arabic, it survives in the fourteenth-century Persian translation of Rukn al-Din al-Shirazi. In the following anecdote, Ibn Khafif describes how he overcame his desire for an almond confection by engaging in *mujahada* and *riyada*:

> I placed an almond confection in my mouth and was greatly pleased by it. My lower self said to me: "Take another one, for it is quite toothsome!" I began to chew more slowly, in opposition to my lower self, and I also chewed my tongue till that pleasure subsided and my lower self was unable to enjoy it,

> so that henceforth, my lower self would not seek fulfillment of its desire and would know for certain that I would no longer seek to satisfy it, but would follow the path of *mujahada* and *riyada* and overcoming desires.[11]

This anecdote is typical of Persian Sufi hagiographies that rely heavily on lively anecdotes for the bulk of their material in that it does not contain a chain of transmission and its language is straightforward and accessible. The trope of the lower self trying to tempt one of God's friends with a tasty morsel occurs not only in Sufi hagiography but in other hagiographical traditions as well (e.g. Jesus tempted by Satan to turn stones into bread in the Book of Mathew; though traditionally reckoned scripture, much of the Gospels are hagiographical in their form and content). The anecdote concludes by affirming the necessity of *mujahada* and *riyada* to subdue the lower self.

Likewise in Attar's *Tadhkirat al-awliya'*, God's friends express similar dicta regarding *mujahada*. To Ja'far al-Sadiq are attributed the following words regarding one's intention in engaging in *mujahada*: "Whoever engages in *mujahada* with his lower self for his lower self, achieves saintly miracles and whoever engages in *mujahada* with his lower self for God reaches God."[12] While underscoring the essential role of subduing the lower self, this anecdote also subtly reminds the audience that miracles are not in themselves the aim of God's friends. The following anecdote, also from *Tadhkirat al-awliya'*, tells of the long years the early ascetic warrior and Sufi archetype Ibrahim-i Adham spent dwelling in a cave and engaging in *mujahada*: "He dwelt in that cave for nine years, three years in each part; who knows how great was the *mujahada* he engaged in day and night."[13] This anecdote serves both to highlight the spiritual fortitude of Ibrahim-i Adham as well as indicate the great difficulty involved in subduing the lower self in that it takes him, a friend of God, years of concerted spiritual struggling to achieve this. The longest chapter of *Tadhkirat al-awliya'* is devoted to Bayazid of Bastam, whom we discussed earlier in this chapter and will return to below. The laudatory introduction to the life of Bayazid describes him as "Ever struggling (*mujahada*) with his [physical] body, and keeping his heart in contemplation [of God]."[14]

The late twelfth-century Sufi hagiography, *Asrar al-tawhid* (*The Mysteries of Oneness*), concentrates solely on the life and deeds of an early and important Sufi of Khurasan, Abu Sa'id Abu'l-Khayr (d. 1049). Abu Sa'id's great-great grandson, Muhammad b. al-Munavvar, was the author of the book and concerned himself primarily with presenting the wondrous deeds of his

forebear.[15] Throughout *Asrar al-tawhid* many anecdotes are related concerning the austerities Abu Sa'id undertook for the purification of his lower self. Abu Sa'id spends seven years in the wilderness, "engaging in spiritual exercises and struggling (*riyadat va mujahadat*)"[16] The following anecdote relates his ongoing austerities: "[Abu Sa'id] dwelt mostly in an ancient *ribat* … where he engaged in spiritual exercises and struggling."[17] Abu Sa'id discusses the centrality of *mujahada* in Sufism, saying: "It should be known that the way of this tribe [i.e. the Sufis] is caution and scrupulosity and in the beginning of [the development of] *mujahada*, the shaykhs imposed certain things on themselves as spiritual exercises, some of which are from the Prophet's *sunna* and some of which are supererogatory."[18] Although Abu Sai'd is traditionally considered an early exemplar of the drunken school of Sufism in Khurasan (i.e. those Sufis who were given to ecstatic utterances[19] and seemingly blasphemous behavior, as exemplified by Bayazid), this dictum regarding *mujahada* is quite "sober" in that it designates the Prophet's *sunna* as its source, as well as emphasizing supererogatory spiritual exercises as an essential aspect of the Sufi path.

Dastur al-Jumhur (*Exemplar of the Multitude*) is a fourteenth-century hagiography concerning the early Sufi, Bayazid-i Bastami, whom we discussed earlier in this chapter in the anecdote regarding the mirror of the heart. The author, Ahmad b. al-Husayn b. al-Kharaqani, composed the hagiography during the reign of Uljaytu (d. 1316), the Ilkhanid ruler of Persia. The Ilkhanids were a Mongol dynasty descended from Hulagu, the Mongol ruler who conquered Baghdad in 1258. The Ilkhanids quickly adopted the Persian language and court culture and eventually converted to Islam. They were great patrons of Perso-Islamic culture and were receptive to the Sufis, who played an important role in the Islamization of the Mongols in Persia.[20] The author's name indicates that he was (or at least considered himself) a descendent of the early Sufi shaykh, al-Kharaqani, whom we discussed above. Like other authors of early Sufi works in Persian, the author of *Dastur al-Jumhur* explains his rendering of the words and deeds of Bayazid into Persian as a means to making them accessible to all and sundry ("This book ought to be rendered into Persian so that the common folk as well as the elite may profit therefrom"[21]), which is yet another indication of the didactic role Persian Sufi hagiography played in premodern eastern Islamic culture.

Dastur al-jumhur contains a number of anecdotes dealing with *mujahada* and *jihad* in the life and deeds of Bayazid. The use of *mujahada* (and *riyada*) to refer to the austerities and exercises necessary to subdue

and purify the lower self is familiar to the reader at this point: "I practiced *mujahada* for thirty years and found nothing to be more difficult for myself than knowledge and practicing that knowledge." In another anecdote from this hagiography, Bayazid alludes to one of the reasons for his spiritual struggling: "That which I sought in all my *riyadat* and *mujahadat* and exile was to please my mother." The Sufi hagiographical tradition portrays Bayazid's mother as the person responsible for Bayazid's initial turning to the Sufi Path. *Tadhkirat al-awliya'* relates the following regarding Bayazid and his mother:

> It is related that when his mother sent him to school and he reached the chapter of Luqman [in the Qur'an] and the verse that says: "Give thanks to Me and to your father and mother", [Bayazid] asked his teacher about the meaning of this verse. When his teacher explained the meaning of this verse, it smote his heart. [Bayazid] picked up his slate and asked leave to go home. His mother said: "Why have you come?"… "I reached this verse in which God, may He be exalted, enjoins [that I serve] Him as well as you; how can I do this? … either you must ask God to make me belong wholly to you or give me to God that I may belong wholly to Him!" To this his mother responded: "I have devoted you to God and relinquished my claim."[22]

'Abd al-Rahman Jami of Herat (d. 1492) is one the great figures of Sufism in the Perso-Islamic world. A prolific author and poet, Jami composed an important hagiography in Persian, *Nafahat al-uns* (*The Exhalations of Intimacy*). Jami probably composed his hagiography with Sufis in mind, rather than a popular audience, and his primary concern seems to have been updating the contents of the Persian version of Sulami's *Tabaqat al-sufiyya* in language that was more suitable for a contemporary audience as well as adding biographies of later Sufi figures thereto. It is traditionally believed that Abdullah al-Ansari composed the Persian *Tabaqat* in the eleventh-century Persian dialect of Herat, though it may have been the work of one of his students. In any event, the language had become somewhat archaic by Jami's time.[23]

Jami's hagiography contains many references to and depictions of *mujahada*. In reference to Husayn al-Sulami, father of the hagiographer, 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami, whom we discussed earlier, Jami states: "He was ever engaged in *mujahada*."[24] Regarding Shaykh Abu Bakr al-Tusi al-Nassaj (d. late eleventh century), traditionally believed to be the teacher of Ahmad al-Ghazali, brother of the celebrated al-Ghazali, Jami relates the following anecdote: "They say that in the beginning of his seeking, he engaged in a

considerable amount of *mujahada*; however, his *mujahada* did not result in *mushahada* (contemplation of God's nearness). He cried out to the Lord and received a responding cry in his innermost heart: 'O Nassaj, be content with the pain of seeking! What business of yours is finding?'"[25] With regard to how Jami employs the term *mujahada* to indicate the spiritual struggle and physical austerities of his subjects, his hagiography adheres consistently to the manner in which the Sufi hagiographical tradition that preceded him developed and portrayed this fundamental concept.

The rich Indo-Persian Sufi hagiographical tradition spans over 500 years and features many works that remain in unedited manuscript form. Though vernacular Sufi literature does exist in native tongues of the subcontinent, Persian remained the primary language of Indo-Islamic culture into the nineteenth century. These Indo-Persian hagiographies contain many examples of the complementary essence of jihad in the Sufi tradition, which reflect the fundamental role Sufis have played in spreading Islam throughout the subcontinent since the twelfth century.

The recently edited *Thamarat al-quds* (*Fruits of Holiness*), composed in India during the late sixteenth/early seventeenth century, is primarily a hagiography of God's friends belonging to the Chishti Sufi order. However, as we have seen in other Sufi hagiographies, *Thamarat al-quds* also contains biographies of earlier Sufi and proto-Sufi figures among its many lives. Regarding the struggle with the lower self, *Thamarat al-quds* consistently employs *mujahada*, rather than jihad, to describe the rigorous spiritual endeavors of God's friends. One such example is the following description of Abu al-Rida'i-yi Ratan following his return from the Hajj: "When he arrived [back in India], he engaged in severe *mujahada* and difficult *riyada* and a great multitude of the sultans, princes, shaykhs, and religious scholars of India … came to converse with him and seek blessings from his breath."[26] In another anecdote from *Thamarat al-quds*, Shaykh Jahangir Jawnpuri of the Suhrawardi Sufi order is said to have been "well acquainted with the wiles and ruses of the demanding self, and thus he ever subjected his lower self to *mujahada* and affliction, and he purified his body in the crucible of *riyada* until he left this world."[27] These examples of *mujahada* accord with the use of the term in the other hagiographies and Sufi writings we have surveyed, further strengthening the thesis that Sufis of the premodern period employed terminology that was invariable and universal to describe the spiritual struggle with the lower self and its passions.

Although Sufis have differed considerably in many other areas of practice, these many examples of purifying and subduing the lower self that are found throughout Sufi hagiographies composed over a 600-year period show that the hagiographical tradition mirrors other Sufi writing in that it adheres to the Sufi convention of using the term *mujahada* to designate the spiritual struggle with the lower self.

Having surveyed all other genres of Sufi writings with regard to analyzing the concept of *mujahada* it but remains for us to consider the ways in which Sufi poetry portrays the struggle with the lower self in order to complete our overview of Sufi literature on this topic.

Mujahada in Sufi Poetry

Persian Sufi poetry, especially *mathnavis* and *ghazals*, contains many references to *mujahada*, *jihad*, and *ghazw*. In the following section, we will examine the concept of *mujahada* in the poetry of the three best-known Persian Sufi poets, Sana'i, Attar, and Rumi. These poets expounded the topic of *mujahada* in their *mathnavis* (extended narratives in rhyming couplets), as well as in their shorter *ghazals* (lyrical poems) and *qasidas* (odes).

Hakim Sana'i (d. 1131) of Ghazna (in modern-day Afghanistan) was the first Persian Sufi poet to transform the *mathnavi*, *ghazal*, and *qasida* into media for expressing Sufi concepts. Though not as well known as Attar and Rumi are in the West, Sana'i remains a revered Sufi poet everywhere Persian was cultivated and the influence of Sana'i on the development of all subsequent Sufi poetry in Persian, as well as Turkic languages, and Indo-Muslim languages is great indeed. Sana'i's *mathnavi*, *Hadiqat al-haqiqa* (*The Garden of Truth*), describes Sufi concepts and practice in individual chapters and illustrates them using anecdotes and parables, which would come to be the standard format of all subsequent Sufi *mathnavis*. Sana'i's poetry contains a number of references to *jihad*, *mujahada*, and *ghazw*, which we will consider in our discussion of the spiritual and martial aspects of jihad as they appear in Persian Sufi poetry. The following excerpt from *Hadiqat al-haqiqa* illustrates the essential role of spiritual struggling in Sufism:

> Although your eyes behold Him not
> Your Creator sees you always
> Remembrance of God exists not
> Save in the path of *mujahada*[28]

"The path of *mujahada*" clearly refers to the struggle against the lower self, which must be subdued before one may tread the Sufi path with the ultimate aim of arriving at the apprehension of God's continual and intense presence. As we mentioned above, Sana'i was the first Sufi poet to develop the *mathnavi* as a medium for expounding Sufi concepts and this example illustrates *Hadiqat al-haqiqa*'s conformity—at least insofar as terminology is concerned—to the Sufi textual tradition in that it employs *mujahada* to denote the spiritual struggle to overcome the lower self. Sana'i's principal spiritual and poetic disciples, to wit Attar and Rumi, continued to develop the *mathnavi* and *ghazal*, which Sana'i had pioneered, as didactic media for Sufi concepts as well as religious precepts of a more general nature. With this in mind, we will now examine the poetry of Attar and Rumi with regard to how they portray the spiritual jihad.

Farid al-Din Attar of Nishapur, who composed the Sufi hagiography, *Tadhkirat al-awliya'*, which we discussed earlier in this chapter, is also one of the greatest Persian Sufi poets. Like his predecessor, Sana'i, Attar composed *ghazals* and *qasidas*, as well as quatrains; however, he is best remembered for his four allegorical *mathnavis*, which represent the zenith of the Persian mystical *mathnavi*. Unlike his predecessor, Sana'i, and his successor, Rumi, Attar composed three of his four *mathnavis* around a frame tale, which provides a much more engaging narrative while adding structure to the compositions, something which could be said to be lacking in the *mathnavis* of Sana'i and Rumi. Attar's finest poetic composition is undoubtedly *The Conference of the Birds* (*Mantiq al-tayr*), which is also one of the masterpieces of classical Persian literature. In *The Conference of the Birds* a group of birds journeys through seven valleys with the hoopoe as their guide, seeking their king, the Simurgh (a mythical bird in pre-Islamic Iranian mythology). At the end of their quest, the 30 birds discover that the Simurgh is themselves (a play on Simurgh and *si murgh*, which means "30 birds" in Persian). Thus, *The Conference of the Birds* describes the Sufi Path allegorically; with the help of their *pir* (Sufi shaykh/guide), represented by the hoopoe, the wayfarers, represented by the birds, reach the stage where they realize that God is the only reality. As we would expect, Attar's poetry also makes reference to *mujahada*, *jihad*, and *ghazw*. An example of *mujahada* appears in the following two lines from an allegorical *ghazal* in Attar's divan:

> In the Valley of Affliction and the Wilderness of Knowledge (*ma'rifat*)
> Where is the consummate man of pure step and will?
> In the ranks of *mujahada* where is there one soul among the leaders,
> Who rides the steed of reliance on God and piety?[29]

These lines seem to echo a common theme in Sufi writing, to wit that there are no longer any Sufis of the caliber of the early generations of Sufis and ascetics. Attar himself mentions this elsewhere, as do other notable Sufi writers (e.g. the oft-repeated lament that "Sufism was a reality without a name, now it is a name without a reality"). The Valley of Affliction and the Wilderness of Knowledge recall the seven valleys the birds traverse in *The Conference of the Birds*. These lines express the difficulty of subduing and purifying the lower self and following the Sufi path. They express doubt regarding the existence of anyone capable of *mujahada*, reliance on God, and piety. While this is probably meant as hyperbole, it does underscore the belief that the Sufi path is not accessible to all and sundry. Attar's use of *mujahada* adheres to the specific meaning of this word that we have encountered throughout the Sufi textual tradition in that it designates the inner spiritual struggle necessary to overcome the lower self and its wiles.

Mawlana Jalal al-Din Balkhi (d. 1273), known as Rumi in the West, is by far the best-known Persian Sufi poet in the English-speaking world and probably the best-known exemplar of Sufism as well. Rumi was most likely born in Vakhsh (in modern-day Tajikistan),[30] lived in Balkh in what is now Afghanistan, and then left Central Asia for Anatolia to escape the coming Mongol invasion that laid waste to the great cities of Khurasan and Transoxiana in the early thirteenth century. The two works of Rumi that are widely available in European languages are the *Mathnavi-yi ma'navi* and the *Divan-i Shams*. Most translations of Rumi contain selections either from the *Mathnavi-yi ma'navi* or the *ghazals* collected in the *Divan-i Shams*, rather than the entire text, owing in part to the great length of these works. Rumi's poetry, like that of his two poetic and spiritual predecessors, Sana'i and Attar, contains numerous references to *mujahada*, *jihad*, and *ghazw*. The following lines, with which a *ghazal* from the *Divan-i Shams* begins, portray the struggle against the lower self, *mujahada*, using martial imagery:

> Engage in *mujahada* and hand-to-hand combat with your lower self
> So that from such battles the state of peace may be succored.[31]

The mortification of the ego is described as a form of combat in this line, and the end result, that is, the purification and subduing of the lower self, is appropriately portrayed as the conclusion of hostilities (*sulh*). As we mentioned in Chap. 3, *sulh*, rather than *salam*, is the term Islamic legal texts employ when referring to the cessation of hostilities with non-Muslims and the acceptance of a temporary peace with them.[32]

Although this *ghazal* develops a metaphor regarding subduing the lower self that is based entirely on martial imagery that would have been familiar to a thirteenth-century Muslim audience, it conforms to the Sufi tradition by using the term *mujahada* to describe this struggle, rather than jihad.

These examples from the poetry of three of the greatest and best-known Sufi poets in the Persian language and the eastern Sufi tradition demonstrate the consistency and uniformity of Sufi terminology—at least with regard to *mujahada*—found in all forms of premodern Sufi literature that we have considered thus far, and it is therefore reasonable to conclude that the terms *mujahada* and *jihad* acquired their separate meanings in the Sufi context during the earliest phase of the development of Sufi doctrine and practice. The term jihad retained its primarily martial connotations in Sufi writings, conforming to its use in Islamic legal texts and canonical *hadith*. However, it appears that from the outset, Sufis employed the term *mujahada* to refer almost exclusively to the spiritual struggle with the lower self, often pairing it with *riyada*, which signifies the physical austerities that complement the spiritual struggle.

Having established the universality of the term *mujahada* to refer to the spiritual struggle in the Sufi context, we will now turn to a discussion of how Sufi hagiography and poetry portray the martial jihad and warfare. In doing so, we will examine the terms *jihad* and *mujahid* as well as *ghazw* and *ghazi* in Sufi literature and how they are used to explain Sufi concepts allegorically, as well as how Sufi hagiography and poetry can furnish us with important sources of premodern Islamic cultural history regarding warfare that is either prescribed (i.e. jihad) or sanctioned (i.e. *ghazw*) by the faith.

The Martial Jihad and *Ghazw* in Sufi Hagiography and Poetry

Depictions of Sufis engaged in martial endeavors occur throughout the Sufi hagiographical tradition as well as in Sufi poetry. Both *jihad* and *ghazw* are also used metaphorically in Sufi poetry. Early examples of Sufi hagiography, for example, Sulami's *Tabaqat al-sufiyya* and Qushayri's *Risala*, do not depict Sufis as warriors; indeed, for the most part, they do not depict Sufis in any kind of anecdotal fashion. As noted heretofore in this chapter, these first examples of Sufi hagiography concentrate on the pious dicta of their subjects, rather than providing narratives of the miraculous and exemplary deeds of God's friends. However, as Sufi hagiography became more narratival and its audience less restricted, anecdotes of Sufis became

multifaceted in that they combined aspects of daily life with wondrous deeds. Thus, anecdotes portraying Sufis involved in a variety of communal endeavors, including Sufis engaging in some aspect of martial activity for the sake of the faith, also became a regular component of the lives of God's friends. Certainly, such jihad-based anecdotes reflected recent historical events, as well as harking back to the early days of warfare and raiding that took place on the frontier with the Byzantines. The early ascetic archetypes, who are also included in the ranks of the first generation of Sufis, were often ascetic *mujahids* who would dwell on the frontier (*thaghr*) in fortified outposts (*ribats*), defending the Muslim territory from Byzantine incursions as well as undertaking raiding expeditions into Byzantine territory.[33] We have already mentioned two of these warrior ascetics, ʿAbd Allah b. al-Mubarak and Ibrahim-i Adham, both of whom lived during the eighth century and therefore could not have been Sufis from a historical perspective, as the Sufi path did not begin to develop until the late tenth/early eleventh centuries in Baghdad and Greater Khurasan.

A more recent historical event in Muslim history that passed quickly into eastern Islamic folklore and thence into Sufi narratives is Mahmud of Ghazna's Indian campaign and the subsequent destruction of the temple of Somnath in Gujarat in 1026. Sultan Mahmud-i Ghazi (i.e. Mahmud the warrior) returned to his capital of Ghazna in modern-day Afghanistan laden with much plunder from his first foray into India, which inspired further campaigns while paving the way for the Muslim conquest of the northern half of the subcontinent. Although it appears that Sultan Mahmud undertook his military expedition to India primarily with plunder in mind, a number of Persian Sufi hagiographies include anecdotes regarding Sufis accompanying Sultan Mahmud on his successful military excursion, which are most likely anachronistic. These anecdotes serve, however, to link Sufis with this important military campaign and the beginning of the spread of Islam in the subcontinent. This is especially significant when we recall that Sufis played a key role in the Islamization of what is now Pakistan, northern and central India, and Bangladesh, where they served as warriors, proselytizers, preachers, and spiritual advisors. It is therefore likely that Indo-Persian Sufi hagiographies portray Sufis as taking part in Sultan Mahmud's initial Indian campaign so as to connect them with the advent of Islam in India. In this, Sufi hagiographers resemble many premodern historians in that they would often rework a narrative regarding a given Sufi's role in an important historical event to express a meaningful version of that event, as they believed it *ought* to have happened. For the

premodern historian, the meaning of an event was more important than mere facts.[34] In other words, the story was "true" if it conveyed something essential regarding how a given culture viewed itself and made sense of its past in relation to its present. The fact that Sufi hagiographies frequently portray the early Muslim ascetic warriors as Sufis and depict Sufi involvement in military campaigns such as Sultan Mahmud's forays into India, shows this historiographical tendency on the part of premodern writers to interpret events and narrate stories in a way that enshrined the fundamental beliefs and practices of their societies.

Jihad and Warfare in Sufi Hagiography

Sufi hagiography contains many references to and portrayals of warfare. The period on which we are concentrating, that is, the eleventh through seventeenth centuries, saw much military activity throughout the Islamic world of both an offensive and defensive nature. This 700-year period witnessed the Crusades, the Reconquista, the Seljuk expansion, the Mongol Invasion, the conquests of Tamerlane, the Ottoman siege and capture of Constantinople, and the establishment of the Mughal Dynasty in India, among other notable events that entailed war and caused much upheaval. It is no wonder then that Sufi hagiography composed during this period offers numerous anecdotes and narratives involving warfare and martial activity.

As we discussed above, Abu Nu'aym al-Isfahani's eleventh-century *Hilyat al-awliya'* is the earliest example of a narratival Sufi hagiography. *Hilyat al-awliya'* is a compendium of the lives and deeds of God's friends, which is not only voluminous in comparison to Sulami's earlier *Tabaqat al-sufiyya* but also provides more extensive anecdotes, while retaining chains of transmission in common with its predecessor.

Hilyat al-awliya' relates a number of anecdotes involving warfare from the life of the early ascetic and *mujahid*, Ibrahim-i Adham, whom we mentioned above. These anecdotes portray Ibrahim not only as a warrior but as an archetype of piety and abstemiousness as well, which accords with his reputation as an ascetic. Ibrahim's companions describe him as traveling on foot during a military campaign, though a horse is available for him. One of his companions entreats him to mount the horse, even going so far as to swear an oath. Ibrahim finally climbs upon the horse's back; however, as soon as he is seated in the saddle, he says to his companion: "I have fulfilled your oath." He then immediately alights from the horse and proceeds to walk the rest of the way.[35] In another

anecdote, Ibrahim refuses to take his share of the spoils and will not eat any of the food taken from the Byzantines,[36] saying: "Although it is religiously licit to eat the food, I am going to abstain from it."[37] He not only insists on eating nothing save the simple fare he has brought with him, he also undertakes supererogatory fasts. He goes to war riding an old horse and refuses his soldier's stipend. All of these anecdotes serve to highlight Ibrahim's extreme piety (*wara'*), which is one of the common attributes of God's friends. However, there is a subtler message in these anecdotes as well, for they depict Ibrahim as an exemplary *mujahid*. Clearly Ibrahim is neither interested in acquiring material wealth from the Muslims' victory in war with the unbelievers, nor is he even interested in his basic physical comfort. He forswears all manner of ease and sustenance, save what he requires to carry out his religious duty, which accords with Muslim legal theory concerning jihad.[38] Ibrahim's abstemious behavior is juxtaposed with that of his companions who indulge in the delicacies they have obtained from despoiling the Byzantines.

In another anecdote from *Hilyat al-awliya'*, Ibrahim is with a company of warriors on a ship when a gale begins to blow. Ibrahim's companions fear they will be drowned when they hear an unseen voice proclaim loudly: "Ibrahim is with you, so why are you afraid?"[39] This anecdote recalls the story from the Gospels concerning Jesus and his disciples on a ship during a storm:

> And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And [Jesus] was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?[40]

Ibrahim, like Jesus in this anecdote from the Gospels, is so favored by God that those with him need not fear a storm at sea. While the Gospel story displays the power of Jesus by having him calm the storm, the anecdote from *Hilyat al-awliya'* implies Ibrahim's potential power over nature. The unseen voice serves to reassure Ibrahim's companions that they are in the presence of one of God's friends while the anecdote confirms Ibrahim's status as such for the audience.

Hilyat al-awliya' also contains many anecdotes from the life of the other early ascetic archetype whom we mentioned previously, 'Abd Allah b. al-Mubarak. The introductory statements regarding 'Abd Allah b. al-Mubarak,

describe him as "closely acquainted with the Qur'an, the Hajj, and jihad."[41] This opening description associates 'Abd Allah with all facets of Islamic piety while also affirming his bravery. By asserting his roles as pilgrim and *mujahid*, the text locates 'Abd Allah among those who actively carry out their duties as Muslims while dispelling any notion that he was a withdrawn mystic concerned only with esoteric matters or matters not directly related to following the *sharia*. Elsewhere, the text emphasizes 'Abd Allah's status as exemplar of jihad by portraying him as a reliable transmitter in the chain of transmission of two well-known *hadith* regarding fighting in God's path:

> … 'Abd Allah b. al-Mubarak … related that the Prophet said: "I have been commanded to fight the people until they testify that there is no god but God and Muhammad is the Messenger of God. And when they testify … their blood and possessions will be unlawful for us …"

> … 'Abd Allah b. al-Mubarak related … that the Prophet said: "The *mujahid* in the path of God is like he who fasts and concerns himself with God's *ayat* (signs) day and night …"[42]

As we discussed previously, the first Sufi hagiographies and treatises were especially concerned with establishing the legitimacy of Sufism within the Islamic tradition; furthermore, the earliest hagiographers were also *muhaddithun*. It is therefore not surprising that important *hadith* are embedded in the earliest hagiographical accounts of the friends of God. Such an association with traditions that espouse warfare for the sake of the faith, a fundamental concept of early Islam, would serve to bolster the status and legitimacy of God's friends as active, pious members of the Muslim community. 'Abd Allah b. al-Mubarak was considered the quintessential *mujahid* in that he combined a rigorous asceticism with an unwavering devotion to the martial jihad, taking part in many campaigns against the Byzantines. The Sufi hagiographical tradition continued to consistently associate 'Abd Allah with jihad; for example, *Tadhkirat al-awliya'* introduces him as "Embodiment of the two jihads," and *al-Kawakib al-durriyya* describes him as "Glory of the *mujahids*."[43] 'Abd Allah b. al-Mubarak's zeal for war with the unbelievers was such that he would take issue with the caliph for not devoting enough energy to his duty to wage jihad.[44] This exemplifies yet another aspect of jihad in the Sufi hagiographical tradition, which we mentioned earlier in relation to

Ansari's statement concerning the three aspects of jihad, that is, the jihad of speaking just words to a tyrant, for which there is a relevant (though, like the greater jihad *hadith*, not universally accepted) *hadith*: "The best jihad is a just word to a tyrannical ruler."[45]

Though not the focus of this chapter, let us pause here to discuss briefly the jihad of confronting rulers of the Muslim community who neglect their duties. There are many examples of God's friends admonishing unjust rulers in hagiography, which symbolically underscores the role of Sufis as guides and protectors of the Muslim community. In this regard, *Hilyat al-awliya'* relates an anecdote concerning Fudayl b. Iyad (d. 803) and the Abbasid caliph, Harun al-Rashid (d. 809). Fudayl was summoned to an audience with the caliph, and upon entering the court, he asked which person was the Commander of the Faithful. The caliph's attendants indicated Harun. Fudayl began admonishing the caliph, saying: "O handsome-faced one! You have been entrusted with the great responsibility of watching over the *umma*. If you do not wish to blacken your handsome face in the flames of Hellfire, then do not misrule or commit injustices!" Harun bade Fudayl advise him, so Fudayl told him that if it was counsel that he sought, he need only turn to the Qur'an to learn how God dealt with those who were just and those who were unjust. The caliph was moved by this counsel and besought Fudayl to return and admonish him again so that he might learn more.[46] In the Arab world, Harun al-Rashid is popularly remembered as the quintessential ruler of the golden age of the Abbasids, when the cosmopolitan city of Baghdad was the center of a flourishing Islamic culture. As a legendary figure, Harun al-Rashid is also one of the best-known characters in the *Arabian Nights*, in which he is generally the quintessential discerning monarch with an acute sense of justice.[47] However, in the Sufi hagiographical tradition, Harun al-Rashid is often the archetype of the less-than-perfect earthly ruler who falls far short of upholding the dictates of his epithet *Amir al-Mu'minin*/ Commander of the Faithful. Harun al-Rashid's interactions with God's friends in Attar's *Tadhkirat al-awliya'*, especially, often result in their upbraiding him for not being a just ruler. Although the term jihad is not used in reference to the interactions of God's friends with caliphs in these anecdotes, the nature of the interactions conforms to the message of the *hadith* quoted above.

Abu Ishaq al-Kazaruni

We began our study in the first chapter with an anecdote from the monographic hagiography, *Firdaws al-murshidiyya*, devoted to the life and deeds of Shaykh Abu Ishaq al-Kazaruni, the eponym of the Kazaruniyya Sufi order. That anecdote relates how the shaykh was able to intervene miraculously from afar and aid the Muslim military expedition that had left Fars for the land of the Byzantines.

As his name would suggest, Shaykh Abu Ishaq al-Kazaruni was from the town of Kazarun in Fars (modern-day Fars Province in Iran). His grandfather had been a Zoroastrian who refused to convert to Islam, though Abu Ishaq's parents did become Muslims. He was born in Kazarun in 963. At that time, the environs of Kazarun remained predominantly Zoroastrian.[48] Abu Ishaq became attracted to Sufism at an early age and eventually established a Sufi hospice (*khanaqah*) in Kazarun where he had many *murids*. He is portrayed in the extant hagiographical sources as an orthodox Muslim with a strong and aggressive disposition.[49] Abu Ishaq is traditionally credited with converting many Zoroastrians and Jews to Islam through vigorous proselytizing in his native Fars. Although a Sufi, Abu Ishaq did not cultivate esoteric knowledge; nor did he develop specific modes or a standard practice for the spiritual training of his *murids*.[50] The hagiographical tradition depicts him as encouraging warfare against non-Muslims and thereby inspiring his followers to carry out military campaigns against the unbelievers in Anatolia.[51] Thus, Abu Ishaq, the eponym of the first Sufi order to develop in Islam, exemplifies few of the characteristics generally associated with Sufism as it is presented in the West; however, the hagiographical depiction of Abu Ishaq does conform to the contemporary discourse of Sufism that we find in the writings of many Muslim scholars writing in Arabic.

During Abu Ishaq's lifetime, the Buyid Dynasty ruled most of present-day western Iran, including Fars, and Mesopotamia in Iraq. The Buyids were a Twelver Shi'ite indigenous Iranian dynasty that had arisen during the brief period of Iranian ascendancy in the eastern Islamic world, after Arab domination under the Abbasids had begun to wane and before the Turkic military dynasties of the Ghaznavids (late tenth century to 1040) and then the Seljuks (1037–1194) came to power. The Samanids who were the first Iranian Muslim dynasty to make Persian the official court language, and whose empire included Khurasan and Transoxiana, were

contemporaries and, at various times, rivals of the Buyids. The Byzantines threatened the Buyids' control of Iraq during much of this period; however, the Buyids were hesitant to wage jihad against the Byzantines, as this was an endeavor, their rivals in Khurasan—who were Sunni Muslims—vigorously supported.[52] Though a resident of Buyid territory, Abu Ishaq was certainly a Sunni and, at least so far as the hagiographical sources are concerned, showed unwavering zeal for encouraging jihad and military campaigns against the Byzantines.

In addition to the anecdote with which this book begins, *Firdaws al-murshidiyya* includes other anecdotes that portray Muslim military campaigns against the Byzantines, one of which describes the outcome of the Muslim warriors' victory. In the following anecdote, the shaykh emphasizes the fundamental reason for waging war against unbelievers:

> Several of the shaykh's companions related that the Friday when the warriors were preparing to leave on a military campaign they came before the shaykh, brandishing their weapons. The shaykh preached to them and encouraged them. He became so caught up with them in their zeal that he snatched a naked sword from the hand of one the warriors and became quite impassioned. He raised the sword aloft and brandishing it, gave a loud cry and spoke thus with terrifying mien: "By the Lord Whom I worship in His oneness! At this moment, if I should behold anyone attributing partners to God Almighty, I would strike his head from his body with this sword, even though I have never killed even a sparrow!"[53]

Although the setting of this anecdote is a company of warriors who are about to depart on a military expedition to harass and despoil the unbelievers, the shaykh's words in his sermon to the warriors emphasize the real reason for embarking on the offensive martial jihad. In his speech and actions, the shaykh makes no mention of spoils or captives; rather, he emphasizes the need to combat unbelievers for associating partners with God (*shirk*), a sin that contradicts the fundamental Islamic belief in God's oneness. The shaykh's declaration that he would strike the unbeliever's head from his body, even though he has never killed a sparrow, serves to remind the audience that the duty of waging jihad in God's path is incumbent on believers, even if fighting is not in their nature, recalling the well-known *hadith* of the Prophet Muhammad, mentioned above: "I have been commanded to fight against the people until they bear witness that there is no god, save God."

The next anecdote from this chapter of *Firdaws al-murshidiyya* describes the more mundane realities of a victorious outcome from battle with the Byzantine Christians. In quite matter-of-fact language, the anecdote describes the aftermath of battle as primarily an opportunity to acquire spoils and captives:

> The army rose and bade the shaykh farewell and went to the border to make war on the unbelievers. When they reached the army of the unbelievers they ranged opposite them, beat their drums, and proceeded to attack. They slew the unbelievers and routed them. They pursued them and killed many of them and plundered them. They took many spoils and captives and then returned in safety. They came before the shaykh, laden with spoils on account of the blessings of the shaykh's grace.[54]

Though we cannot confidently rely upon hagiography as a source for historical facts, hagiography of this kind does furnish us with examples of what are probably accurate portrayals of how such campaigns were carried out. This particular event may not have occurred; nevertheless, it reflects the prevailing attitude of its time regarding warfare against unbelievers and the aftermath of battle.[55] Moreover, by according the victory and the subsequent spoils attained thereby to the power of the shaykh, the narrative highlights the role of Sufis in inspiring and guiding military endeavors for the sake of the faith.

Earlier in this chapter, we examined the concept of *mujahada* in *Asrar al-tawhid*, which concerns the life and deeds of Abu Sa'id Abu'l-Khayr. This monographic hagiography from the twelfth century also includes an anecdote that mentions Sufis as warriors. In this anecdote, it is said that a Sufi shaykh led a group of Sufis on a military campaign against the Byzantines. One day, while wending his way in that "abode of war," the shaykh saw the Devil (*Iblis*) there and said to him: "O Accursed One! What are you doing here among these people who are no concern of yours?" Iblis replied: "I've landed here by no will of my own … I was passing through Mayhana when Shaykh Abu Sa'id was leaving the mosque for home. While he was on his way, he sneezed, which blew me here."[56] Admittedly, the main point of this anecdote is the great power of Abu Sa'id as friend of God, who is able to overpower the Devil with a sneeze; nevertheless, as with the above anecdotes regarding Abu Ishaq and the military campaigns against the Byzantines, this anecdote reflects at least the memory of the reality of the ongoing jihad against the Byzantines

during the Abbasid period. Whether or not it is historically accurate in its inclusion of a company of Sufis from Khurasan engaging in war against the Byzantines is not the point; the hagiography portrays Sufis as warriors because many Sufis did indeed share in the communal duty of the martial jihad against the foes of Islam and portraying them as such exemplified their adherence to all aspects of the *sharia*.

Warfare in *Tadhkirat al-awliya'*

Attar's *Tadhkirat al-awliya'* includes a number of anecdotes in which God's friends take part in warfare against unbelievers, one of which, from the life of Junayd, we read in the introduction, following the anecdote from Abu Ishaq's life. In the life of Shaqiq-i Balkhi (d. 810), Attar relates an anecdote illustrating the ascetic's fearlessness in battle. In the anecdote, Shaqiq's *murid*, Hatim al-Asamm (d. 851–52), tells of a battle in which he and Shaqiq fought side by side. Though the battle was so intense that "one could see nothing save one's spearhead while arrows were flying through the air," Shaqiq compared the way he felt in the thick of battle to the way his companion must have felt while in bed with his wife. When night fell, Shaqiq lay down between the lines and fell asleep wrapped only in his patched Sufi cloak.[57]

Shaqiq-i Balkhi was traditionally known for exemplifying complete reliance on God (*tawakkul*), a concept Sufis have embraced as fundamental to the Sufi path. In typical hagiographical form, this anecdote portrays Shaqiq engaging in an extreme form of *tawakkul*, which underscores his status as friend of God, as well as reminding the audience that God alone sustains us and provides for all our needs. It also suggests Shaqiq's zeal for fighting the unbelievers when it compares how he feels in the midst of battle to the enjoyment and comfort of lying in bed with one's wife.

In another anecdote, Shaqiq is sitting with a gathering of his *murids* when a host of unbelievers attacks the town. Upon hearing the alarm, Shaqiq went forth and vanquished the enemy, then returned to his gathering. One of his *murids* placed a nosegay of flowers at Shaqiq's feet. Shaqiq picked up the nosegay and inhaled its fragrant scent. An ignorant passerby upbraided Shaqiq for cowardice, saying: "an army is at the town's doorstep and the Shaykh is smelling flowers!" Shaqiq replied: "Hypocrites see everything as smelling flowers but the defeat of an army they see not."[58] In this anecdote, Shaqiq uses his extraordinary power to rout the enemy army that has attacked the town in which he is living, which confirms his

status as one of God's friends. The hypocrite in this anecdote symbolizes those Muslims who were critical of Sufis and doubted their sincerity and adherence to the *sharia*. Shaqiq vindicates the role of Sufis in Muslim society by having already defeated the host of unbelievers when he is criticized for having done nothing. The critic is shown as seeing only the surface of the reality of the Sufi path, which Shaqiq embodies, and thus criticizes something he is incapable of understanding.

Tadhkirat al-awliya' also makes use of humor and irony on occasion to emphasize an important lesson. In one such example, Malik al-Dinar (d. 748), traditionally reckoned one of the *Tabi'un* and an important narrator of *hadith*, tells how he had wished for years to take part in a military expedition against the unbelievers. When he finally got his chance, however, he came down with a fever on the day of battle, which rendered him unable to fight. He retired to bed, lamenting his circumstances and exclaimed: "O body! If you were only nearer to God you would not have been stricken with this fever." While lying in bed, Malik heard an unseen voice, saying: "If you had gone forth to battle today you would have been captured and the unbelievers would have given you pork. If you had eaten the pork you too would have become an unbeliever, so this fever has been a great blessing to you." Malik arose from his bed and gave thanks to God.[59] This anecdote illustrates the zeal with which the sincere believer ideally endeavors to take part in the communal duty of jihad. As one of God's friends, Malik exemplifies not only the inner spiritual aspects of the Sufi path but also adherence to the *sharia* and the duties it enjoins on Muslims. It is also a reminder that what God has decreed for his servants is sometimes inscrutable but always for the best.

In another anecdote from *Tadhkirat al-awliya'*, Ahmad Khidravayh of Balkh (d. 854) also wishes to take part in a military campaign, and his lower self, which he has spent much time subduing, encourages him to do so. One day, a group of warriors was leaving for a military campaign. Ahmad longed to go with them and his lower self began narrating *hadith* to him, expounding the merits of warfare against the unbelievers. Ahmad was amazed but realized that this could only be a ruse of his wily lower self to convince him to break the perpetual state of fast he had been keeping. Ahmad said to his lower self: "I will not break the fast while traveling!" "That is fair," replied his lower self. Ahmad was taken aback and wondered whether his lower self was perhaps hoping for an end to the nightly prayer vigils that kept him from getting any sleep, so he said: "I will keep you awake till morning!" To Ahmad's surprise, his lower self agreed to this

condition as well. Ahmad wondered whether his lower self was hoping to mix with other men during the campaign on account of having grown tired of being alone, so he said to it: "Wherever I alight I will isolate you and I will not sit with people!" His lower self replied that this was also a fair condition. At this point, Ahmad was at a loss and believed himself powerless to do anything, so he besought God to preserve him from the wiles of his lower self. God heard Ahmad's prayer and caused his lower self to confess to him:

> Contrary to my wishes, you slew me one hundred times every day and the people knew nothing about your effort, whereas while engaging in warfare I might be killed at once and find release from these tribulations and then the whole world would praise me, saying: "Well done, Ahmad Khidravayh! They have slain him and he has attained the honor of martyrdom!" Thus, Ahmad concluded that his lower self was an inveterate hypocrite and would continue to be so after death. Realizing that his lower self would neither submit in this world nor in the hereafter he resolved to continue opposing it violently.[60]

This anecdote concerning Ahmad Khidravayh and the struggle with his lower self illustrates two important concepts. The first is that the struggle with the lower self is indeed the most demanding form of jihad, for, as we discussed earlier in the excerpts from the treatises of 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani and 'Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi, it is the most difficult struggle one may undertake, in that it requires constant effort and vigilance. The second and, perhaps, less obvious Islamic precept that this anecdote suggests is the importance of carrying out jihad for the right reasons, that is, " … that the Word of God shall alone prevail … " and not for selfish concerns, which, in Ahmad's case, are the desire for an end—through death in battle—to the constant austerities he imposes on his lower self, and the praise that attends martyrdom.

Other Depictions of Sufis as Warriors in Early Hagiography

Earlier in this chapter, we examined how *Hazar hikayat-i sufiyan* separates the martial struggle from the spiritual struggle in terms of both scripture quoted and organization of the relevant chapters. *Hazar hikayat-i sufiyan* contains a number of illuminating anecdotes regarding attitudes toward engaging in warfare with unbelievers, several of which we will now consider.

The first anecdote in the chapter dealing with jihad and warfare, relates the miraculous events surrounding a band of Sufis who embark on a military campaign, as told by their shaykh, a certain Abu'l-Hasan al-Tusi.[61] The text describes Abu'l-Hasan as a *mujahid* and servant of God who was completely devoted to worship and jihad.[62] On one occasion, Abu'l-Hasan and his *murids* went on jihad with another group of Muslim warriors. Abu'l-Hasan had five *murids* in particular who would always accompany him when he would go forth to war. On this campaign, the five *murids* were martyred, save one. When the warriors returned to Tarsus, the surviving *murid* began spending each day sitting by himself and weeping. Finally, Abu'l-Hasan told him that he should not lament the loss of his companions, for they had achieved martyrdom. The *murid* replied that he was lamenting his own ill fortune on account of the wonder he had beheld during the battle. Abu'l-Hasan asked him what it was he saw and the *murid* replied: "While the unbelievers and the Muslims were battling one another, I looked aloft and beheld a dome of white pearl and seated upon it were five houris who were attending to each of my martyred companions."[63] The *murid* then related how the houris had borne aloft each companion one by one, washed him and then seated him on the dome, until all four were seated there together with the houris. The *murid* told the Shaykh that he was confident the fifth houri was waiting for him, and so he said to himself: "There is no doubt that this houri is mine and that I will also join my companions." Heartened by what he just beheld, the *murid* boldly hurled himself against the ranks of the unbelievers; however, instead of dying a martyr, he was astonished to see a youth come toward him from among the unbelievers, saying: "Expound the declaration of faith to me!" The *murid* did so, and the youth became a Muslim forthwith. The youth then turned to face the unbelievers and proceeded to fight valiantly until they finally slew him. The fifth houri then bore him aloft and the houris and martyred Sufis vanished. The *murid* told the Shaykh that this was the reason for his weeping and lamentation, for he had also hoped to be among the martyrs that day. Immediately after the *murid* had finished telling his story, a trumpet was sounded, proclaiming the approach of the unbelievers, so the Muslims hastened out to face them. Abu'l-Hasan looked aloft and beheld that very dome and his four *murids* as well as the new Muslim seated upon it. He also beheld another houri with an ewer and washcloth. His *murid* said: "O Shaykh, look aloft so that you too will see what I have seen!" Having spoken these words, the *murid* entered the fray and became a martyr. As the houris were bearing his soul to the dome he spoke the following words: "We found that which we sought and attained that which we desired, blessed be the martyr!"[64]

This anecdote resembles the second anecdote we read in the introduction, that is, the story of Junayd and his nine *murids*. The Sufi warrior who sees a heavenly agent while he is engaged in fighting and assumes that he is soon destined for martyrdom, only to discover that he is to assist in the conversion of one of the unbeliever warriors who then becomes a martyr, is a common motif in Sufi hagiography. This anecdote differs, however, from the anecdote concerning Junayd in that it repeats the phrase, "in warfare and jihad" (*andar ghaza va jihad*), which is also in the title of the chapter in *Hazar hikayat-i sufiyan* that contains this anecdote. The coupling of these two terms and the repetition thereof make it clear that the text considers jihad and warfare martial concepts that while separate endeavors are nevertheless related. While the terms *ghaza* and *ghazw* and *ghazi* are more common in Sufi hagiography, *jihad* and *mujahid* are certainly not uncommon. The ten anecdotes in this chapter serve to remind the audience of the important martial role Sufis have played in Muslim society while also defining warfare for the sake of the faith as a key aspect of Islam. In addition to furnishing examples of Sufis carrying out these religious duties, this chapter also narrates anecdotes regarding the Prophet, his Companions, and one of the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs either taking part in or directing martial endeavors. In this way, the text connects the deeds of Sufi warriors with those of their spiritual forebears, showing an unbroken tradition of valor and a pious martial ethos, which the Sufis uphold and exemplify. A good example of this is found in the eighth anecdote in the chapter on jihad and warfare. This anecdote narrates the search of one of Bayazid's *murids* for Abu 'Abd Allah al-Nibaji, whom Bayazid had described to the *murid* as having attained the highest rank among men through reliance on God and jihad. The *murid* sought and eventually found Abu 'Abd Allah and questioned him regarding his miraculous insight concerning the unbelievers. Abu 'Abd Allah replied: "The *mujahids* are the confidants of God and … behold the enemies' secrets in their breasts." The *murid* then asked Abu'Abd Allah how he had attained the confidence of God and Abu 'Abd Allah replied that he became God's confidant through following the two professions of the Prophet, namely, poverty and jihad.[65] Abu 'Abd Allah's final words recall the *hadith*: "Indeed I have two professions, whoever loves them, loves me; whoever hates them, hates me. The two professions are poverty and jihad." Thus, the narrative conveys the message of this *hadith* through the actions of Abu 'Abd Allah while also affirming the Sufis' adherence to the Prophet's *sunna*.

The final anecdote, which is related in the chapter regarding warfare and jihad, addresses the complementary nature of the martial and spiritual struggles, without, however, referring to them as the greater and lesser jihads. In this anecdote the narrator relates a curious event that occurred while he was engaged in warfare with the unbelievers. The Muslims were facing the ranks of unbelievers when a warrior came out from their ranks, wishing to do battle. Many of the Muslim warriors accepted his challenge; however, this warrior of the unbelievers overcame and slew each of his challengers. The Muslims became discouraged on account of this seemingly unstoppable champion and feared that they would be routed. All at once, a handsome youth with long black hair came out from the ranks of the Muslims. He challenged the champion of the unbelievers and fought with him till he defeated him; he then proceeded to slay every unbeliever who came forth and finally hurled himself against their ranks, putting them to flight. The Muslims rejoiced at their victory and took much plunder; however, the young Muslim champion withdrew from his fellows. The narrator approached the youth to praise him but was surprised to see that he was unhappy and shedding copious tears, so he said to him: "O young man! God has caused this victory to occur by your hand and made you the reason for Islam's triumph! The Muslims have defeated the unbelievers on account of your strength and thereby gained plunder and spoils, so why do you weep?" The youth replied: "If you understood what the matter was with me you would also weep for me." The narrator asked the youth to explain the reason for his weeping and the young man replied that although he had captured the army of the unbelievers, he remained the prisoner of his passions. The youth then uttered a sigh, left the narrator, and went into the wilderness.[66] The youth's sadness on account of his not having defeated his lower self exemplifies the Sufi belief in the two aspects of jihad and their complementary nature. Though he is successful in battle and has fulfilled the outward communal duty of vanquishing the army of the unbelievers, the youthful champion has not succeeded in overcoming his lower self, and therefore, his jihad is incomplete. That the story ends with the young man withdrawing and showing no interest in sharing in the spoils of victory, as well as his going into the wilderness, which suggests solitude and hardship, indicates his intention to engage in *mujahada* and *riyada* in order to carry out the spiritual struggle and thereby vanquish his lower self.

At the beginning of this chapter, we stated that many early Sufi treatises contain hagiographical material. Though not a work of hagiography, *Qut*

al-qulub (*the Sustenance of the Hearts*), attributed to Abu Talib al-Makki (d. 996), is an influential early Sufi treatise that includes many hagiographical anecdotes regarding Sufis. One such anecdote from the chapter concerning purity of intent, describes the less-than-meritorious behavior of a Sufi who is fighting the unbelievers. The Sufi was taking part in a military campaign when one of his companions showed him a feedbag for a horse. He decided to buy the feedbag, telling himself that he could use it till the end of the campaign and then sell it and make a profit. That night he beheld, as if in a dream, two individuals descending from heaven and one of them said to other: "Write that so-and-so went forth on jihad to amuse himself; so-and-so went forth as a hypocrite; so-and-so went forth as a merchant; so-and-so went forth to wage jihad in God's path." Then he looked at the Sufi and said: "Write that this fellow went forth as a merchant." At this the Sufi became quite distraught and told the two heavenly figures that he did not go forth on jihad as a merchant and that his only motivation was to wage war against the unbelievers. To this, the first of the heavenly figures replied: "O Shaykh, yesterday, you bought a feedbag in the hope of making a profit." The Sufi wept and exclaimed: "Please don't write that I went forth as a merchant!" The heavenly figure then said to his companion: "Write that this fellow went forth as a warrior, but that on his way he bought a feedbag, hoping to make a profit. God will judge him however He deems fit."[67] As with many of the other anecdotes we have examined regarding jihad, this one also exemplifies the necessity of carrying out military endeavors against unbelievers with no thought for material gain or renown. Although the Sufi in this anecdote has taken part in jihad, his effort is tainted by his desire for money, indicating that he has not successfully overcome his lower self.

We have read descriptions of *mujahada* in the monographic hagiography *Dastur al-jumhur* that concerns the life of Bayazid. In addition to depicting the spiritual struggle and austerities of this Sufi archetype, *Dastur al-jumhur* portrays Bayazid as a *mujahid* fighting against the unbelievers, as well as using jihad imagery to explain Sufi concepts. In an anecdote regarding Bayazid's youthful endeavors, the friend of God describes the time he spent among various groups of Muslims—religious scholars, pilgrims, et cetera—as well as *mujahids*: "For a time I associated with the *mujahids*, drew my sword, and slew unbelievers …."[68] The time Bayazid spends among these different sectors of Muslim society in his formative years represents his consummate experience in all areas of prescribed Muslim practice. His association with the religious scholars symbolizes his

knowledge of the Qur'an, *hadith*, and *sunna* of the Prophet; his association with pilgrims signifies his having gone on the Hajj; his time as a *mujahid* alludes to his having taken part in military campaigns for the sake of expanding and safeguarding the faith. In other words, Bayazid epitomizes all the aspects of outward Muslim godliness as well as exemplifying inner Sufi spiritual practice. In another section, the text uses the imagery of warfare against unbelievers to explain *dhikr* (remembrance) in the context of Qur'an 2:152 (*Therefore, remember Me; I shall remember you; be ye grateful to Me and deny Me not*):

> At first, God teaches his servant remembrance by means of His grace and then the servant [having attained] the station of "*Remember Me*" remembers God. After this, God remembers the servant according to his decree "*I will remember you.*" At first, one fights the unbeliever with the sword so that the unbeliever becomes a Muslim; after this, [the unbeliever], who has become a Muslim, wishes to renounce Islam, [so] they threaten him with the sword in order that he remain in Islam.[69]

The principal idea in this section is that the one seeking God (i.e. the Sufi wayfarer) is first sought by God, Who then maintains the seeker's remembrance of Him by remembering the seeker. While this example of martial imagery is allegorical it indicates the familiarity of its intended audience with such actions.

The aforementioned Indo-Persian *Thamarat al-quds*, which primarily concentrates on the Chishti order, contains manifold anecdotes that portray Sufis as warriors. The first such anecdote deals with Mahmud of Ghazna's famous campaign against the unbelievers of Somnath in Gujarat and is similar in certain respects to the anecdote concerning Abu Ishaq al-Kazaruni with which the introduction to this book begins. The anecdote relates that Khwaja Muhammad Chishti (d. 1030) accompanied Sultan Mahmud when he conquered Somnath in Gujarat. The unbelievers were on the point of defeating the Muslims, so Khwaja Muhammad Chishti called out to one of his *murids* who was in Chisht (near Herat in modern-day Afghanistan), summoning him to Somnath. The *murid* appeared and helped defeat the unbelievers. Those who were in Chisht that day saw the *murid* pick up a staff of wood and proceed to strike doors, walls, and various other things with it. Those who witnessed this event wondered at the *murid*'s actions. However, in the end, they learned that he was assisting in the Sultan's conquest of Somnath.[70] This anecdote serves to establish the power of Khwaja Muhammad Chishti and thereby the legitimacy of the

Chishti order. It also symbolically links a Chishti Sufi with the coming of Islam to India, a motif that we considered earlier in this chapter. Though it is unlikely that this anecdote contains much historical fact, it does symbolically represent the significant role Sufis have played in spreading Islam throughout the Indian subcontinent. Other Sufi hagiographies such as Jami's *Nafahat al-uns* portray Khwaja Muhammad in a similar fashion, saying: "He waged jihad against the unbelievers and idol worshippers."[71]

Other anecdotes in *Thamarat al-quds* portray Chishti Sufis as fearless warriors, many of whom achieve martyrdom in battle with the unbelievers, for example, "Nizam al-Din … girt himself with a sword, mounted a horse … fiercely resisted the unbelievers and sent many of them to Hell. In the end, he fell from a wound he received from one of the unbelievers."[72] "Shaykh 'Aziz Allah … went to Gujarat" … and there he slew many of the sinful unbelievers … he fought unceasingly and was martyred in that battle.[73]

Among the many anecdotes that Badakhshi relates in *Thamarat al-quds* concerning Sufi involvement in warfare, one in particular provides an interesting explanation of the greater jihad *hadith*. In this anecdote, an invading "Tatar host" has forded the waters of Lahore and arranged themselves before the ranks of the Muslims. Before engaging their foes in battle, "the warriors of Islam … arranged themselves for prayer on the battlefield of jihad, for [Muhammad]—upon whom be peace—likened jihad to prayer, saying: 'We have returned from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad.' After praying, the Muslim warriors gave their battle cry: '*Allahu akbar*' " … and caused many ranks of the Mongol horsemen to fall beneath their swords."[74] This interpretation of the greater jihad *hadith* encapsulates the Sufi understanding of jihad as having an inner and outer aspect, which are complementary. Here, the greater jihad, in the form of the obligatory prayer, immediately precedes and prepares the Muslim warriors to engage selflessly in combat with the enemies of Islam on the "battlefield of [the lesser] jihad."

What all of these hagiographical accounts have in common with regard to the martial jihad is their depiction of Sufis and early ascetics as exemplary warriors who combine selfless action with piety and bravery, evincing their having first purified themselves through *mujahada* and *riyada*. The spiritual jihad or *mujahada* is either implied or stated as a prerequisite for their going forth as *mujahids* in war against the foes of Islam. Though it is likely that the majority of these anecdotes do not offer much in the way of verifiable historical facts, they do offer insight into how the authors of these hagiographies wished to portray God's friends and Sufis in general.

Jihad and Warfare in Sufi Poetry

Having surveyed how Sufi treatises, *tafsir*, letters, and hagiography (in short, every important genre of Sufi literature) have discussed and portrayed the martial jihad, it but remains for us to discuss how Sufi poetry, which many regard as the most sublime genre of Sufi writing, has depicted the martial jihad and military campaigns. While the martial jihad and warfare are not a central theme of most Sufi poetry, jihad and *ghazi* imagery occurs frequently enough in all genres of Sufi poetry (i.e. quatrains, *ghazals*, *qasidas*, and *mathnavis*) to merit discussion and analysis thereof. This is especially important with regard to the many popular and scholarly collections of Sufi poetry available in English and other European languages in that these contain very few examples of jihad and *ghazi* imagery. The works of all the major Sufi poets we have discussed thus far contain martial imagery and present anecdotes concerning warfare; for this reason we will devote the rest of this chapter to looking at the salient examples of jihad and *ghazw* these works contain.

The eleventh-century Sufi of Khurasan, Abu Sa'id Abu'l-Khayr, whom we previously discussed in this chapter, is significant in the development of Sufism for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is his use of Persian quatrains to express Sufi concepts. The quatrains attributed to Abu Sa'id provide what are probably the earliest example of much of the allegorical and symbolic language of Persian Sufi poetry that would come to be universally adopted by subsequent Sufi poets composing poetry in Persian as well as other languages.[75] Some of the quatrains traditionally attributed to Abu Sa'id contain references to the Islamic military ethos of his era. The following examples make use of *ghazi* imagery:

> It is easy for me to be on the point of a dagger
> Or to be headless on account of my own desire
> You have come to kill an unbeliever
> A *ghazi* such as you makes it pleasant to be an unbeliever.[76]

> The *ghazi* treads the path of martyrdom
> Not knowing that the martyr of love is superior to him
> On the morrow of resurrection how may the one resemble the other?
> For one is slain by the foe, and the other by the friend.[77]

The first quatrain refers to the Beloved (i.e. God) as a warrior by whom the lover (i.e. the speaker of the poem) is willing to be slain. The second quatrain expresses the twofold meaning of martyrdom, contrasting the outward meaning of death as a martyr in battle with the symbolic death of the self through annihilation (*fana'*) in God, Whom the quatrain refers to as "the friend." While the use of the term *ghazi* is undeniably allegorical in both of these quatrains, it confirms the reality of *ghazis* and military campaigns in the Muslim society of Greater Khurasan during the eleventh century. According to the hagiographical sources, Abu Sa'id relied on quatrains (rather than Islamic scripture in Arabic) to teach those who attended his sermons in his native Mayhana. Presumably, his congregation consisted primarily of lay folk (i.e. people who were neither Sufis nor religious scholars), many of whom only knew the local dialect of Persian and would not have understood complex allegory and arcane Sufi terminology. Therefore, Abu Sa'id's use of metaphor and allegory would have had to be accessible, because to be meaningful a metaphor must be commonly understood. We may presume that everyone would have understood a reference to *ghazis* killing unbelievers, because that is primarily what *ghazis* did. As noted previously, corporations of *ghazis* had been present in Greater Khurasan and Transoxiana since at least the Samanid period (819–999) and continued to be active throughout the subsequent Ghaznavid and Seljuk periods (i.e. till the end of the twelfth century). That Abu Sa'id made reference in the poetry he composed for didactic and spiritual purposes to *ghazis* killing unbelievers indicates his and his audience's familiarity with such actions.

Sana'i, whom we discussed earlier, lived a century after Abu Sa'id in what is now eastern Afghanistan. Like the quatrains of his predecessor, Sana'i's poetry also contains many examples of jihad imagery and references to warfare, some of which are allegorical, and others clearly not. In a *ghazal* regarding the Sufi's singular devotion to loving God, the speaker describes his devotion in martial terms: "I have prepared my soul and heart for the sake of love, while I exist jihad is my work and while I live the *ribat* is my trade."[78] In the context of jihad, *ribat* could mean either "preparing a horse for battle" or "taking up a military post on the enemy's border";[79] later it also acquired the meaning of a Sufi hospice or inn, owing, perhaps, to the earlier meaning of a frontier post. Though these terms are allegorical in the context of this poem, their primary military meaning is unequivocal. The first hemistich also contains the Arabic word *sabil*, recalling the Qur'anic phrase "*jihad fi sabil Allah*," which further

adds to the military imagery of this line. That the poetry of both Abu Sa'id and Sana'i compares the devotion of the Lover (i.e. the Sufi) to the Beloved (i.e. God) to the devotion of the *ghazi* or *mujahid* to fighting in God's path, indicates the attitude of Sufis regarding military activity as something customary, while also underscoring the complementary nature of the inner and outer aspects of jihad.

Sana'i's *mathnavi*, *Hadiqat al-haqiqa*, while dealing primarily with spiritual concepts, also encourages the duty of engaging in the martial jihad and *ghazw*. Sana'i emphasizes the Prophet's role as exemplar for both Sufis and *mujahids* when he alludes to the *hadith* discussed heretofore in the following description of Muhammad: "In this world of corruption, his occupations were poverty (*faqr*) and *jihad*."[80] Poverty and a life of simplicity embody the Sufi concept of complete reliance on God; indeed, another term for a Sufi is *faqir*, one who is poor. A Sufi interpretation of the Prophet's jihad would also embrace the complementary martial and spiritual aspects, with poverty precluding undertaking jihad for personal gain, for embracing poverty indicates the stage of having overcome the lower self and its desire for acquiring wealth. In describing the Prophet, Sana'i refers to his miracles as "Sword and Qur'an," which symbolize his role as both bringer of God's word and paragon of jihad.[81] Elsewhere in the section devoted to praising the Prophet, Sana'i quotes the Qur'an in the context of a bellicose admonition:

> "Kill the unbelievers!"[82] How much more of this "You have your religion and I have mine?"[83]
> Break the neck and back of the unbelievers, tear out the root of unbelief from this world
> Stain your blade red with the enemy's blood, you will become great when the enemy is abased.[84]

This section of the poem could be said to express the principle of abrogation, which we previously discussed in Chap. 3, in that it juxtaposes the command "Kill the unbelievers" from the aya of the sword in *Surat al-Tawba*, traditionally considered the final revelation concerning warfare with non-Muslims, with the considerably less aggressive "You have your religion and I have mine" from the early Meccan *Surat al-Kuffar* (the unbelievers). *Surat al-Kuffar* is traditionally believed to have been revealed during the period when the Muslims were few in number and thus vulnerable to persecution on the part of the Quraysh tribe that

controlled Mecca. These lines from Sana'i's *Hadiqat al-haqiqa* clearly exhibit a preference for the aggressive words of the later *aya* to the message of coexistence found in the earlier *aya*, which is in accordance with the principle of later revelation superseding earlier revelation with regard to practical execution of doctrine.

In another section of *Hadiqat al-haqiqa*, practical reference to jihad also occurs in a section dealing with the second Caliph, Umar (d. 644). Umar is traditionally believed to have been a companion of the Prophet and a staunch warrior in many of the early battles between the Muslims and the pagan Arab tribes. In this section, Umar relates the three essential characteristics of the Muslim: jihad, obedience to God, and fidelity in dealing with his coreligionists. The first characteristic Umar mentions is jihad: "We hasten from time to time on God's path and seek *jihad*, and we are happy treading the path of warfare (*ghazw*)."[85] In these lines, the term jihad clearly denotes military action, especially as it is coupled with the term *ghazw*, the only meaning of which is warfare or raiding. This anecdote regarding Umar's emphasis on the duties of jihad and warfare provides yet another example of how Sufi writings have consistently enjoined both the inner and outer aspects of Islam. It also offers an example of how didactic Sufi poetry returns to events and archetypes in Islamic sacred history to illustrate important lessons.

The thirteenth-century Sufi poet Jalal al-Din-i Balkhi, or Rumi, is by far the most famous Persian Sufi poet. As noted earlier, Rumi's poetry is probably the best known and certainly the most accessible Sufi poetry in English, owing to the many translations available. Rumi was prolific and composed poetry dealing with Sufi concepts and fundamental Islamic practice; his poetry, especially his *Mathnavi-yi ma'navi*, also contains much material regarding thirteenth-century Muslim culture and Perso-Islamic folklore. Like his Sufi-poet predecessors, Rumi's poetry also discusses jihad, *ghazis*, and warfare. Book Five of the *Mathnavi-yi ma'navi* relates an extensive anecdote that concerns a certain insincere Sufi and his desire to take part in jihad against the unbelievers. This Sufi is conceited and deluded by the admiration the common folk have for him on account of his show of outward piety. Although he has never experienced the true spiritual states of the Sufi nor conquered his lower self, he considers himself a great exponent of the spiritual jihad and decides to accompany some *ghazis* on a campaign against the unbelievers, believing the martial jihad will be easy for him. However, when he hears the din and clamor of battle, he becomes afraid and decides to stay behind with the baggage. After the

battle, the victorious Muslim warriors return bearing spoils taken from the unbelievers whom they have defeated, a portion of which they give to the craven Sufi. The Sufi becomes angry and refuses to accept any part of the spoils. When the warriors ask him why he is angry he responds that he has been deprived of taking part in the fighting. So they say to him: " … we have brought a prisoner, take him and kill him. Cut off his head that you too may become a *ghazi*."[86] The Sufi is pleased and emboldened by this offer and takes the prisoner, whose hands are bound, behind the tent in order to take part in the military campaign by killing the unbeliever. However, the Sufi remains behind the tent with the prisoner for such a long time that the warriors begin to wonder what is going on, for "an unbeliever with his two hands bound should be easy to kill."[87] When they go behind the tent, they find the unbeliever on top of the Sufi with his beard drenched in the Sufi's blood, biting the latter's throat. The warriors kill the unbeliever with their swords and then restore the Sufi to consciousness by sprinkling water on his face. They ask him how such a thing could have happened and he tells them that the prisoner began rolling his eyes, which terrified him, causing him to lose consciousness. The warriors upbraid the Sufi for his faintheartedness and ask him how he thinks he could stand among the fiercest warriors "for whose swords the foe's head is like a ball" and they tell him that in war one sees "many a headless body still trembling and many a bodiless head [floating] upon blood like a bubble." Disgusted by the Sufi's cowardice, the warriors conclude that he could never be of any use on the battlefield, for how could he draw his sword and face the enemy when he loses his wits so easily upon seeing a bound captive?[88]

This story illustrates the Sufi understanding of the complementary nature of the spiritual and martial jihad and the idea that genuine Sufis who have overcome the lower self make the best warriors for the faith. The Sufi discussed herein has fallen prey to his lower self rather than vanquishing it and is thus susceptible to vulgar praise as well as cowardice on the battlefield. If he were sincere and had truly conquered his lower self, he would seek neither status nor material gain and would fight fearlessly against the unbelievers.

It is worth discussing briefly the terminology used in this story, as it conforms to the pattern we have seen in other Sufi writings. The paragraph in prose that serves as an introduction to this story describes the insincere Sufi as "not having engaged in *mujahada*" but "foolishly believing himself a *mujahid* … joins the *ghazis*."[89] By not having engaged in *mujahada*, the

text means to say that the Sufi in the story has not overcome his lower self and is therefore unfit to be a *mujahid* and take part in the *ghazis*' military campaign. The text refers to the captive unbeliever as a "*kafir*" with the exception of one line in which he is described as a "*gabr*," a term that generally (though by no means always) designates a Zoroastrian.

Heretofore in our survey of jihad in Sufi poetry we have read examples that belong exclusively to the tradition of Persian Sufi poetry. The reason for this is that Persian played a much greater role in the development of the early Sufi poetic tradition than did Arabic or other Islamic languages. This does not mean, however, that there were no Sufi poets of merit who composed poetry in languages other than Persian. For this reason, it is befitting that we consider the poetry of Ibn al-Farid (d. 1235) in our discussion of jihad in Sufi poetry, as he was the most notable early Sufi poet to compose mystical poetry in Arabic.

Not much is known regarding the biography of ʻUmar Ibn al-Farid. The traditional sources say that he was born in Cairo in 1181 during the reign of the celebrated Salah al-Din, anti-Crusader and founder of the Ayyubid Dynasty that would rule Egypt, the Hejaz, and much of the Levant till 1260. He is said to have left Cairo for Mecca after encountering one of God's friends at the gate of the Sayfiyya College in Cairo. This friend of God informed Ibn al-Farid that the time of his illumination had arrived and that he must leave Egypt and journey to the sacred cities of the Hejaz. Ibn al-Farid dwelt 15 years in the Hejaz before returning to Egypt. In 1231 he made the pilgrimage to Mecca and died four years later in Cairo where he is buried in the Qarafa cemetery.[90]

The poetry of Ibn al-Farid is allegorical and often difficult to understand, owing to his use of abstract metaphor in his descriptions of the Sufi path. In terms of imagery, the poetry of Ibn al-Farid owes a great deal to the pre-Islamic poetic tradition as well as to the Abbasid-era wine poetry of the ninth century. In his representation of mystical love Ibn al-Farid also owes much to the earlier ʻUdhri tradition of Arabic poetry.[91] His monumental *Poem of the Sufi Way*, which consists of 759 lines, is one of the most significant poems regarding the spiritual and mystical aspects of the Sufi path in the Arabic language and inspired later Sufis to write commentaries devoted to explicating its content.

With regard to the topic of our study, Line 236 of the *Poem of the Sufi Way* makes reference to jihad and martyrdom, albeit in an entirely allegorical context: "Strive (*jāhid*) and you shall behold in yourself from yourself, beyond that which I have described, a passing into a greater tranquility;

for after I strove, I beheld my scene of martyrdom (*mashhadi*)."[92] This line describes the outcome of having vanquished the lower self through *mujahada* and the subsequent annihilation of the self in God to which "the scene of martyrdom" refers. Although the verb *jāhada*, to strive, conveys here the struggle against the lower self, its combination with the use of the noun of place, *mashhad*, suggests the two words' outward military connotations. This would suggest that Ibn al-Farid's use of martial jihad imagery in his great *Poem of the Sufi Way* conforms to the use of such imagery that we have read in the poetry of his Sufi contemporaries and forebears who composed poetry in Persian. It is highly improbable that Ibn al-Farid was familiar with Persian Sufi poetry; however, his use of jihad imagery and vocabulary in his poetry confirms that by the thirteenth century Sufi terminology concerning the different aspects of jihad was universal.

We will conclude our overview of the martial jihad and warfare in premodern Sufi poetry by reading a section from the *mathnavi*, *Kanz al-haqa'iq* (*Treasury of Truths*) by Mahmud Shabistari, the fourteenth-century author of the Sufi manual in rhyming couplets, *Gulshan-i raz*, which we discussed briefly earlier. This section of *Kanz al-haqa'iq* presents a complementary interpretation of the two primary aspects of jihad as elaborated in the Sufi tradition. Shabistari refers to jihad as one of the Pillars of Islam, echoing the inclusion of a "sixth pillar" by some premodern Muslim religious scholars, as we noted previously. The following lines of poetry first expound jihad as striving against unbelievers in battle before treating the spiritual struggle with the lower self:

> There is another pillar—jihad, which is part and parcel of the *sharia* and the faith
> The two aspects of jihad are incumbent upon you, which you must carry out, both inwardly and outwardly
> The outward jihad is with the unbelievers—whoever has denied God, he is an unbeliever
> The inward jihad you must also discern, when you understand it strive in this regard.[93]

Shabistari's statement that jihad is integral to Islam and that its two aspects are incumbent on his audience, which is, presumably, a Sufi audience, recalls the words of 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, which we read in Chap. 5 concerning the two aspects of jihad, and affirms the Sufi interpretation of jihad as both a spiritual and military endeavor. The explanation of the

"outward jihad" as contending with non-Muslims accords with the other definitions of jihad we have examined thus far in both Sufi and non-Sufi writings, which describe it as combat with unbelievers—either to defend the Abode of Islam or to expand its dominion.

While it must be said that the use of martial imagery such as *ghazis*, martyrdom, and slaying unbelievers, in these examples of Persian Sufi poetry is, for the most part, allegorical, the relative frequency and uniform nature of such imagery in Sufi poetry suggests that the martial jihad (jihad) and religiously sanctioned military campaigns (*ghazw*) must have been both familiar and acceptable to the poets who composed these poems, for none of these poems condemns or questions the legitimacy of religiously sanctioned or prescribed military activity, nor do they downplay such military activity in favor of the spiritual jihad. Moreover, the way in which Sufi poetry combines allegorical use of jihad and martial imagery with practical descriptions of such activity attests to one of the leitmotifs of Sufi writings that we have discussed throughout this study; namely, that Sufis embrace and exemplify a complementary understanding of Islam and Islamic practice in all its aspects, which includes religiously prescribed military endeavors (i.e. jihad), and religiously sanctioned warfare (i.e. *ghazw*).

To conclude our study, in the next—and final—chapter, we will consider some important historical examples of Sufis as warriors during the premodern period. While many of the anecdotes portraying Sufis as warriors, which we have read in hagiography, have little historical basis or are anachronistic in their presentation of early Muslim archetypes as Sufis, Sufis certainly did play an active role in premodern historical military endeavors and have continued to do so till the present. By examining the military activities of prominent historical Sufis we may determine how their deeds reflect and confirm the complementary understanding of jihad premodern Sufi writings developed and propounded.

Notes

1. 'Attar, *Tadhkirat al-awliya'*, p. 6.
2. Ibid., p. 7.
3. This tendency toward making important works of Islamic literature available in the vernacular (i.e. Persian) and dispensing with chains of transmission began much earlier in the development of New Persian literature; for example, two of the earliest surviving examples of Persian prose composed during the Samanid period (early to mid-tenth century) consist of translations of

Tabari's *tafsir* and history, both of which dispense with the chains of transmission. The author of the introduction to *Tafsir-i Tabari* says the following concerning the translation: "This book is the great *tafsir* composed by Muhammad ibn Jarir Tabari, translated correctly into Persian (*Parsi u Dari*). They brought this book [to the Samanid Amir] from Baghdad in 40 volumes, and it was written in Arabic and contained many long chains of transmission …[The Amir asked the religious scholars of Transoxiana]: 'Is it permissible for us to render this book into Persian?' They answered: 'It is permissible to read and write the *tafsir* of the Qur'an in Persian for the sake of whomever does not know Arabic … Thus [the scholars] made a translation from all the pages and cast aside the long chains of transmission ….'" *Tarjuma-yi tafsir-i Tabari* (Tehran: Nashr-i Markaz, 1387 SH), p. 1.

4. Paul Jürgen, "Hagiographic Literature", *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Vol. XI, 2003, pp. 536–539.
5. God's friends perform *karamat*, whereas prophets are vouchsafed *mu'jizat*, thus, "miracle" is a somewhat generic translation.
6. The most readily available scholarly and eminently readable translation of Rumi's *Mathnavi* is the verse translation of Jawid Mojaddedi, Rumi, *The Masnavi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
7. See Hamid Algar, "Golshan-e Rāz", *Encyclopaedia Iranica* Vol. XI, Fasc. 1, pp. 109–111.
8. *Hazar hikayat-i sufiyan* (Tehran: Intisharat-i Sukhan, 1379 SH), p. 134.
9. Farid al-Din 'Attar, *Mantiq al-tayr*, ed. S. Gawharin (Tehran: Shirkat-i Intisharat-i 'Ilmi va Farhangi, 1377 SH), p. 352. Gawharin also notes: "In Persian literature, girding oneself with the *zunnar* is a metaphor for becoming an unbeliever and forsaking Islam."
10. Zayn al-Din al-Munawi, *Al-Kawakib al-durriyya* Vol. 2 (Beirut: Dar Sader, 1999), p. 435.
11. Abu'l-Hasan al-Daylami and Rukn al-Din Shirazi, *Sirat Ibn al-Khafif* (Tehran: Intisharat-i Babak, 1363 SH), pp. 26–27.
12. 'Attar, *Tadhkirat al-awliya'*, p. 15.
13. Ibid., p. 89.
14. Ibid., p. 138.
15. See Hamid Algar, "Asrār al-Tawḥīd", *Encyclopaedia Iranica* Vol. II, Fasc. 8, pp. 800–801.
16. Muhammad b. Munavvar, *Asrar al-tawhid* (Tehran: Mu'assasa-yi Intisharat-i agah, 1376 SH), p. 36.
17. Ibid., p. 29.
18. Ibid., p. 22.
19. Abu Nasr al-Sarraj, *Al-Luma'* (Basra: Dar al-Maktab al-Haditha, 1960), p. 453. " … *Shath* is an utterance taken from movement, for it is the stirring of the innermost hearts of the ones experiencing ecstasy when their ecstatic

state of love waxes in strength and they give voice to that ecstasy through utterances that seem absurd to the auditor. The auditor is beguiled and brought to naught by denying and speaking evil of them when he hears them. He will be safe by putting an end to his denial of them and seeking that which seems dubious to him regarding them by asking someone who knows their meaning ...."

20. See Reuven Amitai, "Il-Khanids; Dynastic History", *Encyclopaedia Iranica* Vol. XII, Fasc. 6, pp. 645–654.
21. Ahmad b. al-Husayn al-Kharaqani, *Dastur al-jumhur* (Tehran: Anjuman-i Iranshinasi-yi Faransa dar Iran, 1388 SH), p. 4.
22. ʻAttar, *Tadhkirat al-awliya'*, p. 139.
23. Hamid Algar, *Jami* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 105.
24. ʻAbd al-Rahman Jami, *Nafahat al-uns* (Tehran: Intisharat-i Ittila'at, 1375 SH), p. 317.
25. Ibid., p. 375.
26. Mirza La'al Beg Badakhshi, *Thamarat al-quds* (Tehran: Pizhuhishgah-i ʻulum-i insani va-mutala'at-i farhangi, 1376 SH), p. 70.
27. Ibid., p. 94.
28. Hakim Sana'i, *Hadiqat al-haqiqa* (Tehran: Chapkhana-yi Sipihr, 1319 SH), p. 95.
29. Farid al-Din ʻAttar, *Divan* (Tehran: Bungah-i Tarjuma va Nashr-i Kitab, 1345 SH), p. 572.
30. Franklin Lewis, Rumi (Oxford: Oneworld, 2008), p. 47.
31. Rumi, *Divan-i Shams* (Mu'assasa-yi Intisharat-i Nigah, 1371 SH), p. 377.
32. For discussion of cessation of hostilities and establishing treaties with non-Muslims, see Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, pp. 133–135, 202–222.
33. For discussion of the term *thaghr/thughur*, which was used at this time to indicate the region where the Abode of Islam bordered the eastern marches of the Byzantine Empire, see Michael Bonner, "The Naming of the Frontier: ʻAwāṣim, Thughūr and the Arab Geographers" *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. 57, no. 1, 1994, pp. 17–24 and M.A. Shaban, *Islamic History: A New Interpretation* Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
34. For discussion of "meaningful narrative" in the Person-Islamic context, see Meisami, *Persian Historiography* (Edinburgh University Press, 1999).
35. Abu Nu'aym Al-Isfahani, *Hilyatu'l-ʻawliya'* Vol. 7 (Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-ʻArabi, 2001), p. 349.
36. For a discussion of the early *ʻulama'* and *zuhhad* and their involvement in and attitude toward *murabata* (i.e. residing on the border that separates *Dar al-Islam* from *Dar al-Harb* for the purpose of defending the former and undertaking raids against the latter), see Houari Touati, "Le séjour dans les marches," in *Islam et voyage en moyen âge*, pp. 237–258.
37. Isfahani, *Hilyatu'l-awliya'* Vol. 7, p. 350.

38. Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, p. 86.
39. Isfahani, *Hilyatu'l-awliya'*, Vol. 8, p. 7.
40. Mark 4:37–40.
41. Isfahani, *Hilyatu'l-awliya'*, Vol. 8, p. 137.
42. Ibid., 146–47. This *hadith* is also found in both *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* as well as in al-Waqidi's *Kitab al-maghazi.*
43. "*Dhu'l-jihadayn*" in *Tadhkiratu'l-awliya'*, p. 183; "*fakhr al-mujahidin*" in *al-Kawakib al-durriyya* Vol. 1, p. 306.
44. Cook, *Understanding Jihad*, p. 33.
45. Found in *Jami' al-Tirmidhi* and elsewhere.
46. Isfahani, *Hilyatu'l-awliya'*, Vol. 8, p. 105.
47. U. Marzolph and R. van Leeuwen, *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia* Vol. 2 (Santa Barbara: ABC Clio, 2004), p. 586.
48. Bruce Lawrence, "Abu Eshaq Kazaruni," Encyclopaedia Iranica, Vol. I, Fasc. 3, pp. 274–275.
49. Ibid.
50. Wilfred Madelung, *Religious Trends in Early Islamic Iran* (Albany: Bibliotheca Persica, 1988), p. 48.
51. 'Abd al-Husayn Zarrinkub, *Justuju dar tasavvuf-i Iran* (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1369 SH), p. 218.
52. Tilman Nagel, "Buyids," *Encyclopaedia Iranica* Vol. IV, Fasc. 6, pp. 578–586.
53. Mahmud b. 'Uthman, *Firdaws al-murshidiyya*, p. 198.
54. Ibid.
55. For discussion of how hagiography sometimes contains historically accurate information, see Eaton, *The Sufis of Bijapur*, p. 20.
56. Munavvar, *Asrar al-tawhid*, p. 275.
57. 'Attar, *Tadhkiratu'l-awliya'*, pp. 202–03. A slightly different version of this anecdote is also related in Isfahani's *Hilyatu'l-awliya'*, Vol. 8, p. 55.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid., p. 43.
60. Ibid., pp. 304–305.
61. The historical identity of Abu al-Hasan al-Tusi is unknown. *Hazar hikayat-i sufiyan* Vol. 2, p. 985.
62. Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 457.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid., p. 458.
65. Ibid., p. 464.
66. Ibid., pp. 465–66.
67. Abu Talib al-Makki, *Qut al-qulub* (Cairo: Dar al-Turath, 2001), pp. 1364–5.
68. Kharaqani, *Dastur al-jumhur*, p. 46.
69. Ibid., p. 64

70. Badakhshi, *Thamarat al-quds*, pp. 112–113
71. Jami, *Nafahat al-uns*, p. 329.
72. Badakhshi, *Thamarat al-quds*, pp. 293–94.
73. Ibid., p. 297.
74. Ibid., p. 564.
75. A. Pagliaro and A. Bausani, *La Letteratura persiana* (Florence: G.C. Sansoni, 1968), p. 326.
76. Abū Sa'īd Abu'l-Khayr, *Sukhanan-i manzum* (Tehran: Kitabkhana-yi Shams, 1955), p. 75. The definitive study of Abu Sa'id's life and legacy is Fritz Meier's *Abū Sa'īd-i Abū l-Ḫayr: Wirklicheit und Legende* (Leiden: Brill, 1976).
77. Ibid., p. 16.
78. Hakim Sana'i, *Divan,* ed. M. Razavi (Intisharat-i Kitabkhana-yi Sana'i, 1983), p. 914.
79. Francis Joseph Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary* (New Delhi: Nataraj Books, 2010), p. 567.
80. Sana'i, *Hadiqat al-haqiqa*, p. 206.
81. Ibid., p. 198.
82. Qur'an, 9:5.
83. Ibid., 109:6.
84. Ibid., p. 212.
85. Ibid., p. 723.
86. Rumi, *Mathnavi-yi ma'navi* Vol. 2 (Tehran: Shirkat-i 'Ilmi va Farhangi, 1378 SH), p. 880.
87. Ibid.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid.
90. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs*, pp. 394–396.
91. Raymond Farrin, *Abundance from the Desert* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2011), p. 236.
92. Muhammad ibn Ahmad Farghani, *Sharh ta'iyyat Ibn al-Farid* Vol.1 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2007), pp. 372–373.
93. Shabistari, Mahmud, *Kanz al-haqa'iq* (Tehran: Matba'a-yi 'Ilmi, 1935), p. 27.

CHAPTER 7

Historical Role of Sufis in Military Endeavors

The aim of this study has been to demonstrate how Sufi writings have defined, elaborated, and depicted the doctrine of jihad in Islam. For this reason, as its title implies, *Jihad in Premodern Sufi Writings* does not pretend to be a history of Sufi military activities in the premodern period. However, it is nevertheless important that we consider some of the salient examples of Sufis as warriors in historical events during the period when these texts were composed. Historical examples of Sufis as *mujahids* and *ghazis* are significant as they demonstrate the link between, on the one hand, theoretical Sufi discussion of the martial jihad, as well as archetypal and narratival depictions of Sufi warriors in hagiography and poetry, and on the other hand, the historical Sufi military activity these writings describe and—at least to some extent—probably inspired.

It may be said that Sufism continued to flourish in part owing to the Crusades and the Mongol invasions, which had resulted in much social and cultural instability in the Islamic world during the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries. Certainly, many Sufis fought zealously and bravely against these invasions from the east and the west and contributed no small part to the ultimate success of the Muslims in resisting the Crusaders. Though the Mongols were largely victorious in their successive waves of invasion that spanned a period of roughly 40 years and culminated in the destruction of Baghdad and the demise of the Abbasid Caliphate, many of them eventually embraced the faith and culture of those they had conquered. In this regard, it was often Sufis who successfully converted and

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assimilated the Mongol invaders to Islam and Islamic culture after these nomadic invaders from the East began to rule over their newly acquired territories.[1] This fact serves to remind us of the important social role Sufis played during this period.

In the following paragraphs we will consider the military role of well-known Sufis in significant historical events. From the outset it must be acknowledged that much of the material available for a historical overview of prominent Sufis who engaged in military activities during the premodern period is of a hagiographical or semi-hagiographical nature. This is due to the origin of the sources, which are generally from within the Sufi tradition, as well as to the orientation of premodern historiography and biography, which—as we alluded to earlier—is to present meaningful narratives, rather than to establish facts. This does not, however, prevent us from sketching out a reasonably accurate historical biography, provided we adduce a variety of historical and biographical materials and recognize the limits thereof.[2] Moreover, it is reasonable to assume that premodern narratives concerning the involvement of outstanding Sufi figures in military endeavors adumbrate the historical role of Sufis in those same endeavors.

We will begin our historical overview with the twelfth-century Sufi Shaykh Arslan al-Dimashqi and his role in defending Damascus during the Second Crusade. We will then proceed to examine Shaykh Abu'l-Hasan al-Shadili's role in the battle that effectively ended the Seventh Crusade in the thirteenth century. Following this, we will turn to the Mongol invasion of Central Asia during the early thirteenth century and the martyrdom of Najm al-Din Kubra and his companions as they fought against the Mongol invaders in Khwarazm. We will then examine the part Shaykh Aq Shams al-Din played in the Ottoman siege and conquest of Constantinople in 1453. We will conclude our overview of eminent premodern Sufi *mujahids* by considering the role of Baba Palangpush in the Mughal's military endeavors in the Deccan during the seventeenth century.

Shaykh Arslan al-Dimashqi and the Second Crusade

Shaykh Arslan al-Dimashqi (d. 1160–1164) is known as the "Protector of Damascus" owing to his active role in defending the city during the Crusader siege of 1148.[3] He was born in Qal'at Ja'bar in northeastern Syria. While still an adolescent he is said to have stoutheartedly defended the citadel against the Seljuks, showing his early zeal for battle. Malikshah and his brother, Tutush—who would become the Seljuk ruler of Damascus—won

the citadel in 1086 following which Arslan swore an oath of allegiance to them.[4] While still a young man, he settled in Damascus where he came under the guidance of Shaykh Abu ‘Amir al-Mu’addib, whose Sufi chain of initiation went back to Sari Saqati (d. 865) of the Baghdad School of Sufism.[5] Shaykh Arslan had many *murids* and established his *ribat* outside the city walls of Damascus next to an edifice said to have been built by Khalid b. al-Walid (d. 642) who had conquered the city in 635. The association of his Sufi hospice with the early Muslim general symbolized Shaykh Arslan’s devotion to the Sufi concept of the complementary nature of jihad as both a spiritual and military endeavor.[6] Although Shaykh Arslan did compose Sufi treatises, most notably *al-Risala fi’l-tawhid* (the epistle regarding God’s oneness), he did not establish a Sufi order.[7] What he did do, however, was to encourage Sufi spiritual exercises among those garrisoned in his hospice, thereby combining spiritual and martial endeavors.[8] Nur al-Din Zangi (d. 1174) of the Zangid Dynasty (1127–1222), who ruled Damascus during the time of the siege, was an ardent anti-Crusader, as well as a generous patron of Shaykh Arslan whom he venerated.[9] Nur al-Din relied on Shaykh Arslan as a source of authority for his efforts to unify the Islamic world against the Crusaders.[10] It is worth noting that Nur al-Din also patronized the Sunni *hadith* scholar, Ibn ‘Asakir (d. 1176), for whom he built the *Dar al-Hadith*, a school for the study of *hadith*.[11] Ibn ‘Asakir’s *Forty Hadith for Inciting Jihad* served as powerful propaganda for Nur al-Din’s jihad against the Crusaders by emphasizing the importance of this military religious duty. Ibn ‘Asakir included *hadith* and Qur’anic verses in his writings that extolled the virtues of jihad and its fundamental role in the early Islamic community. Shaykh Arslan’s role in the jihad against the Crusaders may be seen as exemplary in this environment in that it combined spiritual discipline with military action solely for the sake of safeguarding the faith and the Muslim ecumene, thereby manifesting the complementary Sufi understanding of jihad as both a spiritual and military struggle.

Al-Shadhili and the Battle of al-Mansura

Abu’l-Hasan al-Shadhili (d. 1258) is the eponym of one of the most important Sufi orders in North Africa and Egypt that continues to have a significant presence in much of the contemporary Islamic world. Al-Shadhili was born in Morocco in the late twelfth century and died in Upper Egypt in 1258 while journeying to Mecca and Medina.[12] Al-Shadhili left behind

no writings, and therefore, we know him only from what his followers wrote about him. Al-Shadhili settled in Egypt where he attracted many pupils and earned the approbation of local Muslim scholars. Similar to the Sufism of Abu Ishaq al-Kazaruni, whom we discussed in detail in the foregoing chapter, the teachings of al-Shadhili are virtually devoid of esoteric doctrine or practice. Instead, al-Shadhili insisted upon the fundamental importance of following the *sharia* and the *sunna* for both Sufis and ordinary Muslims.[13] The teachings, prayers, and litanies that are traditionally associated with al-Shadhili remind us of the essential character of premodern Sufism as an expression of Sunni spirituality that provided guidance and instruction to all Muslims, which is something we have also encountered in considering the didactic role of popular Sufi hagiography.

Concerning al-Shadhili's military role, the traditional sources relate that al-Shadhili and many of his companions took part in the defense of the fortified town of al-Mansura located near Damietta on the Nile.[14] The Crusaders, led by Louis IX, attacked al-Mansura in 1250. The Muslim defenders, led by the future Mameluke sultan, Baybars I, eventually beat the Crusaders back, took them prisoner, and held them for ransom. Louis IX's defeat at al-Mansura and subsequent capture effectively ended the Seventh Crusade. Al-Shadhili is said to have been of advanced age and—according to some sources—blind when he lead his companions in battle against the Crusaders, though the latter claim is probably hagiographical. Nevertheless, these traditional accounts of al-Shadhili fighting at al-Mansura indicate the likely presence of Sufis among those who fought the Crusaders. It is not surprising that al-Shadhili's insistence on cleaving to the *sharia* and *sunna*, rather than practicing a form of esoteric mysticism, would include taking up arms in the martial jihad against the enemies of Islam.

Najm al-Din Kubra and the Mongol Conquest of Khwarazm

Najm al-Din Kubra (d. 1221) was the greatest Sufi of his era in the Oasis of Khwarazm located south of the Aral Sea in what is now Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Traditional sources often refer to him as "creator of saints" (*vali-tarash*) owing to the great number of his *murids*.[15] Najm al-Din Kubra is the eponym of the Sufi Kubraviyya Order, which he founded, as well as the author of a number of important Sufi works, one of which, the *Fawa'ih al-jamal*, we examined in Chap. 4. He was born in Khwarazm in 1145–46 and—like so many early Sufis—began his career as a *hadith*

scholar. He traveled to Egypt where he first became interested in the Sufi path under the guidance of Shaykh Ruzbihan al-Wazzan al-Misri (d. 1188) of the Suhrawardiyya Order. Shaykh Ruzbihan eventually deemed Najm al-Din fully mature in the Sufi path and sent him back to Khwarazm with the authority to initiate and guide his own *murids*.[16] Among his many important *murids* was Najm al-Din Daya Razi, author of the celebrated Persian Sufi treatise, *Mirsad al-ʿibad*, which we have referred to several times in previous chapters. Traditional sources relate that Najm al-Din Kubra died while leading his companions in battle against the Mongols during their conquest of Khwarazm in 1221. The Mongols, under Genghis Khan, began their conquest of Central Asia and the Iranian Plateau after the massacre in Utrar of a caravan of merchants from the Mongol Empire in 1218. The Khwarazmshah Sultan Muhammad is said to have authorized the execution of the merchants, either from greed or fearing they were spies, and this action ultimately resulted in the catastrophic Mongol Invasion, which destroyed most of the cities of the Perso-Islamic world of the thirteenth century.[17] Jami's *Nafahat al-uns* presents a dramatic and moving account of Najm al-Din's heroic role in resisting the Mongol attackers, describing him as "filling the sleeves of his initiatic robe (*khirqa*) with stones, taking up his spear, and going forth" to face the enemy.[18] The narrative states that the sultan had already fled when the Mongols arrived and that Najm al-Din exhorted his followers, saying: "Rise up in God's name, let us fight in His path!"[19] While it is difficult to distinguish historical fact from hagiography in Jami's account, it is certainly possible that Najm al-Din and other Sufis affiliated with him fought bravely against the Mongol invaders. According to this account, the temporal ruler, Sultan Muhammad Khwarazmshah, had fled, and the Sufis, under Najm al-Din, immediately took command to defend their faith and their fellow Muslims, which accords with the traditional social role of Sufis as community leaders, especially during times of crisis. Even if it presents no verifiable historical evidence, this account of Najm al-Din Kubra and his companions does symbolize the essential action Sufis carried out in their capacity as leaders of their respective Muslim communities during and after the chaos of the Mongol Invasion.

Aq Shams al-Din and the Ottoman Conquest of Constantinople

Shaykh Muhammad Aq Shams al-Din (d. 1459) of the Bayramiyya Sufi order accompanied Mehmet II in his conquest of Constantinople in 1453, which culminated in the Ottomans achieving dominion over all of historical

Anatolia and Thrace (i.e. roughly modern-day Turkey). According to the hagiographical tradition, Aq Shams al-Din was born in Damascus circa 1390 and studied the Islamic sciences and medicine before turning to the Sufi path, which led him to journey as far as Transoxiana in search of a spiritual guide.[20] The traditional sources say that it was Aq Shams al-Din who convinced Mehmet that he was destined to conquer Constantinople according to the Shaykh's interpretation of a *hadith*.[21] While this anecdote may be hagiographical, it seems certain that Aq Shams al-Din played an influential role in the conquest of Constantinople, delivering sermons and urging on the warriors.[22] According to the traditional account of the siege of Constantinople, Shaykh Aq Shams al-Din exhorted Mehmet, reminding him of his duties to observe the rights of the conquered inhabitants of Constantinople in accordance with the stipulations of the *sharia* in matters of war.[23] Aq Shams al-Din stood before the Ottoman host and delivered a rousing sermon to them, saying: "Recall what the Prophet said regarding your endeavor: '*Constantinople will indeed be conquered, and what an excellent commander its commander will be, and what an excellent army that army will be.*' We ask God to grant us success and make us victorious …." Then, turning toward Mehmet the Conqueror, he said: "Oh Sultan! You have become the favored one of the House of 'Uthman; continue to fight in God's path."[24] It is said that after the victorious Ottoman host entered Constantinople, it was Aq Shams al-Din who delivered the first Friday sermon in Hagia Sofia, which the Ottomans had converted into a mosque.

Baba Palangpush and the Role of the Naqshbandi Sufi Order in Mughal India

Shaykh Aq Shams al-Din's role as spiritual adviser to Mehmet the Conqueror and his army during the siege of Constantinople recalls the role of Baba Palangpush (d. 1699) as spiritual adviser to the Mughal armies in the Deccan. Originally from Ghujduwan in the oasis of Bukhara, Baba Palangpush was a Sufi of the Naqshbandi order who became the traveling Sufi shaykh in the army of Mughal general Ghazi al-Din Khan Firuz Jang during the reign of Awrangzib.[25] The fact that Baba Palangpush attached himself to Awrangzib's armies is in accordance with the Naqshbandi practice of developing relationships with temporal rulers and involvement in worldly affairs.[26] The Naqshbandi predecessors of Baba Palangpush had also involved themselves in political and military affairs. The Naqshbandi shaykh Khwaja Nasir al-Din 'Ubayd Allah Ahrar (d. 1490) exemplified what

would become the Naqshbandi concern for political and social matters. Ahrar wielded considerable political power in Tashkent and assisted the Timurid prince, Abu Sa'id, in his struggle to gain control of Samarqand by recruiting Uzbek auxiliary soldiers for his cause. Later, Ahrar would help organize the defense of Samarqand against invasion and serve as a mediator between Abu Sa'id and a rebellious Timurid prince.[27] Throughout his life, Ahrar was especially concerned with implementing the *sharia* in Muslim society and this emphasis on upholding the *sharia* would become one of the defining characteristics of the Naqshbandi order.[28] The descendants of Ahrar established the Naqshbandi order in India and the founder of the Mughal Dynasty, Babur, held Ahrar in high regard.[29] Though not a physical descendant of Ahrar, Baba Palangpush appears to have continued the Naqshbandi tradition exemplified by his spiritual predecessor. In addition to Baba Palangpush, who, as we mentioned, was originally from the vicinity of Bukhara, Awrangzib's army included many other immigrants from Central Asia—both Turks and Tajiks—and the contemporary sources make little ethnic distinction between the two. It appears that these immigrants were comprised of men of various social circumstances, for example, those with military experience as well as those from a more learned background involving cultivation of the traditional Islamic religious sciences. What they all had in common was their attachment to the Naqshbandi shaykhs.[30] Indeed we could say that this blurring of ethnic and social distinctions among the military entourage of Baba Palangpush, as related in the traditional sources, symbolizes the Sufi synthesis of the inner and outer aspects of Islamic practice and the complementary nature of the spiritual and martial struggle implicit in the Sufi understanding of the doctrine of jihad. According to the traditional sources, Baba Palangpush not only acted as spiritual adviser to Ghazi al-Din Khan but also played an active role in military campaigns in which he is described as going forth at the head of the Mughal host where he would fight the unbelievers using his bow and arrows and thereby inspire his companions to win the day.[31] A company of Sufi archers from Central Asia would accompany Baba Palangpush wherever the Mughal host marched.[32] Though Awrangzib was able to extend Mughal power as far south as Arcot, he ultimately failed to defeat the Marathas in the Deccan.[33] However, the Naqshbandi Sufis' role in Indian spiritual and political affairs would continue after the demise of Mughal power (e.g. the aforementioned Shah Wali Allah).

These five historical Sufi figures from the premodern period exemplify the Sufi understanding of jihad as both a spiritual and martial endeavor.

Although some of the source material for their biographies and military activity is certainly hagiographical—or at least contains elements of hagiography, the battles, campaigns, and conflicts in which they are said to have participated did indeed occur. Whether or not these Sufi shaykhs actually fought in these historical events, the fact that they are traditionally believed to have done so does indicates the likelihood of active Sufi participation in the defense of the Abode of Islam, especially during the Crusades and the Mongol invasions. On the basis of chronicles regarding the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople, as well as the Mughal military campaigns in southern India, we may conclude that Sufis were also involved in offensive martial activities for the expansion of Islam in those regions. While imperial interests most certainly played a role in these conquests as well, this fact did not preclude Sufi participation in these endeavors for purely religious reasons.

Notes

1. Rajab Muhammad 'Abd al-Halim, *Intishar al-Islam bayna al-Mughul* (Cairo: Dar al-Nahda al-'Arabia, 1986), pp. 84–85.
2. For a successful and illuminating example of such a biographical and historical sketch, see Denise Aigle "Cheikh Abū Ishāq de Kāzarūn" in *Saints Orientaux* (Paris: De Boccard, 1995).
3. Erik S. Ohlander, *Sufism in an Age of Transition: 'Umar al-Suhrawardī and the Rise of the Islamic Mystical Brotherhoods* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), p. 195.
4. 'Izzah Hasriyya, *Shaykh Arslan al-Dimashqī* (Damascus: Matba'at al-'Ilm, 1965), p. 101
5. Eric Geoffroy, "Arslān al-Dimashqī, Shaykh." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, *Third Edition*. Brill Online, 2016.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Hasriyya, *Shaykh Arslan al-Dimashqi*, pp. 101–102.
9. Geoffroy, "Arslān al-Dimashqī." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.
10. Ohlander, *Sufism in an Age of Transition*, p. 195.
11. Mourad and Lindsay, *Intensification and Reorientation of Sunni Jihad Ideology in the Crusader Period*, pp. 47–50.
12. Lory, P. "al-Shādhilī." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, *Third Edition*. Brill Online 2016.
13. Ibid.
14. Khatib, *al-Butula wa'l-fida' 'inda al-sufiyya*, pp. 123–124.
15. Bausani, A. "Religion in the Saljuq Period." *The Cambridge History of Iran* Vol. 5. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 298.

16. Najm al-Din Razi, *The Path of God's Bondsmen From Origin to Return* (North Haledon: Islamic Publications International, 2003), pp. 2–4.
17. J.A. Boyle,"Dynastic and Political History of the Il-Khāns." *The Cambridge History of Iran* volume 5. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 303–7.
18. Jami, *Nafahat al-uns*, pp. 426–27.
19. Ibid.
20. Klaus Kreiser, "Aq Shams al-Dīn." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Third Edition*. Brill Online, 2016.
21. 'Ali Muhammad al-Sallabi, *Sirat al-Sultan Muhammad al-Fatih* (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifa, 2007), pp. 149–150.
22. H.J. Kissling, "Aq Šems ed-Dīn." Byzantinische Zeitschrift (Munich: C.H. Beck'sche, 1951), pp. 322–327.
23. Sallabi, *Sirat al-Sultan Muhammad al-Fatih*, p. 152.
24. Ibid., p. 153.
25. Simon Digby, *Sufis and Soldiers in Awrangzeb's Deccan* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 4.
26. Arthur F. Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophets* , p. 61
27. Hamid Algar, "A Brief History of the Naqshbandi Order" *Historical Developments and Present Situation of a Muslim Mystical Order* (Istanbul-Paris: Editions Isis, 1990), p. 13.
28. Ibid., pp. 14–15.
29. Ibid., p. 19.
30. Digby, *Sufis and Soldiers in Awrangzeb's Deccan*, p. 7.
31. Ibid., p. 71.
32. Ibid., p. 74.
33. Munis D. Faruqui, "Awrangzīb." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, *Third Edition*. Brill Online, 2016.

Conclusion

As we have demonstrated herein, Sufi writings of the premodern period (i.e. the eleventh to seventeenth centuries) composed in Arabic and Persian are consistent in their interpretation of jihad as both an inner spiritual struggle with the lower self and the passions and an outer martial struggle with unbelievers. We have read examples of Sufi discourse in treatises, hagiography, didactic as well as more esoteric poetry, and letters, concerning the various aspects of jihad. These Sufi writings were composed during Sufism's formative period (roughly the late tenth till the early thirteenth centuries); the period after the Mongol conquests of the thirteenth century (when it could be said that many of the prominent Sufi orders crystalized); and from the Timurid period in Central Asia till the Mughal period in India. On the basis of these many Sufi compositions we can say with confidence that from the earliest period of its elaboration, Sufi writings have set forth and elaborated a complementary understanding of jihad. While early Sufi writers did develop a spiritual, or inner, interpretation of jihad—an interpretation that does not appear to have existed before the historical advent of Sufism—they also embraced and encouraged the communal duty of fulfilling the martial jihad in accordance with the Islamic scriptural and legal traditions. In this regard, Sufis have also developed and, we may add, have consistently employed specific terminology to refer to the two primary aspects of jihad according to the Sufi tradition, that is, *mujahada*, to designate the spiritual struggle against the lower self, and, in accordance with Islamic doctrine, jihad, to designate the military struggle against non-Muslims—either for

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the defense of Islamic territory or the expansion thereof. Though premodern Sufi writings generally emphasize the greater exertion necessary to combat and overcome the lower self through carrying out the spiritual jihad, they do not claim that the spiritual jihad overshadows the duty of carrying out the martial jihad, and they certainly do not contend that the spiritual jihad supersedes or abrogates the martial jihad. Such an interpretation of jihad would be contrary to the Sufi ethos, which holds that Islamic doctrine and practice have an inner aspect and outer aspect that are always complementary. Indeed as we have read, rather than denying or downplaying the outer, martial aspect of jihad, Sufi writings often insist that it is Sufis who make the ideal warriors for the faith, for they have overcome the lower self and are thus free of desire for personal gain or glory. It is equally true that Sufi writings—especially hagiography—cannot be considered accurate historical documents in terms of establishing whether or not a given Sufi friend of God and his *murids* took part in a particular military activity. Certainly many hagiographical anecdotes portraying Sufis as *mujahids* or *ghazis* say as much about the time and place of their composition as they do about the historical or semi-historical events in which they situate Sufi warriors. At times they also no doubt mirror the idealized early military campaigns of the Prophet and his Companions in Islamic sacred history. Such an association served to connect the Sufis to their spiritual forebears by portraying them as exemplars of the piety and bravery the Prophet and his Companions exhibited in the narratives that related the burgeoning Muslim community's martial endeavors. Nevertheless, on the basis of the many examples of Sufi writings we have considered in this study, we may conclude that Sufis of the premodern period espoused and encouraged military activity and warfare to defend the Muslim community and expand the dominion of Islam. Moreover, on the strength of the consistent and virtually universal support for the martial jihad and *ghazw* found in the Sufi treatises we have read, as well as the many depictions of Sufis as warriors that occur in premodern Sufi hagiography and Muslim historiography, we may reasonably conclude that the Sufi discourse concerning the martial jihad was not confined to theoretical support for military activity and that Sufis did indeed fight in military campaigns and wars with non-Muslims during the premodern period. Though beyond the scope of this study, Sufis of the modern period (late eighteenth to early twentieth centuries)—especially during the era of European colonialism—played a decisive role in many of the struggles against European powers (e.g. ʻAbd al-Qadir al-Jazaʼiri's jihad against the French in Algeria). It is certain that the Sufi *mujahids* of the colonial period

were inspired to a certain extent by the writings and deeds of their Sufi forebears, many of which we have considered in the foregoing chapters.

Having read the conclusions of contemporary Muslim scholars—writing in Arabic and Persian—regarding Sufis and jihad, we may state that the discourse of Sufi jihad these scholars present differs significantly from the Sufi jihad discourse of scholars writing in European languages. Indeed this Western Sufi jihad discourse can be said to be the outcome of over 200 years of Western scholarship concerning Sufis. From the outset, European scholars defined Sufism as a purely mystical and esoteric phenomenon, which they distinguished from outward Islamic practice, with some even going so far as to say that Sufis rejected formal adherence to the *sharia* and outward Islamic practice. While it may be said that scholarship in European languages has changed considerably over the last half century, with many scholars abandoning the narrow definition of Sufism as nothing more than Islamic mysticism, the idea that Sufis are primarily concerned with inner spiritual matters—to the exclusion of involvement in social or worldly matters—persists in scholarly discourse concerning Sufis and Sufism in European languages. As we mentioned previously, there is a clear tendency among both contemporary scholars writing in European languages and Muslim scholars writing in Arabic, Persian, and so on to idealize Sufis and portray them in ways that are agreeable to their respective audiences. This tendency to present Sufis in a certain light may, in some cases, be deliberate, though it is most likely the result of a combination of cultural, historical, and epistemological factors. In any event, there is no creed of Sufism or one school of Sufi practice. The Arabic term *tasawwuf* has designated many modes of spiritual and religious conduct and practice since the historical advent of Sufism in the ninth and tenth centuries; the subsequent appearance of the first Sufi order (i.e. the Kazaruni order) in eleventh-century Fars; the crystallization of the great Sufi orders in the period following the Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century; the elaboration of theoretical Sufism till the end of the premodern period (roughly the seventeenth century); Sufi involvement in the struggle against European colonial powers; and Sufism in the present era.

Regarding Sufis and the martial jihad, there remain many areas for further research. A comprehensive study of the military role of Sufis in the anti-colonial struggles of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries would be especially enlightening. The Sufi understanding of jihad and Sufi involvement in military activity during the premodern period still offer abundant topics worthy of exploration. For example, studies dealing with

jihad in Sufi writings in Turkic languages, or the martial role of Sufis during the Reconquista in the Iberian Peninsula, which are topics this study does not address, would both do much to increase our knowledge of the doctrine of jihad in the various Sufi traditions.

As for the greater jihad *hadith*, it is clear that it ultimately owes its current and ever-increasing importance in contemporary Islamic discourse to Sufism. We have established that the textual history of this *hadith* and its variants is not older than the eleventh century, whereas the canonical *hadith* compendia of Sunni Islam were compiled in the ninth century and do not contain any reference to a greater or lesser form of jihad. However, as many contemporary Muslims *do* interpret the doctrine of jihad to encompass any selfless struggle that benefits the Muslim community or propagates Islam, it is possible that the greater jihad *hadith* will eventually become a generally accepted scriptural source.

The subject of Sufism will undoubtedly continue to hold a particular fascination for scholars, regardless of the language they write in or their intended audience. Thus, we may hope that scholarship regarding Sufis and their place in Islamic history and Muslim society will continue to develop a more nuanced approach to understanding the multifarious roles Sufis have played, especially regarding the Sufi interpretation of jihad.

Appendix A: Anecdotes Regarding Sufis and Warfare from Hagiography

From *Hilyat al-awliya'*

Ibrahim al-Adham

Abu'l-Walid [said]: Ibrahim and I were raiding and I had two horses with me while he was on foot. I wanted him to mount one of them but he refused so I swore an oath [entreating him]. He mounted [the horse] until he was seated on the saddle then he said: "I have fulfilled your oath." Then he dismounted. We traveled with that raiding party thirty-six miles with him on foot. When we dismounted he went to the sea and soaked his feet and then he came and threw himself down and rested his feet on the wall. This is the most difficult thing I saw him do.[1]

Ahmad b. Bakkar said: Ibrahim went on two raiding expeditions with us, each raiding party was harsher than the other, the raid of 'Abbas al-Antaki and Ibrahim's raid with us. [Ibrahim] would not take any share of the spoils and he would not eat of the goods of Rūm. We brought exquisite things, and honey, and chicken but he would not eat of them, saying: "they are religiously licit but I am abstaining from them." He would eat [only] what he had brought with him and he would fast. He would go raiding on a nag whose price was one dirham and he also had a donkey that he would compare to that nag and if I had given him a horse of gold or silver he would not have accepted it. He would not drink water. He went on two raiding expeditions on the sea and would not take his share of the spoils nor would he receive his soldier's stipend.[2]

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Khalaf b. Tamim relates: I was in a mosque with Abu Raja' al-Harawi when a man on horseback came and dismounted. They greeted each other and Abu Raja' informed me that [the man] had been on a ship with Ibrahim on a raiding expedition when the wind began blowing violently. They were close to drowning when they heard an unseen voice proclaiming loudly: "You are afraid and yet with you is Ibrahim?"[3]

Abd Allah b. al-Mubarak
'Abd Allah b. al-Mubarak related that Hamid informed us by way of Anas b. Malik that the Prophet said: "I have been commanded to fight the people until they testify that there is no god but God and Muhammad is the Messenger of God. And when they testify … their blood and possessions will be unlawful for us."

'Abd Allah b. al-Mubarak related … from Abu Hurayra who heard the Prophet say: "the *mujahid* in the path of God is like he who fasts and concerns himself with God's *ayat* (signs/verses of the Qur'an) day and night …."

From *Tadhkirat al-awliya'*

Malik al-Dinar
It is related that Malik said: for some years I had the desire to go on a military expedition. When it so happened that I could go, I came down with a fever on the day of battle so that I was unable to go. I went to bed and said to myself: "O body! If you were only nearer to God this fever would not have come." I fell asleep and heard an unseen voice that said to me: "If you had gone forth to battle today you would have been captured and [the unbelievers] would have given you pork. If you had eaten the pork you would have become an unbeliever. This fever was a great blessing to you." I rose from sleep and gave thanks to God.[4]

Shaqiq al-Balkhi
Hatim al-Asamm related: I went on a raid with Shaqiq. The day was difficult and they were fighting so much that one could see nothing save one's spearhead while arrows were flying through the air. Shaqiq said to me: "O Hatim! How do you find yourself? Are you imagining that it's last night when you were in your bed clothes sleeping with your wife?" "No," I said. "By God!" said he. "I find my body just as you [found yours when you] were in your bed clothes last night." Night came and he lay down

between the battle lines, used his patched cloak (*khirqah*) for a pillow and slept, passing the night among such foes, owing to the confidence he had in God.[5]

It is related that one day [Shaqiq] was holding audience when a voice was heard in the town, [saying]: "the unbelievers have come!" Shaqiq ran out and defeated the unbelievers and then came back. A *murid* placed some flowers before the Shaykh's prayer rug. The Shaykh was smelling [the flowers] when some ignoramus saw this and said: "an army is at the town's doorstep and the Shaykh is smelling flowers!" "Hypocrites," said the Shaykh, "see everything as smelling flowers but the defeat of an army they see not."[6]

Abd Allah b. al-Mubarak

It is related that once ['Abd Allah b. al-Mubarak] had gone on a raid (*ghazw*) and was fighting with an unbeliever [when] the time for the prescribed prayer came. ['Abd Allah] asked the unbeliever for a respite [from the fighting] and performed the prayer. When it was the unbeliever's prayer time, he also asked for a respite [from 'Abd Allah]. When the [unbeliever] faced his idol Abd Allah said: "This hour I have achieved victory over him." With sword drawn, he made for the [unbeliever's] head in order to slay him. He heard a voice [saying]: "O 'Abd Allah, Fulfill the covenant! Indeed the covenant [is that about which, one] will be questioned."[7] 'Abd Allah began to weep. The unbeliever raised his head and saw 'Abd Allah with drawn sword, weeping [so] he said to him: "What has happened to you?" 'Abd Allah told him: "On your behalf I have been chastised." The unbeliever let out a cry and said: "It would be mean to be a rebel and sinner against such a god who chastises a friend for the sake of a foe." [The unbeliever] became a Muslim and was mighty in the path of religion.[8]

Ahmad Khidravayh-i Balkhi

It is related that Ahmad said: "for a long time I subjugated my *nafs*. One day, a group left [to go] on a raid. A great desire [to go with them] arose in me and my *nafs* brought to my attention *hadiths*, in which the merits of raiding are expounded. I was amazed and said: obedience issues not from a lively *nafs*. This is a trick. I said: [the base soul's] trick concerns my keeping him in a state of continual fasting and [thus] his patience is exhausted. He wants to travel so that his fast may be broken [so] I said [to him]: 'I will not break the fast while traveling!' 'That is fair [said my *nafs*].' I was amazed. Was he saying this because I commanded him to pray at night? [My *nafs*] wanted to go on the journey so that he would [be allowed to]

sleep at night and rest. I said: 'I will keep you awake till morning!' 'That is fair [said my *nafs*].' I was amazed and pondered whether he was saying this so that he could mix with people because he had grown tired of being alone. 'Wherever I alight I will isolate you and I will not sit with people!' 'That is fair [said my *nafs*].' [At this] I became helpless, unable to do anything. I turned to God—may He be exalted—beseeching [Him] that He might [both] preserve me from and make me aware of the wiles of [my *nafs*]. [God] reduced [my *nafs*] to confession so that he said: 'contrary to my wishes you slew me one hundred times every day and the people knew it not, [while] here I might be killed at once while raiding and find release and the whole world would proclaim: 'well done, Ahmad Khidravayh, they slew him and he attained the honor of martyrdom!' 'Praise be to God who creates a soul that in life is a hypocrite and after death is a hypocrite. [My *nafs*] will not submit in this world nor in the Hereafter.' I had imagined that [my *nafs*] was seeking obedience, I did not know that he was girding himself with the *zunnar*, so I opposed him violently."[9]

Bayazid-i Bastami
It is related that once the army of Islam became weak in Rūm and was on the point of being defeated by the unbelievers. They heard a voice [saying]: "O Bayazid become aware [of their plight]!" Forthwith from the direction of Khurasan a fire became manifest so that fear fell upon the army [of the unbelievers] and the Muslim army gained the victory.[10]

From *Hazar Hikayat-i Sufiyan*

The First Tale
Abu al-Hasan al-Tusi—may God's mercy be upon him—was a man among the *mujahids* and worshippers and his life was completely devoted to worship and jihad. It happened that a group of Muslims was going to Tarsus to engage in jihad in accord with him. Abu al-Hasan and his *murids* went out to meet them and then went on jihad with them. Five *murids* in particular would always accompany him in warfare and jihad. It so happened that they were martyred while engaged in warfare and jihad, save one. When they returned to Tarsus, that *murid* would sit and weep every day. One day, [Abu al-Hasan] said to him: "If you weep on account of separation from your companions, they have achieved martyrdom, so what is your weeping for?" The *murid* said: "O Shaykh! I weep for myself

and bewail my bad luck, for no one has beheld that which I have beheld and that which I am bereft of, no one has been bereft of, lest it be from wretchedness." "What did you see?" said the Shaykh. The *murid* said: "When the unbelievers and the Muslims were arrayed in formation and waging war, I looked aloft and beheld a dome of white pearl with five houris seated upon it, each of my companions who had been martyred was with attended by them. One [houri] would come and take [a companion] and another would attend him holding an ewer and a cloth; she would take him and bathe him and would cleanse him with the cloth and would then carry him to that pearl dome till they had borne away all four of my companions. When it was my turn, one houri remained and I said to myself: 'There is no doubt that this houri is mine and that I will also be among my companions.' When I clashed with the unbelievers' line, suddenly, a youth from among the unbelievers came out and drew near to me, saying: 'Expound the declaration of faith to me!' Forthwith he became a Muslim, turned to face the unbelievers and began fighting until they slew him and he was martyred. That [last] houri came and took him and vanished. O Shaykh, if I weep with envy it is on this account." At this moment a trumpet was sounded and the people came forth to face the unbelievers. Shaykh Abu al-Hasan says: "I looked aloft and beheld that very dome and those four Muslims as well as that new Muslim and another houri with a ewer and cloth. That *murid* came nigh to me and said: 'O Shaykh, look aloft so that you will see what I saw!' 'I see.' Said I. That *murid* spoke thus, entered the fray, and was martyred. They bore his soul to that dome and he was saying while leaving: 'We found that which we sought and attained that which we desired, blessed be the martyr!'"[11]

The Second Tale

Abu al-Hasan al-Dam'i—may God's mercy be upon him—says: "I went to warfare for a year with the army of Islam. When we reached the abode of the unbelievers, their army came forth and they arrayed themselves before the Muslims. One of [the unbelievers] came out, desiring to fight. That unbeliever cast down everyone who went out from the army of Islam and fought with him. The Muslims were discouraged. A man came out from the army of Islam with a veil over his mouth; he turned toward that unbeliever, pulled him from his horse, and sundered his head from his body. The Muslims cried: 'God is great!' and were glad, though no one knew who [the champion] was. I went down to him and swore an oath and he removed the veil, it was 'Abd Allah b. Mubarak. I said: 'O 'Abd Allah!

Why have you hidden yourself in a time and place such as this, when such a victory has come from your hands?' 'Abd Allah said: 'O Abu al-Hasan! I pledged my life so that the one who created my body and soul in eternity without beginning should know me. All who deal with [God] are among his elite, and his elite have no business with fame among the people. O Abu al-Hasan! Return and divulge not my secret, for He for Whom I offered my spirit knows me and knows that which is in my breast.'"[12]

The Eighth Tale

A *murid* asked Bayazid—may God's mercy be upon him—who among those on earth ranked highest. Bayazid said: "Abu 'Abd Allah al-Nibaji—may God's mercy be upon him." [The *murid*] said: "O Shaykh! Through what manner of worship did he attain this rank?" Bayazid said: "Through *tawakkul* and jihad." That *murid* asked [Bayazid's] leave and went to visit Abu 'Abd Allah. When he arrived there, he asked where [Abu 'Abd Allah's] *zawiyya* was. They showed him a palace with a lofty door, but he did not see Abu 'Abd Allah. [The *murid*] asked where he was and they told him he was at the mill. The [*murid*] said to himself: "Bayazid does not speak idle words, but what is this I see? This is not the sign of those who rely completely on God. If he were truly relying on God, what business would he have with a mill? And this palace does not have the mark of a *zawiyya*, indeed it has the mark of a king." While the *murid* was pondering all this, Abu 'Abd Allah arrived, holding the reins of a camel and near him was an old woman. He caused the camel to kneel at the door of that old woman's palace and then went to the *murid* and greeted him, saying: "Shaykh Bayazid did not speak idle words, this palace belongs to that old woman, who was at the mill for several days with no one to bring her back, so I carried out [the words of the hadith:] 'Compassion is incumbent upon God's people.'" Then Abu 'Abd Allah said: "This palace door is elevated, for we possess the same craft as the Prophet and there may come a time when we will suffer affliction from the enemy, thus, I made this door high so that a horseman could enter." When the [*murid*] heard this he began to quake and said: "Have you a divine inspiration, O Abu 'Abd Allah?" Abu 'Abd Allah said: "There is no divine inspiration; however, the *mujahids* are the confidants of God (*khasagan-i haqq*); whoever is [God's] confidant his heart's eye has insight so that he beholds the enemies' secrets in their breasts." [The *murid*] said: "O Abu 'Abd Allah! How did you attain this rank?" [Abu 'Abd Allah] said: "Through the two professions of the Prophet of God: poverty and jihad."[13]

The Tenth Tale
Da'jal al-Khaza'i—may God's mercy be upon him—said: "One year, I was engaged in warfare, I went to face the ranks of unbelievers and we lined up on two sides facing one another, the unbelievers and the Muslims. Someone came out from the ranks of unbelievers, wishing to do battle. Whoever came out from the ranks of the Muslims, [this unbeliever] would kill. The Muslims became discouraged on his account and feared that they would be routed. All at once, a youth came out from the Muslims' ranks; I had never beheld a face as handsome as his, with his long black tresses thrown loosed so that they reached the bow of his saddle. He went before that unbeliever and clung to him till he defeated him; he slew every unbeliever who came forth, he then hurled himself against the ranks of [the unbelievers] and put them to flight. The Muslims rejoiced and took much plunder; however, the youth went and withdrew [from the others]. I drew near to him and lauded him, but I saw that he was unhappy and shedding a river of tears. I said to him: 'O young man! God-may He be exalted-has caused a victory such as this to occur by your hand and He made you the cause of Islam's triumph; the Muslims gained the upper hand over the unbelievers on account of your strength and gained plunder and spoils, so why do you weep?' The youth replied: 'O Da'jal! If you knew what the matter was with me you would weep for me.' 'Tell me about your condition!' Said Da'jal. The youth replied: 'I captured the army of the enemy, while I am the prisoner of my passions.' He said this, uttered a mournful sigh from his breast and said again: 'How fortunate he who has an obedient heart.' He then faced the road and went into the wilderness."[14]

From *Firdaws al-murshidiyya*

Know that the first person from Kazarun who undertook a raid and mobilized for that purpose was Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Judhayn and this was when the Shaykh, our guide, may God have mercy on his dear soul, manifested Islam and threw down the fire temples of the Zoroastrians[15] all at once. The Zoroastrians and fire worshippers were brought to bay and rendered helpless and so it was that every day the Muslims were becoming the majority over the unbelievers as the Shaykh, our guide, may God have mercy on his dear soul, had foretold: "Today one can reckon the number of Muslims among the unbelievers but a day will come when the Muslims will become the majority and then it will be possible to reckon the number of unbelievers among the Muslims, owing to their paucity.

And the situation was such that when the Muslims became the majority over the unbelievers, the latter began coming group by group and became Muslims at the hand of our Shaykh, may God sanctify his dear spirit. Thus it happened until all the Zoroastrians of these districts became Muslims. After that, the Shaykh… kept exhorting the Muslims to undertake a raid until a host of the people of Kazarun came before the Shaykh, our guide, and asked that they might prepare an army for a raid and go to Sar Band on the border with the Byzantines, a place where the unbelievers dwelled on one side and the Muslims on the other. They requested that the Shaykh arrange that one of his companions be their general and they would not stray from his command. The Shaykh heard their words and every Friday he would ask [for contributions] for their sustenance and he was able to collect a great abundance of gold, silver, and other things for them and from among his companions he made Muhammad b. Judhayn their general.

One Friday they all assembled with their weapons so that the Shaykh would preach to them. Muhammad b. Ibrahim and some of the Shaykh's companions said that that Friday when the warriors were resolved to undertake a raid and came with their weapons all in order and the Shaykh was delivering a sermon to them and encouraging them, the Shaykh was so intent upon their task and was showing such zeal and earnestness that he snatched a naked sword from one of the warriors and became impassioned and leaped about brandishing the sword over his head and yelling, and he said to the entire host: "By the Lord whom I worship in his oneness! If I should behold anyone in this moment who professed *shirk* towards God, may He be exalted, I would sunder his head from his body with this sword, although I have never killed even a sparrow!" When the Shaykh had spoken these words to the assembly the door that was near to him burst asunder, owing to his awesome might, and the sound of it reverberated through the mosque. When the people in the assembly beheld this they cried out and wept much and a host from the army rose and repented. When the Shaykh had finished with the assembly the army rose and bade farewell to the Shaykh and then left for the border to fight with the unbelievers. When they reached the army of the unbelievers they formed ranks, beat the drums, and, all at once, attacked. They routed the unbelievers and defeated them. They pursued them, slaying many of them, and plundered them, taking many spoils and slaves. They returned in safety and came before the Shaykh, laden with spoils, owing to the blessings and effort of the Shaykh.

Thus the Shaykh, our guide, would prepare provisions for them every year and send them on a raid while he would remain behind and render them help through his efforts, and if ever they were at a disadvantage he would come to their aid and help them. Thus, once he had dispatched the army of Islam to Rūm in order to fight the unbelievers and he was watching over them. One day, the Shaykh rose suddenly, picked up a staff and went to the roof of the mosque. There he became impassioned and began flailing the staff that he had in his hand around his head as if he were fighting with an army; his companions witnessed this. After a while the Shaykh finished with this endeavor and became himself again. His companions asked him about the state he had been in. The Shaykh answered: "At that hour the army of Islam had become trapped in Rūm at the hands of the unbelievers and they were calling to me for help. I rendered them aid and assistance." His companions recorded the hour in which this had happened. After the army of Islam had returned from the war with the unbelievers the Shaykh's companions asked them to relate what had happened. They said: "When we reached the army of the unbelievers and stood before them in battle formation the army of the unbelievers was great and ours was small but we took heart and strove with them. We fought them on all sides and were slaying them but they were many and each one of us faced one hundred unbelievers. All at once they attacked and surrounded the Muslims and it was feared that they would destroy us in one fell swoop. We raised our voices and called out to the Shaykh to aid us and we asked for his intercession and help. Suddenly, we beheld a horseman of majesty and terrifying mien who had come to give us succor. He stood before our ranks, unsheathed his sword and, greatly stirred, faced the unbelievers. With ardent furor, he sundered the heads, arms, and legs of the unbelievers. No one among the unbelievers had the courage to challenge him and he sundered the heads of the unbelievers from their bodies like cucumbers. In one hour he routed the entire army of the unbelievers and defeated them and pursued them and then he left our side and was gone and we did not recognize him. After that we became victorious over the army of the unbelievers and slew many of them." When the warriors had told this tale, the companions of the Shaykh looked and found that this had happened during the same hour that the Shaykh had begun brandishing his staff on the roof of the mosque.[16]

From *Nafahat al-uns*

When the Tatar unbelievers arrived in Khwarazm, Shaykh [Najm al-Din Kubra] assembled his companions, who numbered more than sixty; Sultan Muhammad Khwarazmshah had already fled. The Tatar unbelievers imagined that [Sultan Muhammad] was still in Khwarazm, which is why they came there. Shaykh [Najm al-Din] summoned some of his companions… and said to them: "Rise quickly and return to your lands! For a fire has been kindled in the East and will burn till it reaches the West. This is a great catastrophe the like of which this *umma* has never witnessed." … Some of his companions then beseeched [Najm al-Din]: "A horse is ready, if the Shaykh will agree to make for Khurasan as he has insisted his companions do." The Shaykh replied: "I will be martyred here and I am not permitted to leave." Then his companions left for Khurasan. When the unbelievers entered the city, the Shaykh called his remaining companions to him and said: "Rise in God's name and let us fight in His path!" [Najm al-Din] then entered his home, donned his *khirqah*, girded his loins, and filled both armpits of his *khirqah*, which was open in the front, with stones, took up his spear, and went forth. When he faced the unbelievers, he began throwing stones at them till none remained. The unbelievers rained arrows upon him. One arrow pierced his blessed breast, he drew it out, cast it aside and then expired. They say that at the time of his martyrdom, he had taken the standard of the unbelievers and ten men could not release it from the Shaykh's hand; in the end, they had to cut the standard from [his hand].[17]

From *Thamarat al-quds*

During the time when Sultan Mahmud the Ghazi turned to Somnath to battle the unbelievers, [Khwajah Muhammad b. Khwajah Abu Ahmad Chishti] was also present at that battle in the company of the Sultan with the intention of fighting. When it appeared that the victory of the unbelievers was at hand, [Khwajah Muhammad] called out to one his *murids*, by the name of Kaku, who was in Chisht. [Kaku] appeared and the unbelievers were defeated. They say that those who were in Chisht that day saw Kaku, who had picked up a stave-striking doors, walls, and [various other] things-and they wondered at this state. In the end, it became known that [Kaku's] intention in this was [aiding] the Sultan's conquest.[18]

[Shaykh Nizam al-Din] was also the son of Ganj-i Shakar. When Ganj-i Shakar no longer remained, one year, the unbelievers were victorious over [the city of] Ajudhan. [Nizam al-Din] girt himself with a sword, mounted a horse, and came before the unbelievers. He fiercely resisted [the unbelievers] and sent many of them to Hell. In the end, he fell from a wound he received from one of the unbelievers. When the war was over, they sought his corpse but found no trace of him.[19]

[Shaykh ‘Aziz Allah] heard that the unbelievers were victorious in Gujarat over the army of Islam. He went to that land to drive away the unbelievers and there he slew many of those sinful unbelievers and then remained there for a time. For a time, the unbelievers gained the upper hand, so he went to drive them away; he fought unceasingly and was martyred in that battle.[20]

Suddenly, a [cloud] of dust appeared from the direction of those unbelievers and Khan Ghazi mounted his horse at the same time, while giving the sign that all the horses, servants, and those in his retinue should, according to the injunction “Fight the unbelievers collectively” [Qur’an: 9:36], form ranks one hundred times stronger than Alexander’s barrier … The Tatar unbelievers-curse them-forded the waters of Lahore and arranged themselves before the ranks of the Muslims … the warriors of Islam…arranged themselves for prayer on the battlefield of jihad, for Mustafa-upon whom be peace-likened jihad to prayer, saying: ‘We have returned from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad.’ Saying Allahu akbar, they raised their hands and caused many ranks of the Mongols’ horses to fall under their swords … [21]

Appendix B: Some Notes on Form-Three Verbal Nouns in Arabic

With the exception of form one, the morphology of the Arabic verbal noun is, for the most part, predictable. Most form-three verbs form their verbal nouns on the feminine form of the passive participle, that is, the *mufāʿala* pattern, owing to the semantic ambiguity of *fiʿāl*; however, some form-three verbs retain a verbal noun on the older pattern *fiʿāl* (originally *fīʿāl*), either in addition to a verbal noun on the *mufāʿala* pattern or to the exclusion thereof. Where both forms are in use, the *mufāʿala* pattern tends to express the verbal sense, while the *fiʿāl* pattern is more nominalized.

One of the functions of form-three verbs is to denote the attempt or action necessary to achieve the result of form-one verbs. To illustrate this concept further, the example of the distinction between forms one and three of the root *Q-T-L* is especially helpful. Form one, *QaTaLa*, means "to kill", whereas form three, *QāTaLa*, means "to fight", or, in other words, "to try to *kill* by means of fighting."

Form-three verbs that have a verbal noun on the older *fiʿāl* pattern, rather than the much more common *mufāʿala* pattern, often express some kind of violent or contentious action or use of force. This is not to say that all form-three verbs that denote violent action have a verbal noun on the *fiʿāl* pattern (e.g. *muhājama*, to attack, to assail, to raid); however, the majority of form-three verbs that express some kind of violent or contentious action do have a verbal noun on the *fiʿāl* pattern. The premodern grammarians do not mention the preponderance of form-three verbs with

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verbal nouns on the *fiʿāl* pattern that denote violent action, nor, to my knowledge, have any Arabists or Semiticists discussed this aspect of form-three verbal nouns.

The following are examples of forceful actions expressed by form-three verbal nouns on the *fiʿāl* pattern:

DiFāʿ	*Resist, withstand, oppose, defend*
ḌiGHāṬ	*Press against*
ḌiRāB	*Exchange blows; contend with someone in a fight*
ḌiRāR	*Harm or injure someone in requital*
GHiLāB	*Attempt to overcome someone; fight*
ḤiJāJ	*Contend with someone using an argument or plea*
ḤiQāQ	*Dispute, litigate, contend with someone for the right to something*
ḤiRāB	*Wage war, battle someone*
HiRāSH	*Quarrel, wrangle with*
ḤiṢāR	*Besiege, beleaguer, restrain*
ʿiQāB	*Infliction of punishment*
ʿiTāB	*Censure, blame, rebuke*
JiḤāF	*Push or press one against another in war; striving, struggling, contending*
JiDāL	*Quarrel, dispute, debate*
JiLāD	*Fight*
JiRāʾ	*Contend with someone in running (or any other affair)*
KiFāḤ	*Fight, battle*
KHiLāF	*Contradict, oppose, clash with*
KHiNāQ	*Quarrel, have a fight*
MiRāʾ	*Wrangle, argue, dispute with, resist, oppose*
NiḌāL	*Fight, battle, defend*
NiZāʿ	*Fight, struggle, contend, dispute, combat*
QiTāL	*Fight, battle*
RiBāṬ	*Being ready for combat, having gathered the horses*
RiMāʾ	*Throw or shoot arrows at or with someone in competition or contention*
SiFāḤ	*Contend with someone in shedding blood*
ṢiMāD	*Contend with someone in a fight*
ṢiRāʿ	*Wrestle or struggle*
ṬiRāD	*Charge upon or assault one's adversary*
WiQāʿ	*Attack, fight; have sexual intercourse with a woman*

Notes

1. Isfahani, *Hilyatu'l-'awliya'* Vol. 7, p. 349.
2. Ibid., p. 350.
3. Ibid., Vol. 8, p. 7.
4. 'Attar, *Tadhkiratu'l-awliya'*, p. 43.
5. Ibid., 202–03. A slightly different version of this anecdote is also related in Isfahani's *Hilyatu'l-awliya'*, Vol. 8, p. 55.
6. Ibid.
7. Qur'an: 17:34.
8. 'Attar, *Tadhkiratu'l-awliya'*, pp. 188–189.
9. Ibid., pp. 304–305.
10. Ibid., p. 157.
11. *Hazar hikayat-i Sufiyan*, pp. 457–458.
12. Ibid., pp. 458–459.
13. Ibid., p. 464.
14. Ibid., pp. 465–466.
15. The pejorative, ***gabr***, is the term used to refer to Zoroastrians in most pre-modern Persian texts. For discussion of the origin of this term see Harry Neale, "Zoroastrians in Farıd al-Dın ʿAṭṭār's *Tadhkiratu'l-ʾawliyāʾ*," *Middle Eastern Literatures*, Vol. 12: 2, 2009, note 13, pp. 153–154.
16. Mahmud b. 'Uthman, *Firdaws al-murshidiyya*, pp. 181–182.
17. Jami, *Nafahat al-uns*, pp. 426–27.
18. Badakhshi, *Thamarat al-quds*, pp. 112–113
19. Ibid., pp. 293–294.
20. Ibid., p. 297.
21. Ibid., p. 564.

Glossary

Aya verse of the Qur'an; also sign

Dhikr remembrance of God; often either through repeating His name vocally or silently

Ghazal lyric poem

Ghazi originally, raider, warrior; sometimes synonymous with *mujahid*

Ghazw originally, raid; military campaigns of early Muslim community; later, religiously sanctioned warfare

Hadith tradition or saying attributed to Muhammad; body of *hadith* considered scripture

Jihad originally, to struggle; in traditional Islamic law, primarily denotes religiously prescribed "just war" to defend or expand Islam and the Muslim community. The legal tradition stipulates many requirements for undertaking jihad. Incorrectly defined as "holy war."

Mathnavi extended didactic narrative in rhyming couplets; early genre of New Persian literature that developed in the tenth century; first used by Hakim Sana'i in the twelfth century for presenting Sufi concepts

Mujahada originally alternate form of verbal noun jihad; in Sufism almost exclusively designates the struggle against the lower self (i.e. the spiritual jihad), whereas jihad in premodern Sufi texts generally denotes the "just war" of Islamic law

Mujahid one who fights in jihad against the foes of Islam; a warrior for the faith

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Murid literally, one who desires or aims with a purpose; in Sufism designates an aspiring Sufi under the guidance of a Sufi elder

Nafs originally, soul, life; in Sufism *nafs* designates the lower self, or the ego that the Sufi must overcome in order to tread the Sufi path

Qasida originally, ancient pre-Islamic Arabic tripartite poem; ode

Riyada the spiritual and physical exercises necessary for mortification of the *nafs*; often paired with *mujahada* in Sufi texts

Sharia originally, a path leading to a water hole; Islamic canonical law as derived from scripture

Shaykh (also *pir* in Persian) originally, elder, tribal leader; in Sufism denotes a recognized Sufi authority or the head of a Sufi order who guides *murids* on the Sufi path

Sira originally, conduct, way of life; biography of Muhammad concentrating on his military campaigns in Arabia

Sufi mostly likely from *suf* (wool), referring to the patched wool cloak of the Sufi with clear ascetic connotations; one who follows the Sufi path (*tasawwuf*); though often defined as the mystics of Islam, Sufis have followed a wide variety of practices and fulfilled manifold roles in their respective communities, which transcend this rather limiting designation. Sufis generally profess a complementary understanding of Islam that embraces an inner spiritual and an outer active interpretation of all aspects of the faith

Sunna originally, custom, norm; in the Islamic context, *Sunnat al-Nabi* (i.e. the behavior of the Prophet, including his deeds and sayings—*hadith*) is second source of Islamic law and practice

Sura chapter of the Qur'an

Tafsir literally, explanation; traditional commentary and interpretation of the Qur'an

Umma nation; the Muslim community

Wali (plural: *awliya'*) literally, near; often translated as "friend of God" in Sufism, which is preferable to "saint" with its Christian associations. In Sufi hagiography, the *awliya'* are the Sufi archetypes whose wonders and deeds bespeak their spiritual status; while not not of the same spiritual stature or authority of the Prophet, the *awliya'* are believed exemplify his teachings and conduct

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