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**Selected Sufi texts of Shaykh Yusuf:
Translations and commentaries**

Selected Sufi texts of Shaykh Yusuf

Shaykh Yusuf Al-Khalwati Al-Maqassari has made his mark in Southeast Asia as a heroic figure who fought valiantly against the Dutch. However, it was his position as a Sufi shaykh that catapulted him into prominence. Before and during his period of exile, the shaykh wrote a number of important texts on *tasawwuf* (Sufism) that have circulated among and influenced many of his companions and students. In this article we have translated three short treatises that had been attributed to him. Although none of them was written whilst he was in exile at the Cape of Good Hope between the time of his arrival there in 1694 and the time of his death in 1699, he was able to disseminate its contents to members of the nascent Cape Muslim community who had come into contact with him. **Key words:** Shaykh Yusuf, Sufi Literature, Islam in South Africa, Melayu Archipelago.

Introduction

During 1994 the South African Muslims celebrated what they deemed to have been the tercentenary of the presence of Islam on the southern tip of the African continent (Jeppie 1996: 72–91). One of the heroic figures whose name has been associated with the nascent Muslim community at the Cape during the late seventeenth century was that of Shaykh Yusuf Al-Khalwati Al-Maqassari (d. 1699). The shaykh, a Muslim cleric, who was brought by the Dutch to Ceylon from the Melayu archipelago as a political prisoner after having languished in prison on that Island for many years, was one of the most prominent Muslim figures to be exiled to the Cape of Good Hope. The shaykh was part of a coterie of Muslims who were enslaved by the Dutch and who formed the nucleus of the nascent Cape Muslim community.

The shaykh was no ordinary political prisoner. When he was apprehended and taken to Ceylon where he was held for almost a decade, he had already been well known as a Melayu Sufi shaykh. As a shaykh he was someone who wrote about and taught the Shari'ah (Islamic law) alongside the dissemination of the basic teachings of the *tariqas* (Sufi brotherhoods) to their members. The socio-psychological impact that his presence had had on this early Muslim community as well as later generations was inestimable; even though the shaykh was not the founder of Islam at the Cape as some earlier scholars tried to argue, he no doubt

was one of its leading pioneers. Many South African Muslims particularly at the Cape continuously draw inspiration from his legacy; even though they are generally unfamiliar with his Sufi writings, some of them who are members of contemporary Sufi orders such the Qadriyyah and Naqshbandiyyah see themselves connected to him via their allegiance towards the orders' leadership (see Haron 2005: 261–286). However, since the shaykh's manuscripts have become readily available through the translations and commentaries that have been produced by contemporary scholars such as Dangor (1990), Abu Hamid (1994b) and Azra (2006), they have made it their duty to read and imbibe some of his ideas. Sufi literature, as a matter of information, is a genre of literature located within the broad field of Arabo-Islamic literature. The shaykh's Sufi texts, which falls within this category of literature and mainly written in Arabic, have enriched not only the growing body of literature in Southeast Asia but have also added substantially to the understanding of early Cape Muslim socio-theological thought; it may therefore be safely assumed that the shaykh's ideas along with the works of other Southeast Asian scholars have penetrated and filtered down into the fabric of South Africa's Cape Muslims over the centuries.

This article is based on a lengthier study entitled "Selected Writings of Shaykh Yusuf al-Khalwati" (1994) completed by Mustapha Keraan towards the fulfillment of his B. A. Honours degree in the Department of Arabic Studies at the University of the Western Cape. The article therefore focuses on some of the shaykh's writings. From among the shaykh's long list of Sufi writings, the article selects and contextualizes three short treatises that had been attributed to him, and it also provides a brief commentary to these writings.

The context: Shaykh Yusuf's biography

Shaykh Yusuf of Makassar was born on the 3rd of July 1626 in the small Muslim Kingdom of Gowa in south Celebes in the Melayu archipelago (see Abu Hamid 1994a). On the 22nd of September 1644 he left his native Makassar to pursue his Islamic education and also to perform the pilgrimage. In Aceh, which was then the major centre of Islamic learning in the archipelago, he was initiated into the Qadriyyah *tariqah* (sufi order / brotherhood) by Shaykh Nur ad-Din ar-Raniri (Azra 2006: 66). The travels of the shaykh took him from Banten to Arabia; however, this journey was via Ceylon and Yemen respectively.

It was not unusual for the Melayu communities performing the pilgrimage to Makkah to stay in Arabia for long periods, studying various Islamic sciences with famous theologians in the sacred cities of Makkah and Medinah. Some even travelled to other cities such as Damascus to enhance their knowledge of these Islamic sciences. Due to improved shipping facilities the number of Melayu pilgrims steadily increased and resident Melayu communities came to constitute a signifi-

cant part of the population of Makkah. According to Van Bruinesen (1990), the Melayu students of this period generally showed a strong preference for training in *tasawwuf* (sufism). *Tasawwuf* can be described as the religious science by means of which the *murid* (adherent / novice) seeks internal purification, the acquisition of praiseworthy qualities and the elimination of blameworthy ones. The *tariqah*, with its specific education, supererogatory prayers and spiritual excises, offers a specific method or a path for pursuing closeness to Allah.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there were, at least, two major branches of the Naqshbandiyyah in the Arabian Peninsula. The one and apparently the earliest Naqshbandiyyah order in Arabia was established by Ibrahim bin Hassan al-Kurani (d.1690), the so-called doyen of Medinite theologians (Van Bruinesen 1990). The other was established by Taj ad-Din Zakariyyah (d.1642) who left India when his rival Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1624) succeeded their master in the central Delhi Lodge; Taj ad-Din appointed two vice-regents in Yemen, namely Shaykh Ahmad bin Ujayl and Shaykh Abi "Abdullah Muhammad" Abd al-Baqi bin Shaykh Kabir Mazhali al-Yamani Zaydi al-Naqshbandiyyah commonly known as Shaykh Muhammad 'Abd al-Baqi. On arriving in Yemen, Shaykh Yusuf studied under the guidance of Shaykh 'Abd al-Baqi and was initiated in the Naqshbandiyyah order (Azra 2006: 91). He then journeyed to Zubayd in Yemen where he was initiated into the Ba 'Alawiyyah *tariqah* by Shaykh Sayyid Ali Zubaydi al-Yamani. After he fulfilled the main rituals of the major pilgrimage he travelled to Medina where he was initiated into the Shattariyyah order by Shaykh Ibrahim al-Jurani al-Madani (Abdullah 1993: 51). Thereafter Shaykh Yusuf travelled to Damascus where he was initiated into the Khalwatiyyah order by Shaykh Abu al-Barakat Ayyub bin Ahmad bin Ayyub al-Khalwati al-Quraysi who, according to Abu Hamid (1994a: 110) and Azra (2006: 92), bestowed the honorific title of Tj al-Khalwati (The Crown [prince] of the Khalwatiyyah [order]) on him.

Shaykh Yusuf returned to Indonesia in 1664 and settled in Banten and not in his native Gowa which was under partial Dutch domination. His presence significantly contributed to Banten's reputation as a centre of Islamic learning, attracting students from elsewhere to the archipelago. Abu Hamid (1994a: 111–112) noted that the Sultan requested Shaykh Yusuf to document some of his teachings and he wrote treatises such as (a) *Bidyat ul-Mubtadi'* ("The beginner's guide") (b) *Zubdat ul-Asrr*, ("The essence of the secrets") (c) *Al-Faw'ih al-Yusufiyyah fi Bayn Tahqiq As-Sufiyyah*, ("The Yusufian fragrance in explaining the realization of Sufism") and (d) *Muqaddimah* ("Introduction") and others which were considered suitable reading for beginners. He may also have influenced Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa, the Sultan of the Sultanate of Banten, in his anti-Dutch stance (Azra 2006: 88–89). Banten was too important a commercial and political rival for the Dutch East India Company (VOC) to tolerate. When the conflict between the crown prince Abd al-Qahhar and his father, namely Sultan Ageng, came to a head in 1682, the VOC intervened militarily in support of the former (Azra 2006:

96–97). For approximately two years the shaykh personally led a force of about five thousand Bantenese, Makassarese, Javanese, and Buginese followers in skirmishes against the Dutch (Azra 2006: 97). Azra (2006: 98), who came across conflicting sources, stated that the Shaykh was finally captured on the 14th of December 1683 and by the 12th of September 1684 sent him into exile to Ceylon. In the midst of this Buddhist dominated community under Dutch rule the shaykh taught *shari'ah* and *tasawwuf* to the South Asian students. According to Abu Hamid's (1994a: 155-160) observations whilst Shaykh Yusuf was in exile in Ceylon, he also wrote the following treatises: (a) *Kayfiyat al-Munghi wa al-Ithbt*, ("Sufficient safeguards and security") (b) *Safinat an-Najt* ("The redeeming ship") (c) *Haablul-Warid li Sa'adt al-Murid* ("The umbilical cord for the joy of the novice") (d) *Al-Barakt As-Saylniyyah* ("The blessed Ceylon") (e) *Matalib us-Slikin* ("The requests of those in the path") and (f) *Ghyat ul-Iqtisar wa Nihyat ul-Inzr* ("The excellence of brevity and the ultimate vision") (see Azra 2006: 98)

At the age of 68 Shaykh Yusuf was sent to the Cape of Good Hope in 1693, after spending 9 years in exile in Ceylon, and arrived there in 1694. He died on the 22nd of May 1699 at the age of 73. The shaykh's remains, according to some scholars such as Van Bruinessen (1990), were exhumed and reburied in Lakiung in the Melayu archipelago on the 6th of April 1705; this view has, however, been challenged by other scholars such as Abu Hamid (1994a). Be that as it may, both the shaykh's Cape and Indonesian burial grounds have become important sacred sites. At the Cape a tomb was constructed in the 1920s and it has been declared a national heritage site by the South African government.

The shaykh's popularity has soared in present day Indonesia as well as among the respective Muslim communities of Sri Lanka and South Africa. The shaykh, according to many scholars, primarily taught the teachings of the Khalwatiyyah order for which he had earned the earlier mentioned honorific title "Tj al-Khalwati." The principles of the Khalwatiyyah order, which was laid down by its founder, namely Abu 'Abd-Allah Siraj ad-Din 'Umar bin Ikmal ad-Din – more popularly known as 'Umar al-Khalwati (d. 1397) – in Tabriz or Herat (see Keddie 1972), include, inter alia, fasting, night vigil, silence and isolation. According to this Sufi school, the *murid* should be in a permanent state of ritual purity, commit him/herself to constant *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah) and *fikr* (contemplation) and always have his/her heart tied to the spiritual master or shaykh. In Shaykh Yusuf's writings he tried to capture some of this school's teachings.

Most of the treatises that have been attributed to the shaykh have been written in Arabic, and a handful appears in the local Melayu archipelago languages such as Buginese. Several letters and short treatises that he had written in these languages are extant and are fortunately located in the Jakarta Museum in Indonesia and the Koninklijk Instituut Voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde (KITLV) library in Leiden, The Netherlands. Some of these have been mentioned above., The rest, as recorded by Abdul-

lah (1993: 51–53) are (a) *Ar-Risalat An-Naqshbandiyyah* (“The Naqshbadiyyah epistle”), (b) *Fath Ar-Rahman* (“The conquest of the Most Merciful”), (c) *Asrar As-Salah* (“The secrets of the ritual prayer”), (d) *At-Tuhfat As-Saylaniyyah* (“The Ceylonese gift”) (e) *At-Tuhfat Ar-Rabbaniyyah* (“The divine gift”), (f) *At-Tuhfat Al-Labib* (“The essential gift”), (g) *Maktub* (“The recorded [matters]”), (h) *Al-Minhaj As-Saylaniyyah* (“The Ceylonese method”), (i) *Qurrat Al-Ayn* (“The essence of the eye”), (j) *Sirr al-Asrar* (“The secret of all secrets”) and (k) *Taj al-Asrar* (“The crown of all secrets”).

Selected manuscripts: technical descriptions

None of the extant manuscripts that have been attributed to Shaykh Yusuf appear to have been written at the Cape. In fact, it may be assumed that during the short period that he was in exile at the Cape, he used much of his time to disseminate his ideas that were contained in many of the above-mentioned treatises. It could also be that he was not granted the opportunity to write whilst serving his last years of his life at the Cape of Good Hope. In any event, it is difficult to speculate as to how he went about teaching members of the nascent Muslim community whilst having been exiled to Faure (popularly referred to as Makassar), and it also questionable whether he had the opportunity to proselytize for there is no extant evidence to suggest this.

That aside, let us look at the selected texts that are housed at the earlier mentioned KITLV library. The set of manuscripts that concerns us in this article consists of 5 different texts that have been attributed to Shaykh Yusuf. Altogether the set comprises of 36 folios with an average of 17 lines per folio. It appears to be of a good typographical quality and is fairly legible except for a few lines and words; this may, however, be because the complication with its reproduction from the microfilm. These two lines were eventually transcribed from the microfilm albeit with some difficulty. Certain words such as *bb* (section) were also illegible but this could be due to the fact that a different colour ink, probably red, was used in the original document for illustrative or aesthetic purposes.

It is obvious that the various treatises of Shaykh Yusuf were recorded by different scribes because the calligraphy varies markedly from one manuscript to the other. Compare, for example, the handwritings employed in recording *Bidyat ul-Mubtadi* (“The beginner’s guide”) and *Ghayat ul-Iqtisar wa Nihyat al-Inzar* (“The excellence of brevity and the ultimate vision”) to that of *An-Nur al-Hdi*, (“The guided light”) and one is able to see the different writing styles. On this note mention should be made of the fact that in the Muslim world it was not uncommon to find students cum scribes playing a significant role in the dissemination and distribution of their teacher’s manuscripts. When scrutinizing the shaykh’s

manuscripts it may be concluded that the handwriting style in *An-Nur al-Hdi* belonged to one of students of the shaykh's disciples. The latter manuscript, in this instance, was attributed to the hand of Ahmad as-Salih in 1781 as noted at the end of the treatise. Ahmad as-Salih, who copied the treatise almost 80 years after the shaykh's demise, must have received the necessary permission to copy and record the text as it was dictated to him by his teacher / shaykh (see Pedersen 1984: 20–36).

When translating some of these texts, the translators were mindful of some scholars' views regarding the theories of translation. One theoretical model that has been appropriated was the meaning-based theory as explained in Mildred Larson's *A Meaning-Based Translation: A Cross-Language Equivalence* (1998) and elaborated upon by Basil Hatim and Ian Mason in their work *Discourse and the Translator* (1994). The last-two mentioned scholars stressed the fact that when undertaking a translation it involves a process and the product; and they stated that among the factors that are critical in the process and producing a viable product are the translator's cultural background, his/her intention and motivation, the notion of translation as discourse, and translator as mediator. Bearing in mind these important points, we – as translators – attempted to render the texts of Shaykh Yusuf from Arabic (the source language) into English (the target language) as accurately as possible without trying to be too literal in our presentation. We are acutely aware of the fact that these are philosophical-mystical treatises that are not easy to translate. Nevertheless, an attempt was made to render them into English that, we hope, will read fluently. The following three texts were selected for translation: *Talkhis ul-Ma'rif*, *Ghyat ul-Iqtisar wa Nihyat ul-Inzar* and *An-Nur Al-Hdi ila Tariq Ar-Rashd*. Before translating these texts, mention should be made of the fact that whilst it is the normal practice to adhere to a particular system of transliteration, we have generally decided as far as possible to dispense with them for technical reasons.

The manuscript: *Talkhis ul-Ma'rif* ("The synopsis of the divine knowledge") – a translation & discussion

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Introduction

And we ask Him for help in the acquisition of total providence and complete guidance. Amen. We thank Allah who has placed for us a *qiblah* (direction / guideline / course / path) as a guide in order to illuminate His manifest Lordship to the servant; the (servant being the) one who is subjected to and by the Lord. This process should be followed so that reality may be brought to the worshipper's

(consciousness) via his/her subjugation to the Lordship of the One worshipped and sought after. May all the salutations and peace be showered upon the secret and essence of existence, namely Prophet Muhammad who is the best witness-bearer and the best model that people should emulate; and also shower (salutations) upon his family and companions from amongst the *ansar* (helpers) and *muhjirin* (migrators), as well as on all the people from the family of Islam. What follows is the treatise which we have named *Talkhis ma'arif min Ahwal ul-'Awarif*. We humbly appeal to Allah, most High, that this treatise be useful, if Allah wills, to the one who travels the spiritual path as well as the one seeking to be nourished with true love. And the text reads as follows:

The text

Bear knowledge my brother/(sister) to always be a close companion of Allah, may Allah educate you with this knowledge, and may He grant you understanding concerning it (and be aware) that the *qiblah* (direction / guideline / course / path) is (composed of) four (facets). The first of these is the *qiblat al-'amal* (the course of action). The second is the *qiblat al-ilm* (the path of knowledge). The third is the *qiblat as-sirr* (the path of secrecy). The fourth is the *qiblat at-tawajjuh* (the path of contemplation).

As for the path or course of action, that is made quite clear in the verse: "so turn the face in the direction of the sacred mosque" (Qur'an 2: 144). It is not correct to perform the ritual prayer except by literally turning one's face toward it, irrespective whether the one, who performs the ritual prayer, is one who is knowledgeable or is one who is ignorant. This *qiblah* is known as the path to be followed by the common people and this *qiblah* may be distant from the worshipper or it may be close to him/her depending on his/her position. It may be in a particular direction whether it be in the East, the West, the South or the North. And every one from among the common people knows this *qiblah*. So understand this.

As for the path of knowledge, it is indicated by the verse: "Where so ever you turn, there is the presence of Allah" (Qur'an 2: 115). This path or way is known as the way for the elect. The person facing the transcendental *qiblah* can be close to or distant from it. He may be the pathway himself at the same time and in the same position. Not everyone knows the secret of the above *qiblah* except the elect. So know that.

As for the path of secrecy, it encompasses everything and it is manifest with everything, in everything, upon everything, by everything, from everything, with everything, to everything and everything emanates from it, and everything returns to it; it is the essence of everything, it is the same as everything and it is everything itself. "He is the first and the last, the manifest and the hidden" (Qur'an 57: 3), "But we are nearer to Him than you, and you see not" (Qur'an 56: 85), "For

we are closer to him than his jugular vein" (Qur'an 50: 16), and "And He is with you where so ever you may be" (Qur'an 57: 4). Not everyone would understand what we are saying except if he/she was us and we were him/her. Some people said that those who stand (in the ritual prayer) like they are standing and fast like they are fasting and taste their food, will understand their speech. So bear knowledge of that information which forms part of the hidden divine secrets and is at the core of understanding (everything). It is divine gnosis with which nobody else succeeds or gains victory except the people of complete providence, of perfect and comprehensive joy, which encompasses their outer and inner (beings). And whosoever is able to accomplish this then it is due to their emulation of Allah's Prophet. So be confirmed in this.

As for the path of contemplation, it is an expression of the inner recesses of the heart in contrast to the true heart as indicated by the statement: "The heart of the believer is the throne of Allah." And one of them (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "The heart is unseen and the reality is unseen and the unseen is therefore best associated with the unseen." The best (act to perform) is then to direct oneself to that *qiblah* in order to perceive the Reality, Allah, the Most Glorified, the Exalted, and the One who is manifest with complete presence of mind under all circumstances. The great Naqshabandiyyah shaykhs (may Allah sanctify their secrets) depended in pursuing this activity (and other spiritual activities). As for us we have attained great benefits, the blessings of which cannot be enumerated when we entered this *tariqah* (order/brotherhood) and trained at the hands of our shaykh, the leader, the model of mankind, the saint, the gnostic and master Shaykh Muhammad Baqi an-Naqshabandi al-Yamani, may Allah sanctify his soul and may we benefit from him. Amen. So bear knowledge thereof.

Discussion

Although this treatise, consisting of only 4 folios, is not listed amongst the known works of Shaykh Yusuf, two reasons could be forwarded to argue that it was written by him: (a) The copyist / compiler mentioned that he was trained by Shaykh Muhammad Baqi An-Naqshbandi al-Yamani.' Azra (2006) demonstrated that the latter was one of Shaykh Yusuf's esteemed teachers and he was the one who had initiated Shaykh Yusuf into the Naqshbandiyyah *tariqah* (b) A section of the treatise dealing with the four pathways is quoted verbatim from *Zubdat al-Asrar*, which is an established treatise attributed to Shaykh Yusuf; the latter mentioned work was translated into English by Suleman Dangor in 1990 and subsequently critically assessed in Nabila Lubis' work (1996). In addition, the treatise is also alluded to another work of Shaykh Yusuf, titled *Daf' ul-Bala'*.

This short treatise set down the different pathways or guidelines for members of the society. It clearly focused on the guidelines meant for (a) the common peo-

ple, (b) the elect, and (c) the elite of the elect. In addition, it laid down identified guidelines in perceiving the reality of God. And anyone who enters and participates in the Sufi brotherhoods is expected to pursue these specific pathways; no one is able to pass from one stage to the other without the permission of the shaykh who acts as his/her guide in that specific order. The treatise directs one to the fact that Shaykh Yusuf was a member of the Naqshbandiyyah order or brotherhood that has adherents in different parts of the Muslim heartlands.

The manuscript: *Ghayat ul-Iqtisar wa Nihayat ul-Inzar* ("The excellence in brevity and the ultimate vision") – a translation and discussion

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

Introduction

O my Lord, make it easy and not difficult (for me). And may kind praise be showered upon His intimate friend (i. e. Muhammad) for his achievements, and may salutations (be showered) upon Muhammad and his family. I, who am indeed from among the most unworthy and needy servants, am the one who confess my sins and shortcomings, say: "When we – with the power of Allah and the execution of His eternal decree – descended upon the abode where Safiyyu Allah, namely Adam bin Jhinan, resided, that is the island called Sirandib (i. e. Ceylon), some of our brothers amongst the beloved companions and pilgrims requested that I write the treatise *Ghayat ul-Iqtisar wa Nihayat ul-Inzar*. This I undertook and it entails a discussion of the principles of the constant essence, its pathways, relations and names. Then we turned to Allah, the most High, for His help to arrive easily at a decision, and I said: 'By Allah, with Who is all success, and in whose Hand is the domain of accomplishment, what are as follows: Bear mindful O brother, seeker, lover, and the one who desires Allah's love; may Allah educate you with His knowledge and may you gain understanding from it.'"

The text

Verily that which is called constant *dhat* (essence) by the gnostics of Allah, namely from amongst the people of this discipline, it is a form and shape which is known in accordance with the infinite and eternal knowledge of Allah. It is infinite and eternal because knowledge is essentially infinite and eternal; and it is like the divine knowledge, which is wholly infinite in compliance with the infinity of the most sublime essence. So be mindful of that.

As for restricting it to that which is permanent, they have described the essence with it because it is permanent in the Divine knowledge; that is, it does not separate nor does it ever segregate from it, for it has no beginning nor ending. As

for the meaning of "the essence" here, they are specific things in the (field of) knowledge and it also has names besides these in the totality of all scientific information and the reality of all things in science. Reality also has different meanings. Linguistically it means: what is "the thing"; it is as it is. And sometimes it is the technical terms used by the greatest gnostics. They say that reality is that in which a thing exists. From this point of view it is said that He, the Exalted, is the Reality of all things because these things exist in Him, the Exalted, the Most High. So bear knowledge of that. As regards the earlier mentioned statement, it, in truth, means that it is the same condition (i.e. the same reality). So bear knowledge of that.

Then regarding the actual statement of its temporality in relation to its *kharij* (external effects), particularly from the point of view of naming *al-mu'aththar* (the influencing factor), it is also called the effect itself. However, regarding the statement of this world's eternity in terms of its established Reality, it is part of the Infinite and Divine knowledge. According to the people of this discipline pertaining to established evidence – as mentioned earlier – and that is based upon the section regarding the identification of the actual influence by the factor that influences it. And if you are in doubt then let us give an example which may cause you to comprehend it a little better. When, according to the popular understanding, someone did practice or familiarise himself with certain practices then we may take an example of a person who entered a (lion's) "lair". (In it) he saw the footprints of a lion on the ground and said: "This is a lion." He however did not really see the lion but, instead, he saw its footprints. He will be correct in accordance with the people's understanding, and nobody would deny his statement. So bear knowledge of that.

We have also come across terminology used by informed people of this discipline, and some of them say that the existence of this world is necessary. And it is said so in the affirmative; however, and it is the same when whatever is known from that which is missing or absent from those words than that is in accordance with His creation. Then it was said "O be(come) it, then verily it is what it has become." When Allah, the Most High, located it (i. e. that which is in existence) then certainly it had to be in existence merely by the fact that Allah, the Most High brought it into existence. Its existence then would become, with this consideration, a necessity and not a possibility. We agree that the existence of this world would have been a possibility before Divine Creation was attached to it. After that it was necessarily existing by Allah's Grace and not by itself; meaning that it is existing through the power of creation of Allah, the Master, the Powerful, the All-Willing, the Most Wise. It would then have been cautioned according to this negative statement. So bear knowledge of that if you are a person of understanding and peace.

As for the statement regarding its non-existence, it can only be by considering it to be manifestly non-existent. But the statement of its existence can only be real by considering the knowledge about it's (non-existence). It is also true that things that are known to be existing even if it is in relation (to others not existing). However if it had been non-existent from all forms of existence, then it would never have been known when it was actualized. Regarding the statement about its non-eternal or non-temporal nature, these are relative items i.e. the terminology guidelines. According to the great gnostics it is that the manifest Eternal Existence is nothing else except the Reality, the Most High, similarly the manifest Temporal Existence is nothing else except the universe. The permanent Essence is not only the Reality, the Most High, but it also becomes the manifest, Eternal, Existing by itself. It is also not the universe which becomes manifestly temporally existent. The constant Essence did not only smell the fragrance of manifest existence, be it eternal or temporal. Why then cannot it be said that the Reality, the Most High, is Eternal, existing manifestly? But it is not this universe, and concerning its attributes that which is temporal, and existing manifestly, it is correct to say that the constant Essence is not eternal, nor temporal. So bear knowledge of that. It is also true to say that something is not existing, and neither is it (true to say it is) absolutely non-existent from all existence. So bear knowledge of that too.

Who does Allah, the exalted, address with His instruction "Be"? If we say that this instruction is for something that is already existing, then it could imply of necessity that the Reality, glory be to Him, the most High, cannot create from non-existence. If this is so then it creates a problem which is not satisfactory. And if we say that this divine instruction is directed at something which is non-existent, then it would imply that this divine instruction is doing it in vain because it addresses non-existence and the one who addresses is existing. The Reality, Most High, Is All -Wise and informed and He never does things in vain. This is also a problem, how then is the instruction, or rather, to whom is it addressed? The answer is that it is true that the divine instruction "Be" addresses a dimension of the existence of the constant Essence and, it is known, that the constant Essence has two dimensions. The one relates to its existence and the other to its non-existence. As for the first dimension i.e. its existence, the Reality, the Most High, addresses it with His instruction "Kun" (Be). As for the second dimension i.e. its non-existence, it accepts Divine Origination and for this reason it is correct. It is said that the reality, the Most High, brought the things in the universe to existence from non-existence or from possible non-existence to manifest existence. It is correct to say that He, the Most High, brought things into existence from Existence i.e. the sublime Divine Existence which is referred to as the inner Existence; this is according to the views of some of the wise-persons and the gnostics who reached completeness in Allah, to manifest creation. Both these views are correct accord-

ing to those who know the reality of things. Bear knowledge of this because it is of great value.

When the question is asked: “what is the reason for calling this world the shade of Allah, the Most High?” The shade of His likeness is like the picture of the object. The Reality, Glory be to Him, the Most High, has no likeness. It is said that the matter has not been understood for three reasons. The first reason is that the shade cannot exist by itself but by its possessor. Likewise the universe cannot exist by itself but by Allah, Most High. Secondly, the shade does not move except with the movement of its possessor. Likewise this universe does not do anything and it does not have a will except with the will of Allah and His power, the Most High. Thirdly, the shade increases with the compounding of the reflection but the object of the shade does not increase with the compounding of its reflections and its likes. This comparison is for this reason only. So bear knowledge of this.

Conclusion

It is a very precious (treatise) and not everyone knows the exposition of all this with authority except its own people upon whom be peace. And if a person says ‘we understand everything that is mentioned in this treatise’, it is with the help of Allah, Most High.

Discussion

This treatise of 7 folios was compiled, as mentioned earlier (see Abu Hamid 1994a), by Shaykh Yusuf whilst he was exiled to the island of Ceylon, and it contains some profound metaphysical thoughts of the shaykh. Prior to providing a synopsis of the text by making reference to a few key concepts contained in it, it is important to state that its contents should be compared with texts that deal with similar concepts. We have, for example, Naguib Al-Attas’ (1986) analyses of al-Raniri’s work in mind. Due to the constraints of space, it is not possible to bring into purview the ideas contained in al-Raniri’s treatises.

Nonetheless some of the concepts include: (a) the permanence and temporality of the constant essence; (b) the existence of the world and its probability before Divine Creation; (c) the non-existence of the world and its manifest non-existence; (d) the permanent essence is not the Reality and it is not eternal nor temporal; (e) the command *kun* (be) – if addressed to something already existing would imply that Allah cannot create from non-existence, and if it is addressed to something non-existent then it implies that the Divine command would in vain. This concept is also addressed in *Matalib as-Salikin* where it is stated that Allah brought the world its existence from the *ghayb* (unseen) to the *shahadah* (visible) with the command *kun fa yakun* (be and it is). (f) Allah brought things from non-existence or possible non-existence into manifest existence or into existence from existence;

and (g) the universe cannot exist without Allah – a premise which is generally accepted and it is also one of the basic tenets of the *Shari'ah*.

The manuscript: *An-Nur Al-Hdi il Tariq Ar-Rashd* (“The light of guidance towards the righteous path”) – a translation and discussion

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

Introduction

Praise be to Allah, the Exalted, the Most High, Creator of everything from non-existence to existence with His strength. And (may His) choicest salutations and blessings upon our Leader Muhammad, the source of light in both worlds, as well as on his respected, pure family and companions; he (Muhammad) was the truthful friend and the guardian of the believing and fearful *ummah* (Muslim community). All praise be to Allah, who grants success and love, and (we again bring) salutations upon the Prophet, the helper and guide.

In the year 1202 after the *hijra* (the prophet's migration) on the blessed night of the 15th of Sha'bn during the time of 'Isha (late evening ritual prayer) whilst at my home in the land of Maharas in a town called Halwataqa I, Ahmad as-Salih Shams al-Millah wa ad-Din from Borneo, reached the age of thirty two and completed copying this manuscript. Earlier in that year Allah inspired me to copy this book which was titled *An-Nur Al-Hdi il Tariq Ar-Rashd*. I took the liberty of arranging it into seven sections and I have set forth its many different ideas. After my perusal of Maulana ash-Shaykh al-Haj Yusuf al-Taj al-Khalwati's book, I have extracted materials from it. I have also read another book that I had heard from our Shaykh al-Faqih Yusuf al Qadi of Borneo and from which I have drawn upon (relevant) information. I have also included what I have heard from the learned scholars with whom I am acquainted, and with whom I have had detailed discussions. Through the will of Allah and His strength and the love He has for me, I have included some of their ideas as well as those of my own. Through understanding, may Allah strengthen you with this original (manuscript) so that you may gain insight into and innermost certainty regarding all affairs (pertaining to the spiritual dimensions of religion).

The first section

It mentions the conditions of vision, hearing and speech and the different inclinations of the heart. As for your vision (of the things you see), you should not call it existence of vision by itself because of your eyes. This is because in reality the eye does not see except by the vision of Allah. If it had not been that the quality of Allah's vision for the eye had been demonstrated then all of creation would have

been blind. And it is Allah who is the “seer” in reality as Allah, the Exalted, says “for Allah sees well all they do” (Qur’an 2: 96). The eye is an expression of an inclination (to see) but an inclination does not see except by the One who creates that inclination. Regarding your own vision, it has no existence by itself and if its qualities for existence was not demonstrated, then all creation would have been blind because, in reality, Allah is, in truth the Existent.

As regards your hearing (of that which you hear), do not call it the existence of hearing by itself because of yours ears. It is in fact not your ears which hear but Allah (who hears). If the quality of Allah’s hearing was not shown then the ear would not have heard. Allah is, in reality, the All-Seer, the All-Hearer. The ears are only an expression of a cavity; it does not possess hearing except in the possessor. So whatever you hear there is no existence for it by itself; if the quality of the existence of Allah was not shown, then all creation would have been deaf. Its reality (i.e. of hearing) is Allah, the Truly Existent, as He, the Exalted, says: “And Allah is All-Hearing and All-Seeing” (Qur’an 58: 1).

Regarding your speech (with which you speak), do not call it the existence of speech itself because in reality it is not the tongue that speaks when it does except by the will of Allah as He, the Exalted, says: “none shall speak except anyone who is permitted by (Allah) the most Gracious” (Qur’an 78: 38). If it was not that the quality of Allah’s speech was made clear on the tongue then it would not have been possible for all creation to speak because it is, in reality, Allah who speaks. The tongue is only like a flute which gives off a sound. It is not the flute which produces the sound but the flutist. The speech with which you speak does not exist by itself. If the quality of the existence of Allah was not clarified then all of creation would have been dumb. In reality it is Allah who, in truth, is the Existent. And as regards the kinds of inclinations of the heart, do not call it the existence of the will of the heart because, in reality, there is absolutely no division in the inclinations of the heart. If the quality of Allah’s power and will of the heart has not been demonstrated, then the heart would have been divided. But it is not so because Allah, the Most High, says: “Allah has not made for man two hearts in his (one) body” (Qur’an 33: 4). Allah is all powerful and He wills everything and the most High says: “And He is oft forgiving, all full of love and kindness, Lord of the Throne of Glory; doer (without let) of that entire He intends” (Qur’an 85: 14–16). Allah is most powerful and He wills everything in reality and the heart is only an expression of parts (of the body). It does not have any power and will except in the soul. Whatever the heart is inclined towards, it does not do so as a result of existence by itself. If the quality of the existence of Allah was not made clear, it would not have had any power or will. Its reality is Allah who is truly existent. The qualities of His existence are frequently predicated, according to our statement, on the existence of Allah.

The second section

It contains the conditions of the one who performs the ritual ablution for the ritual prayer (to be performed) and the one who (is about to) perform(s) it. When you are performing the ablution, do not say that the will and power is from yourself while (you in the process of) purifying (yourself). Do not call it purity for in essence it is as a result of that which purifies it because it is essentially not you who desires or wills this purification since you are not able to do it except that Allah causes the movements. If the quality of Allah's power and will was not demonstrated to you, then the water would not have cleansed. If the quality of Allah's glorification on the water was not shown, then the water would have remained a non-purifying entity. As for your standing with the intention to perform the ritual prayer, you should draw your attention to the unity of Allah according to the proven statement: "There is no power and strength except in Allah the most High, the most Great". Then you should say: "I am now performing the compulsory *Thur* (midday ritual prayer) or other ritual prayer." And if your tongue says *Allhu Akbar* (Allah is Great), then your heart must say: "I am carrying out Your order according to the proven statement: 'And Allah created you and what you do'" (Qur'an 37: 96). Or you can say: "I am carrying out my duty" in accordance with the proven statement: "He is with you wherever ye may be". All your movements in the ritual prayer should, in fact, occur in the heart according to the statement: "You are one." Or you should say: "You are the Owner of all conditions". And whatever infringes inwardly or outwardly upon your ritual prayer, then do not call it devilish insinuations. Call to mind the will of Allah and His power and also the clear proof of His unity. Make all of it a ritual prayer on the basis of the evidential statement: "You will not move along the path except by the will of Allah". Our ritual prayer is outwardly manifest and the power is from us but, in reality, it is from Allah. This is the view of all the Sufis who say that the worshipper and the one being worshipped is one.

The third section

It deals with the conditions of remembrance and its reality. The best remembrances, according to consensus amongst the gnostics on the unity of Allah, are four: The first is *L ilha illallah* (there is no God except Allah); the second is *Allh Allah*; the third is *Huwa Huwa* (He, He); and the fourth is *ah ah*. If your tongue says *L illha illa Allh* then your heart should simultaneously say "You are the truly Existent". And when your tongue says "Allah Allah" then your heart should say simultaneously "you are truly one". And when your tongue says "*Huwa Huwa*" then your heart should simultaneously state "You are the Absolute". And when your tongue says "*ah ah*", then your heart should say simultaneously "You are the Eternal". And if you have confirmed that "He, Allah, is the truly Existent" then believe in your

heart without separating yourself from Allah and His presence. And if you have confirmed that “He Allah, is one”, believe in your heart without separating yourself from Allah regarding His unity. And if you have confirmed “He, Allah, is Absolute”, believe in your heart without separating yourself from Allah’s Absoluteness. And if you have confirmed that “He, Allah, is Eternal”; believe in your heart without separating yourself from Allah in His Eternity. True remembrance is that which you utter with your tongue, confirm by memory and believe in the heart. As Allah, the Exalted says: “Verily *dhikr* is a benefit for the true believers” (Qur’an 51: 55).

The fourth section

It mentions the conditions of contemplation and its reality. If you want to contemplate, then make good your remembrance in the absoluteness of Allah on the basis of the proven statement: “And Allah encompasses all things” (Qur’an 4: 126). So make good the transformation of your soul and the flow of entry into your soul and confine it (to the remembrance of Allah), ponder on the glorious Name of the Most High in the depth of your heart, and its light will radiate and it will encompass all your limbs and everything else. As for the time of your contemplation and if anything intrudes outwardly or inwardly, then you should not call it devilish insinuations because it is in fact a quality of the power and the will of Allah. As you should take the sign of your intrusion not as a separation between yourself and Allah because a quality of Allah can never be separated from His essence as the Shaykh Taj ud-Din an-Naqshbandi himself said: “The fragmentation of the attributes from the Essence is impossible”.

The fifth section

It deals with the conditions of the exit and entry of the soul and its reality. It is the most supreme Name of Allah which connects between the exit and the entry of the *nafs* (soul). The exit of the *nafs* is in fact one of the qualities of Allah who humans worship and its entry is of the essence of Allah who humans worship. As for the *nafs* it is not the spirit but it is a sign of the spirit, like the fire and its smoke. As for the spirit, it is in fact called an essence and we are a quality of the spirit and the spirit is a quality of Allah. This is what is meant by the statement of our prophet Muhammad: “Know yourself for he/she who knows him/herself will know his/her Lord and he/she who knows his/her Lord will know him/herself.” The essence is a concrete substance and it belongs to the infinite knowledge of Allah. It is best to always work towards the exit of the *nafs* with the remembrance “*Huwa Huwa*” and at its entrance with “Allah Allah”. Or you can say for the exit of your *nafs* “Allah Allah” as well as for its entry because the exit of the *nafs* is *shari’ah* (Islamic law) and its entry *tariqah* (the Sufi path). Its presence in you is *haqiqah*

(reality) and the totality of all of these is *ma'rifah* (gnosis). Whoever participates in the remembrance (of Allah), without severing himself from the unity of Allah, is the best (form of remembrance) as shown by the statement: "He is the first and the last, the manifest and the Hidden" (Qur'an 57: 3).

The sixth section

It records the *tawhid* (unity) of Allah's rights and the non-separation of His creation. Realise that the knowledge of *tawhid* is one single concept and (it means) everything is encompassed in His knowledge. And His knowledge is His quality. The essence and the qualities (of Allah) are but one (and the same). Likewise the things exist in Allah and Allah exists in things. And they are, in actual fact, one. There is no (other) existence except His existence, and there is no (other) attribute except His attribute. There is also no essence except His essence on the basis of the evidential statement: "Verily whatever they worship besides Allah is Allah."

The seventh section

It deals with remembrance which is not disconnected and sight which is not veiled from the unity of Allah's rights. And He, Allah, is (able to) cut off (His relationship with anything and anyone) except Himself separating from Prophet Muhammad. However, Allah's separation, on the one hand, is without any beginning and, on the other, without ending. And the condition is always the same when absorption takes place with our Prophet's radiance. The annihilation is in of our Prophet's light and the two will remain together in Allah's essence. There is no separation for us from our prophet Muhammad and from Allah. As Allah, Most High, Himself states: "Man is my secret and my secret is My attribute and My attribute is nothing besides Myself." This is because the light of Allah's essence is also called Muhammad's light and his light is called "spirit". The spirit's light is called the object of desire and its light (of the desire's object) is called substance. There is no difference between the light and its possessor-this being like the sun and its rays. As the most High says: "And the earth will shine with the glory of its Lord" (Qur'an 39: 69). Another example (of this non-differentiation) is (the analogy of) the sea and its waves.

Oh my brothers (and sisters), this is your gnosis regarding the Unity of Allah's right. This is a special covenant from the heart without your separation from Allah and His messenger. You will always work upon this and you will always have it in your heart when you stand, walk, sit, recline, (and during your) silence, talking, consciousness, sleep, health, sickness, life and death as He, the Most High, says: "Celebrate Allah's praises standing, sitting or reclining [...]." (Qur'an 40: 103).

Conclusion

In this way I found, while I was writing this book, the reward and the supplication of our grandfather Shaykh Yusuf and the blessing of our mentor, the jurist, Yusuf in accordance with the path of our leader Muhammad, may he be forgiven and loved. I yearn for His blessings in this world and in the Hereafter and those who follow the path to which I invite you so that we obtain the gnosis of Allah. He does not demand from me; and what I ask of Him whilst in this abode of turmoil to the abode of stability is: O Allah, You are with me and You cause me to progress. Allah makes it easy and do not make it difficult (for me). I call on You for help, so please help (me). O Lord of all worlds, the best of all helpers. And O Allah place (Your) salutations upon Muhammad, the best of Your creation.

Discussion

When reviewing this treatise, which consists of 12 folios, it is quite evident that it deals with a number of significant mystical aspects. In the first instance it discussed the conditions of vision, hearing and speech and the different inclinations of the heart. The scribe/discussant, namely Ahmad as-Salih, attempted to explain the concept of *wahdat al-wujud* in very simple terms based on the prophetic statement quoted another of the shaykh's works titled *Zubdat al-Asrar* ("The essence of all secrets"): 'My servant continues to come closer to me [...] I become his hearing through which he hears and his sight [...]' Perhaps his audience or readership belongs to a particular category in the Sufi order and hence the need to address them at a level to accommodate their understanding: "Regarding your hearing [...] it is not your ears that hear but Allah." Perhaps it is appropriate to quote Shaykh Ahmad al-'Alawi (Lings 1993: 128) on this issue: "Thou art now deaf and hearing is not in thy nature. God is the hearer and it is by attributing this faculty unto thyself that thou art deaf. If thou couldst hear, then wouldst hear the discourse of God at every time and every state [...] nay thou art deaf and art still in the fold of nothingness." In the treatise he identified specific concepts that are critical for the individuals pursuing the spiritual path. Here below an attempt will only highlight some of the concepts.

The *arif* (knower), having reached the state of *al-fana* (extinction), does not hear, see or speak by himself but by the will of Allah because he has ceased to exist by him/herself or by his/her *nafs*. These concepts are also alluded to in *Zubdat al-Asrar* and *Matalib As-Salikin* respectively. The *muttawaddi* (the one who performs ablution) prepares for the actual performance of ablution and thereafter the actual obligatory ritual prayer. One can only take ablution with the will of Allah and the water will only purify when Allah is glorified as one purifies oneself with it. Similarly the ritual prayer is only possible and performed because all the movements that one performs are in reality willed by Allah's wish. The conditions of

dhikr (remembrance of Allah) and its actualization takes place when one verbally – silently or loudly – utters the following phrases and words: *la illaha illa Allah*, *Allah Allah*, *huwa huwa* and *ah ah* with the tongue and with the relevant responses from the heart. These matters are further discussed in the shaykh’s treatise, namely *Daf’ ul-Bala* (warding off of evil) and further expanded upon in detail in his *Al-Barakt as-Sayluniyyah* (“The Ceylonese blessings”). In the latter text the classification of the *dhikr* (the one who remembers) and its mechanics – namely, moments when the body, the breathing and the importance of the heart – are emphasized are explained. The “spiritual” heart occupies a pivotal position in the philosophy of *tasawwuf* (Sufism), as it is the receptacle of *ma’rifah*. The following is a quotation from Shaykh Abdul-Qadir Jilani (1990: 176) in which he relates the incidence of a person who enquired from Shaykh Abu Yazid al-Bistami about a clean place to perform the ritual prayer and his reply was: “Cleanse yourself then pray wherever you want (to perform the ritual prayer).” In this regard Imam al-Ghazali (1983: 52) stated that “you present your bodies before Me and you offer Me your tongues, but you keep your hearts from Me. What you are (then) doing, are (indeed) futile.” Another quote from Shaykh Abdul-Qadir Jilani (1990: 35): “My heart saw my Lord with the light of my Lord” also stresses this point. The importance of the heart in *tasawwuf* is also alluded to in the shaykh’s work, namely *Zubdat al-Asrar*.

The question of *tafakkur* (meditation) and the notion that the attributes of Allah can never be separated from His essence are critical issues that have been addressed in this treatise. The importance of *tafakkur* is emphasized by all the great Sufi masters such as ibn ‘Ata Allah (1984: 59) who stated that “(m)editation is the lamp of the heart so when it goes away the heart has no illumination.” Thus the one who repeats the *dhikr* *Huwa Huwa* with the objective of exiting this world and uniting with Allah, and the person who repeats *Allah Allah* with the intention of entering Allah’s ever presence enrich the *nafs* as well as the forms its reality. In addition, the repetition of *al-Ismu al-Adham* (The greatest name), namely Allah, operates between the points of the individual’s respective exit and entry and this is essentially, according to the shaykh’s treatise, a sign of the spirit and not the spirit itself. Some of these and other aspects of the *nafs* are also alluded to in *Zubdat al-Asrar*. The concept of *tawhid* (the unity of Allah) reveals that everything exists in Allah, and that there is no existence except His existence. This is a concept that was mentioned in the four other manuscripts and alluded to in some detail in *Matalib As-Salikin* and one that is also expounded by most of the great Sufi masters. And the concept *dhikr* (remembrance) may be described as a perpetual vision and a means via which there is no separation for the people of *dhikr* from Allah and His Prophet. Shaykh Abdul-Qadir Jilani (1993: 6) stated: “He (who) frees himself from its (i.e. the world’s) attractions, and (will be eternally) connect(ed) with his Lord and Sustainer at all times, and (he will) remain sincerely dedicated in his devotion and worship (to Allah alone).” And

finally the essence of Allah is called “the Light of Muhammad” and his light is called “the spirit”. By this is meant that the individual should thus try his/her best to emulate as best as he/she can the prophetic model in order to capture his “spirit”. It should, however, be borne in and stated that each of the sufi concepts briefly highlighted and explained here are much more complex, and that the contents of this text attributed to the shaykh should be compared to those penned by his predecessors such as Nur al-Din Muhammad Al-Raniri (d. 1658) and ‘Abd al-Ra’uf Al-Sinkili (d. 1693); these comparative studies will assist one in gaining a better and indeed a deeper insight into the concepts and in comprehending God’s attributes.

Conclusion

Shaykh Yusuf was and remains a prominent figure in South Africa’s Muslim history in particular and South Africa’s history in general. Although there is solid evidence that suggest that he never wrote any manuscripts whilst he was exiled to the Cape of Good Hope, it cannot be denied that it was inevitable for a man of his stature, namely a sufi shaykh, to disseminate his teachings and ideas among those with whom he came into contact at the Cape. In fact, his mere presence had a socio-psychological effect upon the nascent Muslim community and it also encouraged other exiles and slaves from Southeast Asia and elsewhere to remain steadfast against Dutch and later British colonialism. The three translated manuscripts in this article reveal and share some of the shaykh’s significant ideas concerning *tasawwuf* (Sufism); an institution that has developed over many centuries into vibrant spiritual movements/orders that have been prevalent among South Africa’s minority Muslim community for generations (see Haron 2005). The Sufi literature that the shaykh had penned in Southeast Asia and whilst he was in exile in Ceylon has undoubtedly contributed directly and indirectly towards the theological and mystical thinking among the early Cape of Good Hope Muslims. Although South African literary historians cannot lay claim to these writings as having been part of South African heritage, they – in particular the Muslim scholars – can declare that the shayk’s ideas have, to some extent, filtered down and become an integral part of the formation of a unique South African Muslim identity; an identity that is seeped in Sufi thought.

At this point it may be stated that *tasawwuf*, as a special path that stressed spirituality, has always been regarded as an inherent component of the Muslim society by many of its followers; they opined that this has been the case since the time of the Prophet Muhammad and *tasawwuf* is not a *bid’a* (an innovation) as some of its critics have argued. The possible reason for this misconception is that the Prophet (s) was selective, even with his companions, concerning the educa-

tion of the *tariqah*. Whilst prophetic traditions were widely publicized, memorized and disseminated to all, the education of *tasawwuf* was restricted and its propagation circumspective. Many Qur'anic verses exhorting the believers to *dhikr Allah* (the remembrance of God) which, incidentally, is the basis of *tasawwuf*, can be quoted but two will suffice for the sake of brevity: "Celebrate the praises of God and so often and glorify Him morning and evening" (Qur'an 33: 41–42) and "Those who believe and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of God [...]" (Qur'an 13: 28).

Similarly many prophetic traditions can be quoted to substantiate its importance; for example, "(t)he *shari'ah* (Islamic legal teachings) are my sayings, the *tariqah* (order) [demonstrate] my acts and the *haqiqah* (divine reality) is my (personal) condition". Commenting on this statement the prophet is purported to have stated that "I have been given three types of education by God: the first is the *shari'ah*, which I can give (and share) with all of you; the second is the *tariqah*, which is (meant) only for some of you, and the third is the *haqiqah*, (which cannot be shared) with any of you." Imam Malik, the compiler of the famous compendium – the *Muwattah* – remarked that "(h)e who practices *tasawwuf* and neglects *fiqh* (jurisprudence) is a *zindiq* (heretic), he who practices *fiqh* and neglects *tasawwuf*, his Islam is feeble, and he who combines both attains the *haqiqah*."

It may be concluded that many of these thoughts are captured in most of the manuscripts that had been penned by the shaykh before and during his exile. These manuscripts have stimulated his students as well as many followers of *tasawwuf* in Southeast Asia and beyond. In South Africa, for example, the writings of sufi shaykhs are widely circulated and since the shaykh's writings such as *Zubdat ul-Asrar* have become available in English they have gradually find their way into the hands of those wishing to know more about the spiritual path and more about the thoughts of this heroic Southeast Asian shaykh.

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