The Way of Shāhidīn: The Construction of a Qur’anic Theology of Sufism in Tafseer-e-Fāzli

Dr. Abdul Hafeez Fāzli
Department of Philosophy
University of the Punjab
Lahore, Pakistan

Abstract

Hazrat Fazal Shah (Allah’s mercy be upon him), known as Ba Ba Ji Noor Walay, is initiator of Fāzli Qādirī branch in already existing Qādiriyya Order in Muslim gnosticism. He was born at Jallendhar, East Punjab, India. After the partition of Indo-Pak subcontinent in 1947 the saint migrated to Pakistan ultimately settling at Lahore. He passed away in 1978. Dr. Mohammad Ashraf Fāzli (1940–) at present his successor and first mentor of Fāzli Qādirī Order is also settled at Lahore. It was the way of Hazrat Fazal Shah that he would give a narration (biyân) of one rakū” (a small section) of the holy Qur”ān daily at pre-dawn. Dr. Mohammad Ashraf Fāzli, his most obedient disciple and would-be successor was assigned the duty of taking notes and presenting the import in his own writing, before the mentor any time in the day to get his verification. The narration of the Qur”ān completed in the life time of Hazrat Fazal Shah and was verified by him in his ‘will’ before his demise. This ultimately published by the name of Tafseer-e-Fāzli (TF). The commentary is not based on any traditions etc. Authority for whatever has been said in it is given from the Qur”ān. The obligation on the reader has been written under the caption of ‘Paroration’ after every verse. The work is original with respect to its diction and approach. It consists of seven volumes and is originally in Urdu, published from 1982 to 1998. First three volumes have been translated into English and published while work on the 4th volume is in progress. The study examines how the TF constructs of a Qur’anic theology of mysticism focusing on the interpretation of the Qur’anic term Shāhid. According to the TF the epithet used by the Qur”ān for what is commonly called ‘sufi mentor’ is ‘shāhid’ (witness) and ‘The Tariqat-i-Shāhidīn (The Way of Shāhidīn) is the right epithet to be used for ‘taṣawaf/sufism’. Shāhid recites the Word of God and presents his auspicious life as model. He is the teacher of the Book and Wisdom. He grants purification (tazkia) to the follower/s and verifies it as shāhid. Therfore, Tariqat-e-Shāhidīn (commonly called sufism) is the discipline for granting purification (tazkia) and then its verification (tasdīq). The article is an attempt to locate the origin of Islamic Spirituality in the Quran. The Qurān is the fundamental religious document and basic source of Islamic faith. Sufism is a phenomenon which organized itself into a discipline in the early centuries of Islam. A great majority of Muslims have always believed it quite coherent with the spirit of their faith. But the question is: “Where does lie its origin in the Qurān!” Muslim scholars have been searching for the answer of this question since centuries. They have tried to explain it in terms of words like ‘ṣaf’, ‘ṣuf’, ‘ṣuffa’, ‘wujud’, ‘iḥsān’, ‘hubb’, ‘tazkia’ but could not explain its origin and its development into a discipline on Quranic grounds. First time in the history of Muslim culture Tafseer-e-Fāzli traces the origin of this discipline in the Qurānic term ‘Shāhid’ (the certified witness) and explains its development into a discipline. The most important thing about this article is that it explains everything without reference to anything other than the Qurān.

According to Tafseer-e-Fāzli (TF), the Qur’ān is qawl ( olacağı teaching, guidance, precept) and has the status of the standard of truth in this respect. To talk with reference to the Qur’ān is to talk on the basis of authority. The writer must admit that there could never flourish in Muslim culture in general, and in Sufism in particular a strong tradition to talk on the basis of authority. When anyone talks on some matter without reference to authority, it is no better than mere conjecture. Conjecture can add to anyone’s knowledge or contribute to his betterment to the least. One’s conjecture is in no way better than the other’s.

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Conjecture does not spare anyone from ‘the truth’. As being ‘the truth’ (al haqq) only the Word of Allah has the status of ‘authority’. The Qur’an is precept (qawl). So far as the word, the concept, the idea, the principle, teaching or the precept, interpretation of an unveiling (kashf) or vision (shuhūd), is concerned, whatever ‘the truth’ certifies is truth, whatever conforms to ‘the truth’ is truth. Then there comes the stage of action (‘amal). ‘Amal is complementary to qawl. The knowledge that Allah has given to the believers to talk on a matter is to say only that which they themselves act upon, if otherwise, Allah hates it most. If one expresses his knowledge on some matter, in accordance with Allah’s injunction, he will share the benefit, with others, he has got from acting on it. These are the conditions to be fulfilled if one talks with reference to authority. If one believes that the Qur’ān, being al-haqq, is the standard of truth, controversies in religion arise when he talks without its reference, for knowledge is the capacity to distinguish truth from untruth. Therefore, the purpose before a knowledgeable person while writing or giving judgment on anything, should be to enlighten truth on that very matter. The study examines how the TF constructs of a Qur’anic theology of mysticism focusing on the interpretation of the Qur’anic term Shāhid.

The TF sees the origin and organization of Islamic Spirituality in the concept of shāhid. According to TF, the holy Qur’ān calls the prophet (pbuh) as shāhid (the witness, the devout). All the prophets (pbuh) were shāhid. The followers of the prophets (pbut) are mash-hūd (the witnessed). Allah Himself sent the prophets (pbut) as shāhidin. There can be shāhidin who are not prophets. The shāhidin other than the prophets are raised from within the believers (the mash-hūdīn). Allah loves both. He vows the honor of both shāhid and mash-hūd. Allah has taught the believers to pray for togetherness with the shāhidīn. In Islam, the chain of holy people (the mash-hūdīn turned shāhidīn) has its origin in those immediate followers of the prophet (pbuh) whom he (pbuh) purified and then verified, and will continue to the dooms day. It is these holy men who are mistakenly called sufies. The way of gnosis in Islam is actually the way of shāhidin (the verified witnesses).

It is the glory of the prophet (pbuh) as shāhid that he is giver of glad-tidings as well as a warner. He gives glad-tidings to those who believe in him (pbuh) that for them is blessing and warns the disbelievers of bad end. All the messengers (pbut) were shāhid i.e., giver of glad-tidings as well as warners. Shāhid recites the Word of God and presents his auspicious life as model. Allah has sent His prophet (pbuh) as the teacher of the Book and Wisdom. To grant purification to the followers is also the proud privilege of shāhid. Allah Almighty says: Allah verily has shown grace to the believers by sending unto them a messenger of their own who recitieth unto them His revelations, and causeth unto them to grow [purifies them]. and teacheth unto them the scripture and wisdom; although before (he came to them) they were in flagrant error. (al-Qur’ān, 3:164) According to the TF this privilege was granted by the prophet (pbuh) to ‘the chosen ones’, the devout, from among his followers and this will last till the day of resurrection. For example, Allah chose Tālut (Saul-a.s.) above others and granted him abundance in knowledge and physical endurance; Allah chose Maryam (a.s.), purified her, and exalted her above the women of the whole world making a model for them; Allah also chose Ādam and Nūh and Āl-e-Ibrāhīm and Āl-Imrān (pbut) above all people. (Āl are the people whose condition is similar to that of their leader.) In every age, Allah Almighty chose some men to bring people from darkness to light. “Allah Almighty chooses certain men/women so that through them people find the way to attain His Pleasure.

It is comforting to accept him who is chosen by Allah Almighty. When one believes in Allah Almighty through the one chosen by Him, one is granted guidance. The Qur’ān classifies the early Muslims into three categories: those on the right hand (aṣhāb-al-yamīn); those on the left hand (aṣhāb-ush-shimāl); the foremost in the race (as-sābiqoon-al-awwaloon). The Qur’ān says that Allah is Well-Pleased with ‘the first and foremost of the fugitives from Makkah (the muḥājirīn) and those who welcomed and helped them in Mādīnah (the anṣār) and they are well-pleased with Him. The Qur’ān also states that same is true for those who followed them in sincerity. Al-`Ashra-tul-Mubashira were the ten chosen ones among these whom the prophet certified as the dwellers of paradise while they were alive. The TF holds that the greatest of all the favors of Allah Almighty to mankind is that He presented His chosen servants as model for them. The purpose being that people should believe in Him through the chosen servants and follow them so that they are relieved of fear and grief. Hence, according to the TF, tariqat-e-shāhidīn (commonly called sufism) is the discipline for granting purification (tazkia) and then its verification (tasdīq). But what is the significance of purification! The TF holds: Purification (tazkia) and success in both the worlds (falāh) are essential for eachother. He attained falāh who kept his self pure. Indeed he attained falāh(success) who was granted purification. Allah promises falāh for muminūn—the faithful. The shāhid certainly imbibes in him these qualities par excellence.
According to the TF, following in the footsteps of their shāhid at all these stations the faithful attain purification and thus falah.\(^3\) If it was necessary in the life time of the prophet (pbuh) that the shāhid grants purification how can it be attained without shāhid in any other time! Allah Almighty has sent His prophet (pbuh) as lamp that gives light.\(^32\) Lamps will go on lit by the light-giving beacon. Shāhid is pure/righteous. According to the TF, two authorities confirm his purity: i) His precepts are straight.\(^33\) Word of Allah as ‘standard of righteous precept’ verifies his position. ii) In practice he always follows in the footsteps of his mentor.\(^34\) Allah is the protecting friend of those who believe. Shāhidīn are the friends of Allah. He bringeth them [His friends] out of darkness into light.\(^35\) It is the glory of the friends of Allah to be free of fear and grief.\(^36\) He who befriens any friend of Allah, befriens Allah. He is directed towards light and becomes free from fear and grief.

According to TF, shāhidīn are beloved servants of Allah. Allah Almighty has stated in the Qur’ān: Allah loves the steadfast (ṣābirīn).\(^37\) Similarly, the purifiers, the just dealers, and those who for the cause of Allah fight in ranks as if they were a solid structure are beloved of Allah.\(^38\) Those who have inculcated vices in them are also mentioned in the Qur’ān. For example, Allah does not love the transgressors (mufsidīn),\(^39\) the aggressors (mustaqīn),\(^40\) the purifiers (mustakbirīn)\(^41\) and the like.\(^42\) One who develops in him the attributes of any of the beloveds of Allah, comes near him and becomes dear to Allah. The attributes of a beloved of Allah cannot come except by following him with love. And after all it is the beloved of Allah who is to certify that one is following him. Only one of the beloved servants of Allah at present is to be followed but all others are to be respected.\(^43\) Those who claim nearness with any of the beloveds of Allah without following him, their claim is devoid of evidence. The claim not supported by evidence does not prove to be true. The prophet (pbuh) is the absolute standard of servitude (‘abdiyat) to Allah.\(^44\) Allah certifies the prophet (pbuh) as ‘abdohū or ‘abdehī (His servant).\(^45\) He (pbuh) enjoys the highest place in servitude to Allah. None of the attributes of the beloveds of Allah is to be found in any one equal to the prophet (pbuh). Allah Almighty Himself has granted these good qualities to His beloved servant (pbuh), the followers are granted these qualities by the beloved servant of Allah at present. The prophet (pbuh) is the most beloved servant of Allah and the lamp that gives light. Those who are lit from this lamp are also light-giving lamps and beloveds of Allah. How beautifully the TF narrates the saying of Hazrat Fazal Shah:

Beloveds of Allah (shāhidīn) are one embodiment, for their purpose is one and the same and that is to bring people out of darkness into light.\(^46\)

Some consider tašawaf as ‘kashf’-o-shahūd (unveiling and direct witnessing). The TF does not consent to it. It is not true of the way of shāhidīn. According to TF, kashf-o-shahūd, or karamat(making miracles) if granted by Almighty, is appreciable but it never is the objective of those who love the beloved of Allah. The worthy authors of TF believe that anyone’s kashf-o-shahūd bears no authority, and karamat is the outcome of profuse repetition of a ‘word’, be it meaningless. To make miraculous things is never evidence of one’s piety.\(^47\) Who can be the better knower of what is needed to bring people out of darkness towards light except the Al-Mighty! Allah by Himself grants to His beloved whatever knowledge is needed to him.\(^48\) Those who seek ranks by their own choice, make themselves fall in trouble.\(^49\)

Shri’āt(the law), tariqat(the practice/the way), haqiqat(realism) and m’arifat(gnosis) are four grades of believing. Sharia is Allah’s amr(command) which is to be followed. Sharia in essence is a way, a royal road on which Allah has set us and has commanded to follow. Who he follows it as he likes, does not follow Allah’s amr, he only follows his own likes and dislikes.\(^50\) Such a person may develop high expertise in rituals, but never reaches the core. According to the TF to act upon sharia following in the footsteps of shāhid is tariqat.\(^51\) The cadre of haqiqat is related to knowledge. ‘Ilm(knowledge) is always post-experience. It is granted after ‘amal(acting upon sharia).\(^52\) It is only after following in the footsteps of the beloved of Allah that the faith in the unseen (imān-bil-ghaib)\(^53\) is converted into the witnessed faith (imān-bish-shahādat).\(^54\) He who keeps on following his shāhid at all the three grades is granted m’arifat(the level par excellence of what the Qur’ān calls ifrān-i-ḥaqq).\(^55\) He is granted togetherness with shāhidīn.\(^56\) He is included among those whom Allah has blessed with His favour i.e., among the truthful ones, the martyrs and the righteous.
Al-Qur’an says: Who so obeyeth Allah and the messenger, they are with those unto whom Allah hath shown favour, of the prophets [an-nabīyīn] and the saints [as-siddiqīn] and the martyrs [as-shuhadhā’ī] and the righteous [as-sālihīn]. The best of company are they! (al-Qur’an, 4:69) The Qur’an states four ultimate categories of those whom Allah has blessed with His favor and they are: nabīyīn (the prophets-pbut), siddiqīn (truthful ones), shuhadhā’ī (martyrs), sālihīn (the righteous). All other epithets used in the Qur’an for those whom Allah has blessed with His favour will come under these heads, for example, messengers (rasool), olul-azam, shāhidīn, mukhlīṣīn, the abrār, the muttaqīn, the mohsinīn etc. Thus according to the TF, to consider messengership (risālat) a higher category than prophet-hood (nabuwat) to or to consider olulazm as a category independent from an-nabīyīn, is not correct in the light of this verse. All prophets (nabīyīn) are also messengers (rasool) by virtue of their being nabībut it is not true otherwise. TF supports the primacy of prophet-hood over the messengership.

Word of Allah affirms that those whom Allah has blessed with His favour (in ‘amyafta) will remain in the world till the last day and that there is no better company than to be with them. Only whoso is with them here, will be with them in the hereafter, for the same present is going to convert into the future (i.e., hereafter). (al-Qur’an, 2:25, 82, 110, 130). The TF expounds these grades of believing in the following manner: Shri‘at is similar to milk, tariqat is like curd, haqiqat is like butter and m‘arifat is akin to butter oil. If there is no milk, none of these could be made nor can anyone make. Butter-oil is ultimately the essence of milk. The TF also explains it in another way: The reality of shri‘at is step/journey (qadam), tariqat is footprints (naqsh-e-qadam), haqīqat is the knowledge derived from it and is one and eternal (qādim). Shri‘at is the beginning of journey (ibtidā-i-qadam) and m‘arifat is the ultimate end of journey (intihā-i-qadam).

Seyyed Hossein Nasr

To rightly appreciate the value of the thought and approach of TF about what is called Sufism let us compare it with the thought and approach of a contemporary scholar who is also one of the chief representatives of a school of sufism. Seyyed Hossein Nasr (b. 1933), an eminent scholar, and presently professor of Islamic Studies at the George Washington University in America wrote a book in 1966 entitled Ideals and Realities of Islam (IR) to help the world understand Islam. In this book he also gives his views about sufism. Two instances from this book will be presented here.

Ideals and Realities states an analogy of a circle to explain the relationship between shri‘at, tariqat and haqiqat. In this analogy the circumference of a circle depicts shri‘at. Shri‘at is for all believers and all the believers are on the circumference. The radii of this circle symbolize the Turuq (plural of Tariqat—the way). Tariqat is that radius which connects each and every point on the circumference to the center which is haqiqat(Reality). Because of cultural and psychological difference of the people tariqat is apparently found in various shades but it does not differ in essence. IR states that there are as many as ways of tariqat as the number of the children of Adam. By affirming faith in Allah one comes on the circumference (i.e., the shri‘at) from where one can travel on the path (i.e., the tariqat) towards the center of the circle (i.e., Haqiqat) which is God. Haqiqat is the source of shri‘at and tariqat. God has created shri‘at and tariqat separately from each other. These both have a different relation with Haqiqat [i.e., God]. Observing shri‘at alone is necessary as well as enough to achieve salvation but there are such persons who do not stop short of reaching Haqiqat.

Examining from the point of view of TF all aspects of this analogy are contrary to Qur’anic teachings. The center of this circle is Haqiqat(The Truth or God or Reality as IR calls it.) But the Qur’an never uses the word ‘Haqiqat’ for Allah. The word ‘Haqiqat’ is a derivative of the root Ḥā-Qāf-Qāf. The following derivatives of this root occur in the Qur’ān:

Haq (occur twelve times) meaning just, right; to occur or fall rightly or justly; to be justly due; coming true of the Words, promises, warnings or glad tidings of Allah etc.
Haqqat(five times): justified;
yahiqqo (once); fulfilling of the word;
Haqqat (twice): be made fit;
yuhiqq (four times): to cause the truth come true or become manifest; asṭahawaqq (once): to deserve; to merit; asṭaḥawaqq (once): be ascertained;
haqqa/n (17 times): duty incumbent on someone to fulfill; certainty (of promise of Allah); certainly or in truth; a promise which is binding on Allah to bring about; coming true of a dream; haqqāhō (3 times): the due; ahaqqo (10 times): to have a better right; to be more deserving; to be truer than, to be more worthy than (e.g., testimony, or party); haqqq (once): to be bound; al Hāqqah (3 times): The day of judgment as reality, the sure event, the undeniable truth; Al Haqq (227 times). The Word of the Lord; (02:26), the truth or reality as opposed to al-bātīl (falsehood); 02:42, as opposite to ad-dalālāh(error); (10:32), or as opposite to zann (conjecture) etc. (03:154)55

There is no scope for calling God Haqiqat(Reality) while talking in the light of the Qur’an. It cannot be derived from the derivative al hāqqah even which occurs only three times in the Qur’an in the first three consecutive verses of surah al-Ḥāqqah. Pikthhal translates these verses as follows:

The Reality! What is the Reality? Ah, what will convey thee what the reality is! (al-Qur’an, 69:1-3) Abdullah Yousaf Ali translates the same verses in this way:

The Sure Reality! What is the Sure Reality? And what will make thee realize what the Sure Reality is?

But the translation of verses 13 to 37 of the same surah by Pikthhal as well as Abdullah Yousaf Ali leave no doubt that in all the first three verses the reality, the sure event, the undeniable truth referred to is nothing except the Day of Judgment when everyone will be required for his doings during worldly life. (al-Qur’an, 69:1-3, and 13-37)56

The analogy of a circle to depict the Person of Allah, too, is un-Qur’anic. The Qur’an never uses this analogy, nor does it befit to His Glory. The writer has stated above that shariāt denotes ‘teachings’ or precept, tariqāt comprises practice and haqiqaṭ denotes a stage of spiritual knowledge. Whoso follows in the footsteps of his mentor in all these three places he is blessed with m’arifāt. M’arifat is a favour (in ‘ām) as approval of his piety. He becomes a sage, a saint, a gnostic. IR does not mention ma’rifāt except as a passing reference and that too without authority. After identifying Allah as Haqiqat how could there remain any further stage!57 If Allah is Reality then what is the status of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them which He has claimed to have created with truth! (Cf. ibid, 45:22) It would not be anything other than appearance or a relative reality58 of the Reality! But the universe as manifestation of Absolute Reality could not be less than being eternal or everlasting which is contrary to the Qur’ānic teachings. Allah has created the heavens and the earth in truth… (al-Qur’an, 06:73, 10:05, 45:22 and many more.) If the word ‘haqiqāt’ is to be used in the sense of ‘reality’ in Qur’ānic perspective, it can be used for ‘the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them’. They are ‘reality’ and Allah is the Creator of reality. It is commonly believed in by Muslims from centuries, that ‘al-haqq’ is one of al-Asmā’ al-Ḥusnā (the Beautiful-Names of Allah). However, the wahdat al-wajīd school of sufism, (of which Seyyed Hossein Nasr is a present day representative59), has chosen ‘al-haqq’ as their preferred name for Allah which they use for translating God into The Reality or The Truth. The belief that ‘al-haqq’ is one of al-Asmā’ al-Ḥusnā60 and to identify Allah with this as His preferred name is one of the two fundamental presuppositions of the doctrine of wahdat al-wajūd61 propounded by a renowned sufi scholar Ibn al-‘Arabi (d. 638/1240).62 The TF doesn’t believe ‘al-haqq as one of al-Asmā-ul-Ḥusnā. Hence identification of Allah with al-haqq, referring Him as ‘The Truth’ or ‘The Reality’ and drawing implications thereof, TF does not accept. According to TF the status of being al-haqq (the truth) only befits to the Word of Allah in the light of the Qur’an.63 Some references from the Qurān are hereby given for the perusal of the readers.

“Say: Al Haqq is from the Lord of you all. Then whosoever will, let him believe, and whosoever will, let him disbelieve. (cf. Ibid., 18:29); His Word is the truth (Qawlo hul-haqq—Ibid., 6:73) What Allah says is the truth (Wallahu yaqoolul haqq—33:34), al-Qur’an is the truth from your Lord (ho wal-haqqo mir-Rabbika—Ibid., 32:02-03) What Allah descends unto His Messenger is the truth (cf. Al-Qur’an—5:83-84, 11:120, 13:01, 19; 21:55; Allah’s Injunctions are the truth (cf. Ibid., 02:149, 33:53) etc.
Al-Haqq means ‘the standard of truth’. Whatever the Qur’an verifies is truth (haqq), whatever it disapproves is untruth. Wherever the Qur’an is silent, to express one’s views is to express opinion or conjecture and batil(false) is the opinion of those who disbelieve. (cf. 38:27) ‘Assuredly conjecture (الْبَاطِلَ—az-zanna) can by no means take the place of truth.’ (cf. 10:36, 53:28) Deviation from what Qur’an states is but error(ad-dalā’īl) (Fatmāhā ba’dā al-haqqī ‘llā l-ad-dalā’īl). (10:32) To give views opposite to the Qur’an is but al-bātīl. (cf. 17:81, 21:18) ‘To say anything in violation to the Qur’an is without justification, and wrongful (bi ghair-il-haqq— cf. 02:61).’ Allah commands the believers ‘not to utter aught concerning Allah save the truth, (i.e., what is in accordance with the Qur’an. cf. 04:171)”64

The TF upholds that the Qur’ān is authoritative, it is perspicuous and internally self-consistent and TF gives no reference from anything other than the Qur’an. The TF holds al-haqq(i.e., the Qur’ān) to be the final standard for determining the truth or validity of a doctrine, belief, view, concept, principle or teaching, unveiling, intuition, imagination, religious experience or whatever. The views about sufism, wahdat al-wajud, or the way of shāhidīn expressed in TF arise in the same perspective.

TF, as we have already seen, do not see sh邻里 at and triqat to be separately created by Allah for common people and for the chosen one’s respectively. It holds that al-haqq (the Qur’ān) is the source of knowing sh邻里 at.65 The way to act upon its teachings—the straight path (triq-i-mustqīm i.e., the triqat)—is also shown by this Book.66 For triq-i-mustqīm to be as many in number as the children of Adam is but contrary to the Qur’ānic teachings. What this means is that there is no need to follow him who is turning towards Allah, that whatever way one likes to act upon sh邻里 at is triq-i-mustqīm. But this is absolutely contrary to Divine injunctions. (…And follow in the footsteps of the one who is turning towards Allah—cf. TF, vol.5,31:15, p. 253) Islam has from ever been the Dīn—the way of life approved by Allah for His servants.67 All the shāhidīn—the beloved servants of Allah—presented Islam to their people. It was perfect guidance for everyone. Since it was revealed on the last of the prophets (pbuh) for all humanity and for all the ages, it now comprises of a guidance which is absolutely perfect (akmal). Sh邻里 at now comprises of the teachings of this Dīn and the essence of sh邻里 at is a royal road. (Cf. TF, vol. 6,45:18) Al-haqq uses the analogy of the straight path (sirāt-i-mustqīm) for the way traversed on this royal road by those whom-Allah-has-blessed.68 To follow in the footsteps of one among the blessed ones is sirāt-i-mustqīm or the triq-i-mustqīm’ or triqat. It is the shortest and the surest way to destiny i.e., falāh. Allah witnesses Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh) to be on the straight path. (al-Qur’ān, 36:3-4) Whom he (pbuh) witnesses as his follower is also on the straight path. Whosoever follows this devout (shāhid) and is witnessed by him is also on the straight path, and so on. Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh) is shāhid(witness). Allah Himself has witnessed it.69 (33:45) All others among his followers are raised as shāhid from those who are mash-hood (85:3) i.e., either directly witnessed by the prophet (pbuh) or indirectly verified by one whom he (pbuh) verified. Straight path (sirāt-i-mustqīm) is the shortest distance between two points and to follow a witnessed guide is the safest and guaranteed way to reach the destiny. The circumference has neither beginning nor it takes anywhere. The analogy of a circle is used in the Qur’ān either in the sense of ‘befalling of a bad fortune’ or ‘evil turn of fortune’. 70 Nowhere has it been used to depict sh邻里 at or its relationship with triqat and haqqiat.

IR asserts in the name of Hazrat Ali (a.s) that
“the basmalah begins the surah al-Fatihah and therefore the whole of the Qur’ān…, [and] all the Qur’ān is contained in the surah al-Fatihah, all of the surah al-Fatihah is contained in the basmalah, and all of the basmalah in the letter ba’ (ب ) with which it begins, all of the letter ba’ in the point (diacritical mark) under—а and I am that point.”71

No doubt, Hazrat Ali (a.s) is among the chiefs of shāhidīn and shāhidīn have ever been admitting this fact and ever shall they admit it. But what has been said in the above analogy, can it be substantiated on the authority of the Qur’ān! Never! It does not befit the glory of Hazrat Ali (a.s) that he would claim anything which could not be substantiated on the authority of al-Haqq. A diacritical point under ba’ is a ‘point’. A ‘point’ is always dimensionless as well as directionless. Hazrat Ali (a.s) always followed the footsteps of the prophet (pbuh) and submitted to him (pbuh). How could he (a.s) be dimensionless or directionless! The TF nowhere supports such mystifying and mythologizing the personality of any beloved servant of Allah in the name of esoteric knowledge. Hazrat Ali (May peace be upon him!) is at a very very high rank among the beloved servants of Allah and a leader of the Gnostics till the last day. Hazrat Ali acted upon the teachings of the Qur’ān throughout his life, following in the footsteps of the prophet (pbuh) taking him as ultimate role model.72
The **TF** nowhere uses words like ‘union with God’. It holds that the concept of anyone’s ‘union with God’, inward or outward, is contrary to Qur’anic teachings. According to **TF** one’s nearness or togetherness (m āiyyat–مَيِّضَت) with Allah is the right concept. For instance the Qur’ān says that Allah is ‘with those who show perseverance (s ābirīn), those who fear Allah (muttaqīn), and those who do good (mohsinīn).’ During migration in their way from Mecca to Madinah, when they were hiding themselves in the cave and the enemy came very near to them and the worthy companion Hazrat Abu Bakar Siddique feared lest the disbelievers harm the prophet (pbuh), he (pbuh) said to his worthy companion: “Don’t be afraid, We are in togetherness with Allah.” (cf. Lā tahzan ‘inna Allāha Ma’anā) Hazrat Ali, a perfect saint, certainly was in supreme togetherness with Allah in seclusion as well as in public but not in union with God.

Most of what has been presented and is going to be so in the name of **sufism** is but mysticism (b ātiniyat or sirriyat). It has nothing to do with Islam. The **Way of Sh āhid īn** is absolutely different from it.

It can be asked why one cannot purify oneself without a sh āhid! If someone says that one has purified oneself it would only be a claim. Who would witness this assertion! Allah enjoins: ..follow him who turns towards Me. (al-Qur ān, 31:15) According to **TF**: One who talks of doing his own purification, one who does not identify anyone better in knowledge than himself, how could he act upon Allah’s injunction stated in verse 31:15! What was the problem of Iblis! Were it not the case that to acknowledge Adam (pbuh) better than him was difficult for Iblis! (cf. al-Qur ān, 7:12) Had Iblis acted upon Allah’s Injunction to prostrate before Ādam (a.s.), he would have come out of the orbit of his own likes and dislikes. Allah Almighty at Surah 31 (Luqmān) verses 14-15 enjoins man to be grateful to Allah and to his parents. If his parents ask him to attribute associates with Allah he is not to belong to him (pbuh). This is true of all **sh āhid īn**. **TF** holds messengership as a whole time affair covering the whole life. A messenger (pbuh) is first and foremost a messenger and then anything else.

**Bifurcation of the Personality of Sh āhid into Various Facets**

It is observed that in presence of the Qur’ānic saying “Allah purifies whom He likes.”, why should, one search, identify and acknowledge a sh āhid! According to the **TF**, it is Allah Almighty Who has granted His Most Beloved Servant (pbuh) the authority to purify the believers. Allah purifies him whom the prophet (pbuh) purifies. According to **TF** Allah Almighty says to His prophet (pbuh) to ask the believers to follow him (pbuh) if they aspire Allah’s love, and to tell them if they do so Allah will include them in those whom He loves. The claim to follow the prophet (pbuh) can only be substantiated if one follows the sh āhid at present. Al-Qur’ān says: And know that the messenger of Allah is among you...(49:7) According to the **TF** the prophet (pbuh) is among the believers in the shape of sh āhid īn(3:53, 5:83) and mukhlaṣīn(3:53, the sincere servants of Allah–15:40). According to the **TF**: Whosoever follows Allah’s beloved at present, Allah likes him and to whom Allah likes to purify, the beloved of Allah grants purification and verifies him.

If one classifies the person of the prophet (pbuh) into various facets of authority, asserting his being a messenger only one among these aspects and maintaining that he (pbuh) is to be followed only in this respect; and even in this respect, if one maintains, he (pbuh) is to be followed in matters pertaining to religion alone, and not in matters pertaining to mundane world, how he could submit to the prophet (pbuh) or follow him (pbuh) even if he happened to be in the life time of the prophet (pbuh)! The **TF** believes in the indivisibility of the personality of sh āhid; that he (pbuh) is sh āhid and sh āhid alone. Father, wife, son, relative or non-relative whoever believes in him (pbuh) as sh āhid and follows him (pbuh) belongs to him (pbuh) and whoso does not follow him (pbuh) does not belong to him (pbuh). This is true of all sh āhid īn. **TF** holds messengership as a whole time affair covering the whole life. A messenger (pbuh) is first and foremost a messenger and then anything else.
The reason for bifurcating the personality of the prophet into facets and holding messengership just a facet by such people seems to be that are stitched with their likes and dislikes and on the face of Allah’s injunctions mentioned above that if anybody aspires for Allah’s love, he should follow the messenger, and that he who will obey the messenger Allah will include him among the ones whom He has blessed, such people find no scope for giving preference to their own likes and dislikes. Making risalat just a facet of the personality of prophet they have tried to procure ample space for entering their likes and dislikes into the teaching of the Qurān.

**Tradition Concerning Date Palms**

Those who hold being messenger only one facet of the life of the prophet, maintain that there are two types of matters—umūr-i-Dunya (matters pertaining to mundane world) and umūr-i-Dīn (matters pertaining to religion)—and maintain that believers are bound to follow the prophet (pbuh) in umūr-e-Dīn alone. They base their contention on a tradition which says: That some growers of date-palm presented themselves before the prophet (pbuh) and said that before the prophet (pbuh) had migrated to Madīnāh, they used to get pollen-grain from the flowers of male date-palm and would rub it manually over the flower of a female date-palm. This, they would call ‘marriage of date-palms’. The tradition further narrates: But when it came to the knowledge of the prophet (pbuh) they thought that the prophet (pbuh) did not like it so they abandoned the age old practice. But the yield next year was very small. Here the tradition adds: The prophet (pbuh) asserted that they were better knowledgeable concerning their umūr-i-Dunya. According to TF it is absolutely contrarily to the teachings of the Qurān to believe that anyone can be more knowledgeable than the prophet (pbuh) in any sort of affair/s. Let us examine this alleged tradition in the light of Tafsīr-e-Fāzli.

This tradition divides umūr (affairs) into umūr-i-Dunya and umūr-i-Dīn. There is no basis in the Qurān for such distinction in the nature of affairs (umūr). Umūr (singular amr) in the diction of the Qurān are either m’aruf or they are munkar. The prophet (pbuh) always commanded the former and asked to hold back from the latter. The Qurān forbids the believers to force the prophet (pbuh) to comply with their wishes, and warns them had the prophet (pbuh) accepted their opinions in most of the affairs (amr) they would surely be in trouble. (cf. al-Qur’ān, 49:07) The righteous do not even imagine to intentionally disobeying the mentor (shāhid), however, if such thing happens unintentionally, they do not delay in making repentance/ excuse and seeking guidance. Whosoever submits to the advice of his shāhid, succeeds, and whosoever does not submit to him, the shāhid would not fail to accommodate him so that the relation is not broken. However, one who follows his likes and dislikes necessarily falls in trouble and it is then that he may turn towards acting upon the advice of the shāhid if Allah so Wills. Al-Qurān asserts the absolute following of the prophet (pbuh). The significance of following the prophet (pbuh) can be measured from the fact that who so follows the prophet (pbuh), Allah Almighty includes him/her among those whom He loves. And who so submits to the prophet (pbuh), is included among those whom He has blessed.

Let us see where does the word ‘umoor’ occur in the Qurān and in what sense:

The word ‘umoor’ occurs in the Qurān as the following: …All cases [umoor] go back to Allah (for judgment). Then how could they be divided into Umoor-i-Dunya and umoors-i-Dīn! Hazrat Luqmān (pbuh) advised his son to establish prayer, enjoin kindness and forbid inequity, persevere on whatever befalls him. These, Hazrat Luqman said, were of the steadfast heart of things (mīn azmil-umūr). (cf. al-Qur’ān, 31:17) Which of these they would declare as umoors-i-Dunya and which of these as umoors-i-Dīn! The constructions ‘tasīrulumūr’ (of the steadfast heart of things) (ibid, 42:43) and ‘āqibatu umūr’ (sequel of all things) (ibid, 31:22) have also been used in the Qurān. But none of these uses of the word ‘amr’ (or umūr) meaning affair/s or case/s warrants bifurcation of the affairs into umūr-i-Dunya and umūr-i-Dīn.

The Qurān mentions that Allah has made everything in pairs: night and day, death and life, darkness and light, believer (Muslim) and non-believer (Mujram), knowledgeable (‘Ālim) and ignorant (Jāhil), seer and blind, male and female etc. Nowhere in the Qurān Allah pairs ‘dunya’ with ‘Dīn’. Al-haqq(the Qurān) invariably pairs ‘dunya’ (world) with ‘akhirah’ (hereafter) for example: …Our Lord! Give unto us in the world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good…(al-Qur’ān, 2:201) The word ‘Dīn’ (the way of life) wherever it occurs in the Qurān it refers either to Dīn al-Islam or Dīn al-kufir. (109:6) It proves that the above tradition is contrary to the Qurānic teachings and cannot be a saying of the prophet (pbuh).
Sufism as Iḥsān-i-İslām

Some people have tried to trace the origin of tasawwuf from another tradition commonly known as Ḥadīth-i-Jibrā'il. On the bases of this tradition they assert that there are three levels of believing: İslām, İmān and Iḥsān. To make a declaration of faith is İslām and to confirm it in heart is İmān. İḥsān is the highest state and it is to always act with the conviction that I am seeing Allah, and if not this level of conviction then to act with the conviction that Allah definitely sees me. The exponents of this view maintain that sufi is at the highest stage of believing (i.e., at İḥsān). 92

TF does not support this view. According to this tradition İmān(faith) is the second stage of believing. Al-Qur‘ān states nine qualities of a mo‘min. These are in fact nine stations (muqāmāt) of being a mo‘min which are as follows: taubah(penitence), ibādat(worship), ṣaom(fasting), ṕukā’ (bowing before Allah), ṣijdah(prostration), amr-bil-m‘arūf(bidding good), nahi-anil-munkar(forbidding evil) and ḥifżāt li-hudud-Allah (observing the limits prescribed by Allah Almighty). 93 Is it stated anywhere in the Qur‘ān that you should act with the conviction that you are seeing Allah? Does the mo‘min not act with the conviction that Allah sees him on the face of the verse that ‘Allah is Seer of what you do.’ (Cf. 2:96, 110) According to TF only those who maintain his togetherness with Allah in seclusion remains pure in seclusion (khalwat) and he who keeps his togetherness with the prophet (pbuh) when in public remains pure in public (jalwat); and a mo‘min remains pure in seclusion and in public. Even if Allah says that “…and over every lord of knowledge there is one more knowing.” (12:76) the fact is that to acknowledge someone better in knowledge than them is the real problem of those who present their conjectures under the label of knowledge. It is easy to go on guessing, every now and then, about oneself, and self-certifying that one is at the place of Iḥsān or at the place of İmān! To follow anyone is not possible until one acknowledges the beloved servant of Allah better in knowledge, and self-centered people would never acknowledge anyone better than them. One who does not hesitate from asserting himself better knowledgeable than the prophet (pbuh)—in what he alleges the matters of mundane world (umoḥor-i-dunya), and asserts that the prophet (pbuh) is a human being (basher) like him, how could he acknowledge anyone better than him! According to the TF if the prophet himself says that he (pbuh) is a human being (basher) like them it is absolutely correct, for only basher can be a model to be followed by the basher. (Angel could be a model only for the angel. 94 Even the angel could not offer a model through his words and deed for basher.) 95 But if anyone other asserts that the prophet (pbuh) was like him/Them it would be absolutely wrong for how can the mercy-of-all-the-worlds (rahma-tullil-ālamān) be like us. Is it not same thing the non-believers would say concerning the prophet (pbuh)!96 Whoever minds himself according to the standard becomes a standard when he is verified.

There are people who believe that one can purify himself. 97 If one could purify himself why did the prophet Ibrahīm pray to Allah for sending a messenger who will grant purification to the people! Similarly, while stating the purpose of sending the prophet (pbuh) why did Allah mention that he purifies the believers! Some people think that the prophet (pbuh) has shown how to perform prayers (mandatory and discretionary), fasting, conducting remembrance of Allah (ziker) and other religious rituals and the same was his (pbuh) way to grant purification. Everything is preserved in the Qur‘ān and in the books of tradition. One should act upon these teachings to become pious. The TF does not recognize that anywhere in the Qur‘ān it is commanded to Muslims that they purify themselves on their own. What the books contain is only words. One cannot get from books except the information, principles, teachings or the precept. Should the ‘book’ be raised to the status of teacher (muallim) what need was there for Allah to send the prophets (pbut)! What difficulty could the Arabs face in understanding the Arabic Qur’an! One who claims to have taken the ‘book’ for teacher (shāhid), follow none but himself. If the ‘book’ could act for a teacher (shāhid) then none else except the Qur‘ān was needed. It is the dignity of the prophet (pbuh) that he (pbuh) is teacher (muallim). (Al-Qur‘ān , 2:151; 3:164.) Commentary on verse 02:151 including in TF reads: “Those who are to be reformed must always have a perfect model before them...It is the Order of Allah alone which is worthy of obedience and it is His beloved who is worthy of being a model, an ideal. One who is purified by the beloved of Allah Almighty, is practically initiated into guidance.”
Commentary on verse 3:164 reads: “He (pbuh) read unto the people the verses revealed to him by Allah Almighty and honored them by purifying them, because success comes after purification. He taught them the Divine Book and wisdom, imparted them the knowledge of Divine injunctions and the way to benefit from them. ... His (pbuh) lovers continue to educate people in His verses as well as wisdom and purify the believers to enable them to benefit from the bounties of Allah Almighty. Our own suggestions lead us astray.’

Tomb can also not play the role of a teacher (shāhid). How could any tomb play for a teacher on the face of the prophet’s tomb! To grant purification is no more the privilege of those who have passed away. The TF narrates this fact in a very beautiful manner when it says: Purification is granted in the present, and it is granted by him who has the honour of being shāhid at present. One should keep in touch with shāhid. When the greatness of the shāhid dawns upon one, one’s qawl (belief, idea, statement, precept, ritual) is rectified. When one gets in love with shāhid, his ‘amal (practice) gets reformed and becomes righteous. Now the knowledge is granted. Knowledge is always post experience. Who follows in the footsteps of the mentor (shāhid) at all these three stages he is included among the mukhlasin (the sincere, the devout). Al-haqq certifies that Satan cannot mislead a mukhliș. Those who disprove shāhid or whose action does not confirm their claim of submission to shāhid, they are not proved true. If a person comes to shāhid in a position that he/she has already freed himself (or herself) from contradictions, confusions and doubts and the soil is ready to accept the seed of righteousness, it is sown.

If the soil is not ready and the seed of righteousness is sown, the person becomes abnormal, his personality is defaced, and it is not something wise. A Qur’anic parable would help understand this position: The heart of man is like a niche in which is placed the lamp. The lamp is encased in a glassy globe. The globe is so clean that it glitters like a star. Imagine how much illumination the globe can add to the light of the lamp when it is lighted, and how beautifully will it distribute this light! The lamp in the heart of man is filled with blessed oil, the reason. Heart is the seat of reason. This blessed oil is pure like the oil extracted from the fruit of an olive tree which is neither in the east nor in the west but in the center of the garden where the sun shines over it the whole day. The oil of such a tree is so pure that it is just to be lighted up as soon as spark approaches it. Now imagine when this lamp is lighted up, how luminous would it be! Light upon light! The role of reason is to free man from contradictions. The reason, when pure, has the greatest capacity to catch light from the light of guidance of Allah by which the heavens and the earth are lit and luminous. But when man follows his desires, the reason loses its purity. The heavens and the earth are filled with the light of Allah’s guidance. If there is a heart, whose oil has not lost its purity and whose globe has not lost its shine, Allah guides him to the way of His light, to the way of His gnosis. Shāhid is that light-giving lamp. (33:46) When the heart of Mo’min gets lighted up it becomes light upon light. Allah is the Knower of everything. He knows with absolute Knowledge whom to bless with this favour. Allah sets parables for the guidance of mankind.

Some people understand Awaisia is a chain of shāhidin (silsila) where one does not need a shāhid for granting purification or for verification. They make the process of granting purification a sort of mystery. The TF does not agree with this view. Awaisia is not a chain of shāhidin, rather it is a way of imparting knowledge. It is the glory of shāhid that he can impart knowledge to a sincere seeker living physically at a distance from him.

Wahdat al-wujūd may also need to be discussed in the context of the Way of Shāhidīn. The view that Allah is wujūd-e-multiq (Absolute Existence) and whatever else is His manifestation, is known in the history of Muslim thought as Wahdat al-wujūd or the principle of the unity/oneness of all-Existence. It is also known as the principle of the unity/oneness of all-Existence. One of its fundamental presuppositions (i.e. Allah is al-Haqq) has already been discussed above. The second fundamental presupposition is going to be discussed here. The TF upholds that the doctrine of wahdat al-wujūd is un-Qur’anic, therefore contrary to truth. Let us examine this view.

‘Wujūd’ is a word of Arabic origin. It is a derivative of the root wao-jim-dal. Were Allah Wujūd-i-Mutliq in His Essence, what difficulty was there to mention it in the Qur’ān which is in Arabic. But Allah has not liked to use this word or any other derivative of the same root to mention His Being. Could anyone else know Allah’s Essence better than Him! Chittick observes that “Ibn-al-‘Arabi is not a philosopher” but a sage, a visionary, and “wahdat al wujūd is one of the many dimensions of his overall vision of reality which Ibn al-Arabi wants to convey to his reader.” “One of Ibn al-Arabi’s themes is that reason or intellect (‘aql) is inadequate as a source of knowledge of God, the world, and the self.
His own teachings are based primarily upon “unveiling” (kashf), “direct witnessing” (shahīd), “contemplation” (mushāhīda), and “tasting” (dhawq), all of which transcend the limitations of intellect.” It is clear from the above quotation from Chittick that Ibn al-'Arabi’s own ‘vision’ is the standard-of-truth to him. The same is true of his school. Al-haqq (The Qur’an) testifies that Allah is Incomparably Unique and Matchless. To consider one’s own vision or speculation regarding Allah to be truth whereas Allah has not accorded any validity to it, is a grievous wrong. (al-Qur’an, 07:21) Shaykh Ahmed Sirhandi criticized this view saying that wahdat al-wujūd is only a stage in mystic journey and asserted that when Allah, by His Grace, elevated him from this stage only then he realized that it was not the final stage and the concept of God based on this level of experience was not the right concept. Shaykh Ahmed Sirhandi asserted that Allah is the Creator and the universe is His creation. Creation in no way partake the being of Allah either as His manifestation or adumbration (tajallī) or what not. ‘Creation’ is reality but the Creator absolutely transcends it, He even transcends it with respect to any analogical reference. Shaykh Ahmed Sirhandi termed his view as wahdat ash-shahīd (transcendental unity of all manifestation). If Ibn ‘Arabi has presented his wahdat al-wujūd on the base of his vision/mystic experience, Shaykh Ahmed Sirhandi was no better than him in this respect. None of them talked with reference to authority i.e., the holy Qur’an. According to the TF talking with reference to authority ‘the oneness of all shāhīdin’ (wahdat-i-shāhīdin) is the right view, for the way of shāhīdin (the certified witnesses, the devout) has ever been to bring people from darkness to light and to purify them and to verify him whom they grant purification.

Note
Translation of verses in this article has been taken from Pithall, The Glorious Qur’an—Text and Explanatory Translation, Lahore, Pakistan: Taj Company, 1984 and is given in italics.

1 The Qur’an says: The (Qur’an) is the qawl of the illustrious messenger. (ılmahu la-qawlur-rasūlin karīmin. 69:40, also 81:19). In order to understand this verse it is necessary that we i) know the referent of rasūlin karīmin (the illustrious messenger), and ii) that we rightly determine the meaning of the word ‘qawl’. Rasūlin karīmin may not refer to the archangel Hazrat Jibrāil for he has only brought down the revelation to the holy heart of the prophet (pbourh) by Allah’s Command (Fa’ innahu Nazzalahu ‘Alā Qalibka Bi’ idhni Allāhi, ibid, 2:97) It may not refer to Allah, for the Qur’an is (Kalām Allāhi), the Word of the Lord. (cf. ibid, 2:75, 09:06, 48:15); Allah is the Sender of revelation (ibid, 69:43) so He may not be the rasūl (the messenger). The prophet (pbourh) can be the only referent of the phrase rasūlin karīmin. ‘Qawl’ may not mean ‘the inspired word’ as Muhammad Asad translates it. (The Message of the Qur’an, 69:40, 81:1) He is a naturalist and may mean that Qur’an is a speech which the messenger (pbourh) articulated in his words under Divine inspiration. This is not correct for the Qur’an is Kalām Allāh and revealed as such. ‘Qawl’ may not mean ‘speech’ or ‘word’ as Pithhall translates it. (cf. The Glorious Qur’an, 69:40 and 81:19, Abdullah Yousaf Ali also translates it as ‘word.’) Allah warns a disbelief of flinging into Hell-fire who says that this is nothing but the ‘Qawl—speech or word’ of a bashar i.e., a human being (إن ها هل أقول أن البشر). (cf. 74:25) The Qur’an verifies that the Messenger (pbourh) is a bashar-human being (cf. 18:110). The (Qur’an) also asserts that ‘it is the Qawl of the Illustrious Messenger.’ How to reconcile this! ‘Qawl’ means the ‘precept’, ‘the guidance’, the teachings. ‘Qawl’ is a complimentary of the concept of ‘amal (the human moral action). The auspicious person of the prophet (pbourh) is the absolute model of acting upon this precept—‘qawl’. The auspicious life of the prophet (pbourh) is the best embodiment of this ‘qawl’. The Tafseer-e-Fazli translates the verse in question as ‘The (Qur’an) is the qawl of the illustrious messenger (69:40), and rightly draws the conclusion that the Qur’an is qawl. TF’, vol. 7, (Lahore: Fazli Foundation, 1998) 69:40-43, 264-65.

2 howal-Ḥaqqomir-Rabbika: The Qurān is the truth from your Lord. The revelation of the Scripture whereof there is no doubt is from the Lord of the Worlds. Or say they: He hath invented it? Nay, but it is the truth from thy Lord, that thou mayst warn a folk to whom no warner came before thee, that happy they may walk aright. 32:02-3 ...What is revealed unto thee from thy Lord is the truth (ho wal-Ḥaqq), ...34:06. As for that which We inspire in thee of the Scripture, it is the truth (ho wal-Ḥaqq) 35:31, ... That which is revealed unto Muhammad – and it is the truth from their Lord (ho wal-Ḥaqqo mir-Rabbihim) ... 47:02, al-Ḥaqq mir-Rabbihim: 47:03. From centuries onward the belief that al-ḥaqq is one of al-ʿAsmā al-Ḥusnā (the Beautiful Names of Allah) is prevalent in Muslims. The TF does not agree with it. According to it ‘al-ḥaqq’ means the standard of truth and this epithet is to be used for the Qurān. TF, vol. II, (Lahore: Fazli Foundation, reprint 1996), 305.

3 Assuredly conjecture (zann-ضن ) can by no means take the place of truth. Cf. Al-Qurān, 10:36; A guess can never take the place of truth. Cf. Ibid, 53:28. Commentary on this verse in the TF includes: The conjecture (zann) cannot spare anyone from the truth (ḥaqq). Zann relates to one’s desires whereas ḥaqq is Allah’s revealed Guidance. It is not possible to have knowledge if one follows one’s conjecture. Cf. TF vol.7, 1998, 68.

4 Say: Al ḥaqq is from the Lord of you all. (cf. al-Qurān, 18:29); al-Qurān is the truth from your Lord (ho wal-ḥaqqo mir-Rabbika—Ibid, 32:02-03) What Allah descends unto His messenger is the truth (cf. ibid,—5:83-84, 11:120, 13:01, 19; 21:55; More references will follow in the body of the article.
Allah Almighty says: I swear by all that ye see. And all that ye see not. That it is indeed the qawl [teachings, precept] of an illustrious messenger [rasool-e-karim]. It is not the qawl of a poet, it is not the qawl of a diviner. It is a revelation from the Lord of the Worlds. *(TF vol.7, 69:38-43, 264-65)* also see, nor is it the qawl of an evil, accursed spirit. *Ibid, 81:19, 383.* Also see note 2 above.

*Batiil* is only the opinion of those who disbelieve. *TF* vol. 6, 1997, cf. 38:27; *What is opposite to al-haqq is al-batiil, TF* vol. 1, 2 and 6, cf. 02:42, 109, 144, 146, 213; 07:118, 18:56, 40:78;

"O ye who believe! Why say ye that which ye do not? It is the most hateful in the sight of Allah that ye say that which ye do not. (Ibid, 61:2-3) The *TF* apply this principle to all aspects of life. It doesn’t agree with any preaching if what the preacher preaches is contrary to what he practices. Commenting on *bism-Allah* they say that a claim not supported by accordant actions does not prove to be true. Cf. *TF*, vol. 1, Eng. tr. p.1.

Allah granted sustenance, faculties and honor to the Children of Isra’il but “rather than keeping themselves on the right path in accordance with the Divine Message, they begin to give the same importance to their speculations which was worthy of truth, and truth alone so they fell into schism after the knowledge had come to them. For kn...
32) al-Qurān, cf. 33:46
33) Cf. ibid, 33:70
34) Cf. ibid, 31:15
35) Cf. ibid, 2:257
36) Ibid, cf. 10:62
37) Ibid, 31:15, for a detailed discussion on the meaning of this verse see note 45; also cf., TF, (Eng. tr.) vol. 1, viii.
38) Every prophet (pbuh) was a standard of servitude of Allah for his followers for he demanded the believers to follow him and to submit to him.
39) Al-Qurān, 25:01, 17:01
40) TF, (Eng. tr.) vol. 1, Introduction, viii. Also, al-Qurān, 14:1;5; 33:43; 57:9; 65:11
41) Qurān recites the story of a man who had such capacity. Qurān says: And recite unto them the tale of him to whom We gave Our revelations [Signs is the proper word] but he sloughed them off, so Satan overtook him and he became of those who were led astray. And had We willed We could have raised him by their means, but he clung to the earth and followed his own lust. …Ibid, 7:175-76
42) Qurān narrates the story of a pious man, a courtier of Hazrat Sulaimān (pbuh) who could make miraculous things. When Hazrat Sulaimān learned that the Queen of Sheba was coming he said to his council that which of them could bring her throne before they come to him. A djin said that he could bring the throne before he adjourns the court. But a courtier whom Allah had given some knowledge of the Scripture said he could bring it before twinkling of his eye ceases. And the throne was there before him! Ibid, 27:38-40
43) Al-Qurān, 02:61.
44) And now We have set thee (O Muhammad) on a clear road [Sharī‘a] of (Our) commandment [amar]; so follow it, and follow not the whims of those who know not. Ibid, 45:18 The verse does not address to the prophet (pbuh) as Pickthall thinks, it addresses to the believers. Cf. TF vol. 6, 314.
45) And follow the path of those who turn towards Me. Ibid, 31:15 The TF translates this verse as the following: “And follow the path of one who turns toward Me.” (TF, Urdu, manzil 5, Lahore: Fāzli Foundation, 1996, 252-53.) This translation seems better and correct for one can follow only one person, one cannot follow many. The righteous and the evil-doers always have different triqat (way). (cf. Ibid, 72:11) The Triqat (way) of the righteous is that they follow their shāhid as one who turn towards Allah (cf. TF vol. 5, commentary on 31:15, 253) and submit to Allah and His messenger (cf. 3:32,132). The Triqat of the evil-doers is that they take their own likes and dislikes as standard (cf. TF vol. 1,Eng. tr., commentary on 2:145, p.75). They are the ones who follow the way of those who are oblivious of Allah’s remembrance, follow their own desires and do not observe the limits prescribed by Allah.(18:28) Holy Qurān is the Book that guides to the truth and guides to the straight road (tariq-e-mustaqīm) (46:30)
46) O ye who believe! Why say ye that which ye do not? It is most hateful in the eyes of Allah that ye say that which ye do not. (al-Qurān, 61:02) That which is most hateful in the eyes of Allah cannot be knowledge. Commenting on 2:08 and 61:02 the worthy authors of TF say: A claim of faith not witnessed by accordant actions does not prove to be true. A claim of faith in Allah and the Last Day proves true only by following the Beloved of Allah. (cf. TF vol. 1 (Eng. tr.), p. 07, and vol.7, p.190).
47) According to the TF, to accept as true without asking how and why, the statement of one whose truthfulness and integrity has been acknowledged is Imān-bil-ghaib. The muttaqān accept as true whatever is stated by their shāhid whether they understand it or they understand it not. Qurān imparts its guidance only to muttaqān (the pious). Qurān also states the qualities of muttaqān because of which they succeed in getting guidance from it. Imān-bil-ghaib (Faith in the unseen) being the first of those qualities. (TF vol.1 Eng. tr., p.5) commentary on, 02:02-3)
48) Before acting upon Allah’s injunctions having faith is only a claim or precept (qawāl) but not knowledge. Hence Imān-bil-ghaib is qawāl. Qurān enjoins to join claim of faith with righteous deed. (cf. al-Qurān , 02:82) A claim of faith not witnessed by accordant actions does not prove to be true. (cf. al-Qurān, 2:08) Imān-bil-ghaib converts into knowledge when one acts upon it doing righteous deed for knowledge is always post-experience. The doings of the righteous are righteous-deeds. Following one’s shāhid/mentor raises faith from Imān-bil-ghaib to Imān-bish-shahādat. Mentor vis-à-vis shāhid is at the level of Imān-bish-shahādat. When one follows his shāhid in totality of his life the mentor purifies him and certifies him, the follower becomes shāhid and his faith becomes witnessed faith.
49) Al-Qurān, 05:83
50) It is the way of the pious that they yearn and pray for togetherness with shāhidīn. Al-Qurān says: Our Lord! We believe in that which Thou hast revealed and we follow him whom Thou hast sent. Enroll us among those who witness to the truth [shāhidīn]. (03:53, also 5:83)
IR identifies Haqiqah with Truth when it says “Finally at the Center there is the Haqiqah or Truth which is the source of both the Tarīqah and the Shariah.” Similarly it identifies Haqiqah with Center when it says: “…that Haqiqah or Center which is ‘everywhere and nowhere, …’”. It also identifies God with the Truth when it says: “…God who is the Truth.” Ibid, p.122. Thus in IR, Haqiqah, Center, God and the Truth refer to one and the same being. IR also identifies ‘Reality’ and ‘Unity’ with the above. For treating God as ‘Reality’ or ‘Absolute Reality’ or ‘Real’ see: IR, Pp. 15, 16, 17, 19, 137 etc.

53 For an elaborate study on the meaning of al-ḥaqq, please see: Dr. Abdul Hafeez Fāzli, “Is al-ḥaqq one of Al-Asmā al-Husnāl,” Bazayf, University of the Punjab Lahore: Oriental College, 2006


55 “M’arifat is excellence in ultimate hight of what Qurān calls ‘recognition of the truth’. The Qurān says: When they listen to that which hath been revealed unto the messenger, thou seest their eyes overflow with tears because of their recognition of the truth. They say: our Lord, we believe. Inscribe us as among the witnesses. (05:83) That which hath been revealed unto the messenger, thou seest their eyes overflow with tears because of their recognition of the truth. They say: our Lord, we believe. Inscribe us as among the witnesses. (05:83) IR mentions it but as a passing reference and without quoting authority from the Qurān when it says: “Imān, when transformed by ilḥān, becomes that illuminative knowledge that unites, that gnosis (‘irfān or marifā’) which penetrates and transforms man.” Ibid, p.134.
“Tell me about the Hour.” The prophet Amr has come into—

He said, “The slave girl will give birth to her mistress, and you will see

They write: “Whosoever holds Allah’s—

CF, al-Qurān, 4:49; 24:21

The TF holds that the status of Allah is that of a Lover: He loves the mohsinīn:2:195), tawwābīn(2:222), motatahhirīn (2:222), muttaqīn. (3:76), (sābirīn, (mutawakkilīn) (3:159) as stated earlier. Status of Allah is not that of a Beloved. Shāhidin are Allah’s beloved, they are also the beloved of the believers. The right translation of this verse according to the worthy authors of TF would be: ‘Say: If you aspire Allah’s love, then follow me, and Allah will love you …’ They write: “Whosoever holds Allah’s beloved as his beloved, Allah makes him His loving friend.” Some people and especially draw from—Wa Mina An-Nāsī Man Yattaq坤 Min DāniAllāhi ‘Andādāan Yuhbībūnahum KaḥubbīAllāhī; Wa al-Ladhīn ‘Āmanū ‘Ashaddū Hūbbān Līllāhī …02:165 ‘that as for the believers, they love Allah ardently.’ But the TF would translate it as the following: ‘And there are people who choose others beside Allah, and aspire that they (i.e., the others) love them as Allah loves. But as for the believers, they ardently aspire Allah’s love.’ (TF, Vol. 1, Urdu, reprint 1992, commentary on verse 3:31, p. 207 and commentary on verse 2:165, Ibid, p. 95.)

Commenting on this verse the worthy authors of TF say that Allah has done a great favour on the faithful by placing love for guidance in them and by having adorned their hearts with faith. And because of this they are always inclined to follow the shāhid and never incline to make him comply with their wishes. Tafseer-e-Fāzli vol. 7, p. 394.

Ibid vol. 2, cf. exegesis of 09:102-105

Say, (O Muhammad, to mankind): If ye love Allah, follow me; Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. 3:31

Qurān says: Whoso obeyeth Allah and the messenger, they are with those unto whom Allah hath shown favour, of the prophet’s [nabīyin] and the saints [ṣiddiqīn] and the martyrs [shuhadā] and the righteous [ṣāliḥīn]. The best of company are they! Ibid, 04:69

al-Qurān, 2:210; 8:44; 22:76; 35:4; 57:5

The word ‘amr’ in Arabic has another meaning i.e. ‘command’ and it occurs in the Qurān at many occasions. But it has ‘awāmir’ as its plural. Similarly the word ‘Amr’ also occurs in the Qurān in ontological context: whatever has come into being out of Allah either belongs to the category of khalq or to the category of amr. But neither of them partakes in the Being of Allah. It is clear that the word ‘umūr’ in the present context does not refer to any of these two senses of the word ‘amr’.

Text of the Hadith is as follows: ‘Umar ibn Khattab said: One day when we were with God’s Messenger, a man with very white clothing and very black hair came up to us. No mark of travel was visible on him, and none of us recognized him. Sitting down before the prophet, leaning his knees against his, and placing his hands on his thighs, he said, “Tell me Muhammad about submission [Islām].” He replied, “Submission means that you should bear witness that there is no god but God and that Muhammad is God’s Messenger, that you should perform the ritual prayer, pay the alms tax, fast during Ramadan, and make the pilgrimage to the House if you are able to go there.” The man said, “You have spoken the truth.” We were surprised at his questioning him and then declaring that he had spoken the truth. He said, “Now tell me about faith [Imān].” He replied, “Faith means that you have faith in God, His angels and His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day, and that you have faith in the measuring out, both its good and its evil.” Remarking that he has spoken the truth, he then said, “Now tell me about doing what is beautiful [Ikhsān].” He replied, “Doing beautiful means that you should worship God as if you see Him, for even if you do not see Him, He sees you.” Then the man said, “Tell me about the Hour.”” The prophet replied, “About that he who is questioned know no more than the questioner.” The man said, “Then tell me about its marks.” He said, “The slave girl will give birth to her mistress, and you will see the bare foot, the naked, the destitute, and the shepherd vying with each other in building.” Then the man went away. After I had waited for a long time, the prophet said to me, “Do you know who the questioner was, ‘Umar?’” I replied, “Allah and His Messenger know best.”
He said, “He was Gabriel. He came to teach you your religion.” Schiko Murrata and William C. Chittick, _The Vision of Islam_, (Lahore, Pakistan: Suhail Academy, 1998), 25-26. They have quoted it from _Muslim_, Iman 1; _Bukhari_, Iman 37; MM 5-6.


93 Those who spend (of that which Allah has given them) in ease and in adversity, those who control their wrath and are forgiving toward mankind; Allah loveth the good [Mohsinīn]. (Al-Qurān, 3:134) Is the reward of goodness (Ihsān) aught save goodness (Ihsān)! (55:60) Lo! Allah enjoineth justice and kindness (Ihsān),...

94 al-Qurān, 17:95

95 Al-Qurān, Say: I am only a mortal [bashar] like you. [With the difference that] My Lord inspireth in me that your God is only One God...(18:110; 41:06); Their messengers said unto them: We are but mortals [bashar] like you, but Allah giveth grace unto whom He will of His slaves…(14:11)

96 The chieftains of his folk, who disbelieved, said: This is only a mortal like you... Al-Qurān, 23:24. Also see, 11:27, 14:10, 33:34.


98 Al-Qurān, 02:129; 02:151

99 TF vol. 1 (Eng. tr.), 78; also, ibid, 241.

100 TF vol. 1, p. iv.

101 Ibid. 15:40; 38:83

102 al-Qurān, 2:129, 151; 3:164; 62:2

103 Have they not travelled in the land, and have they hearts wherewith to feel [to reason—ya’qiloon] and ears wherewith to hear? For indeed it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts, which are within the bosoms, that grow blind. Al-Qurān, 22:46.

104 Those who follow their desires go astray. (Al-Qurān: 18:28; 25:43; 45:23; ...)


106 Qudratullah Shahīb, _Shahāb Nama_, (Lahore: Sang-e-Meal Publications, 1987). cf. p. 1114 Qudratullah Shahīb was a bureaucrat in Ayyub Khan’s regime in Pakistan, a novelist, and a sufi who died in 1987. Shahāb Nama is his memoir/autobiography which was published after his death.

107 In fact there are many ways of imparting knowledge other than the normal. Al-Qurān does not fail to mention these. For example, Allah imparted knowledge to Hazrat Musa’s mother (a.s.) what to do when Hazrat Musā (pbuh) is born. Similarly Allah guided and granted knowledge to Hazrat Maryyam. Similarly there are different kinds of knowledge which Allah grants to His servants. For example al-Qurān mentions a servant of Allah whom the prophet Musā met at river side. Allah states that: Then they found one of Our slaves, unto whom We had given mercy from Us, and had taught knowledge from Our presence. (18:66) But only Hazrat Musā (pbuh) was at the status of shahīd. Similarly, al-Qurān narrates the story of a pious man, a courtier of Hazrat Sulaimān (pbuh) whom Allah had given some special knowledge of the Scripture and could make miraculous things. (Ibid, 27:38-40) Ref. footnote nos. 21, 22. This special kind of knowledge is known as _Ilm-e-Laduni_.

108 Those who follow their desires go astray. (Al-Qurān: 18:28; 25:43; 45:23; ...)

109 TF vol. 6 (Urdu), 1997, p.251. See peroration of verse 43:15.


111 Ibn al-‘Arabi, and his followers present their view on the base of their own mystic experience which they call _kashf-o-shahīd_ (unveiling). Ibid., p. 35-6.

112 Ibid.42. Usually it is considered that pantheism and _wahdat al-wajud_ are one and the same thing, and panantheism and _wahdat ash-shahad_ ascribed to Sheykh Ahmed Sirhandi are one and the same thing. Both these things are incorrect. Pantheism is a philosophical term which considers the universe and God identical; and panantheism is a philosophical term used to denote a view which considers that being of God has two aspects: immanent and transcendent. The universe is a manifestation of God; God is immanent in the universe or reality. So reality or manifestation is identical with God but God is also transcendent to His manifestation or reality. In Muslim _tasawuf_ and especially in school of thought relating Ibn Arabi the term _wahdat al-wajud_ is used in the sense close to panantheism.

113 Commenting on verse 04:26 which says ‘Allah wishes to make clear to you what is right and to show you the ways of those who preceded you ...’ the _TF_ says: The present is proved true by the attestation of the past, and past is proved true by the verification of the present. It is in fact the greatest favor of Allah that one who has definite knowledge of relieving from fear and grief is Shahīd in present time and a verifier of Shahīdīn who preceded him in the past. _TF_, Eng. tr. Vol. 1, 274. In Surah Muzzammil it has been said that Allah has sent a Messenger (pbuh) who is ShahīdWitness) upon you as he sent a messenger towards Pharaoh. (73:15) Thus Shahīdīn have been sent in the past. _TF_ vol. 7, 301.
References


Articles


