

THE HANBALI SCHOOL AND SUFISM

The course of Sufism in the history of Islamic religious movements, as may be gathered from our manuals on Islam, may be summarized as follows. Sufism, born in Islam at an early date, enjoyed a period of calm and tranquility in the first and second centuries after the Prophet. In the third century, it met with opposition from official Islam, and a troubled period followed, culminating in the notorious torture and execution on the gallows of the great mystic martyr, al-Ḥallāj. This execution took place in the first quarter of the fourth century (tenth century of the Christian era). The period which followed brought a change for the better, for in this period works on mysticism were written, reproduced and circulated. In the 5th/11th century, so goes the story, al-Ghazzālī succeeded almost single-handedly in reconciling, once for all, official Islam with Sufism. But his triumph did not come without a bitter struggle within the ranks of Islamic orthodoxy. The Hanbalis, who are variously regarded as conservative to the core, rigid, intransigent, even fanatical, fought tooth and nail, we are told, in opposing Sufism's admission into the ranks of the orthodox. They fought Sufism before its triumph, and they continued to fight it after its triumph. But Sufism spread out and went on to make great conquests in a vast and growing Muslim world, thanks to the heroic efforts of al-Ghazzālī, and in spite of the unrelenting resistance of the Hanbali School down through the centuries.

This story varies in its details, but three distinct stages emerge from the various versions: (1) the birth and rise of Sufism; (2) the struggle of Sufism with official Islam; and (3) the triumph and spread of Sufism in spite of tenacious Hanbali opposition.

The consensus of scholars has faltered on all but the third stage; namely, the triumph of Sufism in the face of unbending Hanbali opposition.

On the other hand, the most persistent differences of opinion have centered around the problem of the origins of Islamic mysticism: whether endogenous, arising from its own religious sources, or exogenous, with the impetus coming from other religions. The consensus, of late, seems to be in favor of its origins being

Islamic, a result of the continual meditation of the Koran itself. This is the thesis defended by Louis Massignon in his *Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane* in 1922¹, based on a brilliant study of documents of the first three centuries of Islam.

It is not my intention to treat of the origins or the development of Sufism; though, with regard to the origins, my conclusions will be found to support the endogenous theory of Islamic mysticism as expounded by Louis Massignon. However, the primary concern of my paper lies elsewhere; i. e. to test the truth value contained in the thesis of Hanbali opposition to Sufism.

Ever since the work of Ignaz Goldziher, the Hanbali School has been a favorite whipping boy of modern scholarship in Islamic studies. It is hardly necessary for me to say that Islamists owe a great debt of gratitude to this eminent scholar whose works, taken as a whole, constitute one of the most solid foundations in our field of studies. But he had, as it were, a blind spot as regards the Hanbali School; a blind spot which he acquired from anti-Hanbali sources, and which was naturally included in that excellent legacy he has passed on to us. This lack of clear sight may be attributed in part to the historical sources available in print at the turn of the century; sources which, replete with an anti-Hanbali bias, have supplied the materials used for laying the foundations of our knowledge regarding the Hanbali School. And although many other sources have become available, the impressions resulting from the first sources and the studies based upon them have lingered on.

Many well-read Islamists are to this day still surprised to hear that the Sufis al-Anṣārī al-Harawī (d. 481/1089)² and 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī (d. 561/1166)³ were both very strong Hanbalis. Those who know these two Sufis to have been fervent Hanbalis usually concede this fact only as an exception to the general rule of so-called Hanbali anti-Sufism. In this they are following the lead of Goldziher who sees the affiliation of these two Sufis with the Hanbali School as due to a flight from rationalist theology⁴.

However, the persistence of the notion of Hanbali anti-Sufism is not due to the matter of sources alone; it is also due to the language of the sources, a perennial problem in the case of documents coming down to us from the middle ages.

¹ Second revised edition (Paris: J. Vrin, 1954).

² On this Sufi, see *EP*, art. *al-Anṣārī al-Harawī* (by S. de Beaucœuil).

³ On this Sufi, see *EP*, s. v. *'Abd al-Qādir al-Djīlānī* (by W. Braune).

⁴ I. Goldziher, *Le dogme et la loi de l'Islam* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1920), 144-145.

The language problem may be seen quite clearly in the Hanbali sources themselves. When one refers to the biographical notices of the two above-mentioned Sufis in Ibn Rajab's biographical work on the Hanbali School, one finds al-Anṣārī referred to as "aṣ-ṣūfī"⁵ and al-Jīlī referred to as "aṣ-ṣūfī"⁶. If these terms were to be interpreted literally, we would have a mystic (ṣūfī) in Anṣārī and a simple ascetic (zāhid) in Jīlī.

But even one Sufi in the Hanbali School, admitted as such by a Hanbali biographer, would be, under the circumstances, cause enough for concern. A Hanbali biographer should, one would have thought, be circumspect enough to pass over the matter in silence. From Ibn Rajab's designations of these two Sufis, two tentative conclusions may be drawn: (1) Ibn Rajab appears not to have felt the need for circumspection as regards Sufism in the ranks of the Hanbali School; and (2) his use of the terms ṣūfī and zāhid indicates the possibility of their being interchangeable.

These conclusions were strengthened by a subsequent reading in Ibn Rajab's *Dhail*. This two-volume biographical work covers a period of three centuries of Hanbalism, from the middle of the 5th/11th century to the middle of the 8th/14th. By reading merely the headings of the notices which consist of the full names and epithets of the Hanbali biographies, the reader can come across ten "Sufis" referred to as such⁷. By reading beyond the names into the text of the notices, he can find again nearly three times as many Hanbalis easily identifiable as Sufis⁸. And with still closer scrutiny, the total number can amount to over one hundred, that is to say, over one-sixth of the Hanbalis treated by Ibn Rajab. But the true number of Hanbali Sufis is yet higher than that, for Ibn Rajab supplies no noticeable hints of the Sufism of other Hanbalis who, on the basis of still other sources, are known to have been Sufis⁹.

A few years ago I wrote briefly on Hanbali Sufism in eleventh-century Baghdad, in the era of Ibn 'Aqīl (d. 513/1119)¹⁰. Since that

⁵ See Ibn Rajab, *Dhail 'alā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila*, ed. H. Laoust-S. Dahhān, vol. I (Damas: Publications de l'Institut Français de Damas, 1951) (= *Dhail*), I, 64, line 11; Ibn Rajab, *Dhail 'alā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila*, ed. M. Hāmid al-Fiḳī, 2 vols. (Cairo: as-Sunna al-Muhammadiya Press, 1372/1952) (= *Dhail* (ed. Fiḳī), I, 50, line 9.

⁶ See *Dhail* (ed. Fiḳī), I, 290, line 10.

⁷ See *Dhail* (ed. Fiḳī), at the following numbers of biographical notices: 22, 27, 136, 137, 389, 393, 398, 445, 463, 466.

⁸ See *Dhail* (ed. Fiḳī), numbers 139, 193, 196, 197, 200, 233, 274, 289, 302, 307, 313, 323, 369, 370, 373, 381, 396, 397, 405, 436, 448, 472, 473, 492, 493, 514, 551.

⁹ For these Hanbali Sufis, see the schemata below.

¹⁰ See G. Makdisi, *Ibn 'Aqīl et la résurgence de l'Islam traditionaliste au x^e siècle* (Publ. de l'Institut Français de Damas, 1963) (= *Ibn 'Aqīl*, 377-383.

time, and especially recently, I have come across sources shedding further light on the extent of the commitment of the Hanbali School to Sufism.

Two works by the Hanbali juriconsult Ibn Qudāma (d. 620/1223) indicated the need for research in this direction¹¹. The first was *Kitāb at-Tauwābīn* in which a two-fold message was strongly indicated, one in favor of Hanbalism, the other in favor of Sufism¹². The second work was *Tahrīm an-naẓar fī kutub Ahl al-Kalām* in which Ibn Qudāma condemned his fellow Hanbali Ibn 'Aqīl for theological rationalism, but passed over, in almost complete silence, Ibn 'Aqīl's Ḥallājism¹³. Those who are familiar with Ibn 'Aqīl's *cause célèbre* will remember that he was made to give up his Mu'tazili tendencies, and retract a work which he had written in justification and glorification of the mystic al-Ḥallāj¹⁴. Ibn Qudāma quotes the retraction of Ibn 'Aqīl word for word; but when he comes to the passage dealing with Ḥallāj, he omits it, inserting the following remark in its place: "Ibn 'Aqīl mentions something else here, then goes on to say ..." ¹⁵. This remark of Ibn Qudāma shows that his omission of the passage on al-Ḥallāj was a conscious one.

The tradition of scholarship pointing to a hostile relationship between Sufism and Hanbalism being as deep-rooted as it is, I contented myself with adding the name of Ibn Qudāma to the list of Hanbalis cited by Massignon as merely favorable to al-Ḥallāj¹⁶.

But the next thing that happened was as startlingly conclusive as it was unexpected; namely, the discovery of an *isnād*, or chain of Sufi initiation, in which figured, quite clearly and unmistakably, the name of our Hanbali doctor, Ibn Qudāma. Furthermore, not only was Ibn Qudāma's own name to be seen in this chain of Sufis, but also those of seven other Hanbalis, each investing the

¹¹ On Ibn Qudāma, see *ET*, art. *Ibn Qudāma* (by G. Makdisi).

¹² Ibn Qudāma, *Kitāb at-Tauwābīn*, "Le Livre des Pénitents" (Publ. de l'Institut Français de Damas, 1961) pp. xxv f.

¹³ See G. Makdisi, *Ibn Qudāma's Censure of Speculative Theology* (Gibb Memorial New Series XX; London: Luzac, 1962).

¹⁴ On Ibn 'Aqīl's retraction, see G. Makdisi, *Nouveaux détails sur l'affaire d'Ibn 'Aqīl* (= *L'affaire d'Ibn 'Aqīl*) in *Mélanges Louis Massignon* (Paris-Damascus, 1956-57, 3 vols.), III, 91-126; G. Makdisi, *Ibn 'Aqīl*, 426 ff.; see also I. Goldziher, *Zur Geschichte der hanbalitischen Bewegungen*, in *ZDMG*, LXII (1908), 1-26, esp. pp. 20-21, where the text of the retraction is quoted in *extenso* (for the translation, see G. Makdisi, *Ibn 'Aqīl*, 426-428); L. Massignon, *La Passion d'al-Ḥallāj* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1914-1922), 366-367.

¹⁵ See G. Makdisi, *Ibn Qudāma's Censure*, 3 (para. 8, line 6 of Arabic text: *wa-dhakara [Ibn 'Aqīl] shai'an akhara thumma qāl*). —For the omitted passage concerning al-Ḥallāj, see G. Makdisi, *Ibn 'Aqīl*, 427 (lines 7-11).

¹⁶ See G. Makdisi, *L'affaire d'Ibn 'Aqīl*, 126.

other with the Sufi cloak, or *khirqa*, with Ibn Qudāma receiving it directly from his Shaikh, the famous Hanbali mystic, 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī.

This chain of Sufi initiation I found in one of the manuscripts of the Zāhiriya Library of Damascus¹⁷, the city in which Ibn Qudāma had lived and taught seven centuries ago. Corroborative evidence came later in manuscripts studied in Istanbul, Leiden, Dublin and Princeton. I also found further corroborative evidence in the biographical notice of one of the non-Hanbali links in the Sufi chain, Shams ad-Dīn ad-Dunaisirī, in Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī's *ad-Durar al-kāmina*¹⁸ where the Sufi pedigree of Dunaisirī is traced on his own authority to Ibn Qudāma, through two other Hanbali Sufis. The Zāhiriya Hanbali chain of Sufi initiation, corroborated by these several sources, has been studied in a separate article¹⁹.

Hanbali Sufism is consistent with Massignon's theory of the Koranic origins of Sufism. There is hardly any need to emphasize the role played by the Koran in Hanbali doctrine; for the Hanbalis, like the early Sufis, are known for their constant meditation of the Koran. It is therefore understandable when Massignon does not subscribe to the theory of Hanbali anti-Sufism²⁰, though he names Ibn al-Jauzī and Ibn Taimīya as Sufism's two great opponents²¹. On the other hand, the alleged Hanbali anti-Sufism is consistent with the theory of the foreign origin of Islamic Sufism. That is why Goldziher can see the Hanbali School as hostile to Sufism, since Hanbali traditionalism would regard Sufism as a foreign heretical innovation smuggled into Islam.

Recently, the late Marijan Molé, in subscribing to Massignon's view of the endogenous character of Islamic mysticism, found it necessary to explain why the Hanbalis, who issued from the same origins as Sufism, had taken, as he believed, different direction. "Sufism", he writes, "was born in an atmosphere of deep Koranic impregnation. But other Islamic movements —such as Hanba-

¹⁷ *Majmū'* 18, fol. 254b.

¹⁸ Vol. IV, p. 264 (n.° 728).

¹⁹ In a special issue of the *Cahiers de l'Herne* (Paris) devoted to Louis Massignon, (in press).

²⁰ L. Massignon, *La Passion d'al-Ḥallāj*, 354: "It is not certain that the universal tradition of the [Hanbali] school had been to admit the legitimacy of the condemnation of al-Ḥallāj; al-Huṣrī (Ṣūfī) abstains; Ibn 'Aqīl, defender of the sanctity of al-Ḥallāj, was forced to retract. Two great mystics, al-Harawī and 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, both uncontested Hanbalis, pronounced themselves in favor of al-Ḥallāj. And Marī, the conscientious commentator of Ibn Taimīya, is of the same opinion as Ibn al-Ghazzāl and aṭ-Ṭaufī who declare al-Ḥallāj innocent, although Ibn al-Jauzī and Ibn Taimīya were dead set against him". (translated from the French).

²¹ See *EI*. art. *taṣawwuf*, end of bibliography.

lism— had likewise sprung from that source without having taken, for that reason, a similar direction. To the initial summons of the sacred text, some individuals were reacting in a special way which was consonant with their profound aspirations”²². This statement represents an earnest attempt to explain the apparent paradox in the common origin but divergent development of Sufism and Hanbalism. Like Massignon, Molé was right in seeing a common origin for Sufism and Hanbalism; if he saw a divergence between these two movements in their later development, the fault lies in his acceptance of Goldziher's thesis of Hanbali hostility to Sufism.

In reality, there exists a very strong kinship between Hanbalism and Sufism. This kinship can be seen not only in their common spiritual origin, namely, the meditation of the Koran; it can also be seen in their common membership in one of Islam's earliest religious movements. Both the Hanbalis and the Sufis were members of *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*, i. e. the Traditionalists, as opposed to the Rationalists, not merely the tradition experts. This kinship explains their common, active and unremiting hostility to *kalām*, or rationalist theology. Moreover, both Sufis and Hanbalis go beyond the formalism of works. The tradition that good works are judged only by the intentions behind them (*innamā 'l-a'māl bi 'n-nīyāt*), is a tradition found most frequently in the *Musnad* of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal. If some Hanbalis condemned al-Ḥallāj and other Sufis, they were simply acting like other Traditionalist Sufis who did the same; on the other hand, other Traditionalist Sufis, including Hanbali Sufis, opted for the sainthood of al-Ḥallāj.

The theory of Hanbali hostility to Sufism does not stand up to close scrutiny. This hostility is attributed in a special way to Ibn al-Jauzī (d. 597/1200) and Ibn Taimīya (d. 728/1328), both of whom lived and died after the eleventh century. These so-called arch-enemies of Sufism, it will readily be noticed, died after the alleged reconciliation of Sufism with Islamic orthodoxy and its triumph in the eleventh century, a triumph which was supposed to have occurred in spite of Hanbali opposition²³. But even if we

²² Marijan Molé, *Les Mystiques musulmans* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965), 35-36: “Le soufisme este né dans une atmosphère de profonde imprégnation coranique. Mais d'autres mouvements islamiques —tel le hanbalisme— en étaient également sortis, sans que pour cela ils aient évolué dans un sens analogue. A l'appel initial du texte sacré, certains individus réagissaient d'une façon spéciale qui était conforme à leurs aspirations profondes”.

²³ In order to become reconciliated with Islamic orthodoxy, Sufism would first have had to break away from it. But this could never have taken place, since we know from the lives of the Sufis that they were also jurists, and participated in all the Islamic sciences and in the life of the community. Cf. the various *ṭabaqāt*-works; cf. also M. Molé, *Les Mystiques musulmans*, 87-88.

shored up this anachronism by adding the name of Ibn 'Aqīl who lived in the eleventh century²⁴, the theory of Hanbali hostility would still fall flat for lack of sufficient support. The reason is simply that neither of these three Hanbali doctors qualifies as an enemy of Sufism. Let us look at the record.

Ibn 'Aqīl, as a youth in his twenties, wrote a work venerating the mystic al-Ḥallāj²⁵. An accusation brought against him by a member of his Hanbali school, but not in the name of the school²⁶, forced him to retract, among other things, his Ḥallājism. However, this work on Ḥallāj, which he was supposed to destroy, was later found in Ibn al-Jauzī's library, in the handwriting of Ibn 'Aqīl himself²⁷. And later still, it was used by another Hanbali doctor, Ibn al-Ghazzālī (d. 615), for the latter's own work venerating al-Ḥallāj²⁸. Clearly Ibn 'Aqīl does not qualify as an opponent of Sufism.

Nor does Ibn Taimiyya. Henri Laoust has already written of Ibn Taimiyya's affinities with Sufism²⁹, and that one would search in vain to find in his works the least condemnation of Sufism. He opposed the pantheistic Sufism of the *ittiḥādīya*, but he showed his admiration for the works of the Sufis Junaid, Sahl at-Tustarī, Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, Qushairī, 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jilī, and Abū Ḥafṣ as-Suhrawardī³⁰.

At present we are in a position to go much farther and show that this allegedly great opponent of Sufism *was himself a Sufi*

²⁴ Ibn al-Jauzī's principal work against certain Sufi practices is based in large measure on Ibn 'Aqīl.

²⁵ G. Makdisi, *Ibn 'Aqīl*, 517 (no. 22); G. Makdisi, *L'Affaire d'Ibn 'Aqīl*, 93 f.; L. Massignon, *Akhbār al-Ḥallāj*, 3rd edn. (Paris: J. Vrin, 1957), 89 ff.

²⁶ This question was studied in *L'Affaire d'Ibn 'Aqīl*, passim, esp. 120 ff., based on the private diary of Ibn al-Bannā' (G. Makdisi, *Autograph Diary of an Eleventh Century Historian of Baghdad in BSOAS*, vol. XVIII-XIX (1956-1957)).

²⁷ See G. Makdisi, *Ibn 'Aqīl*, 517, and n. 4.

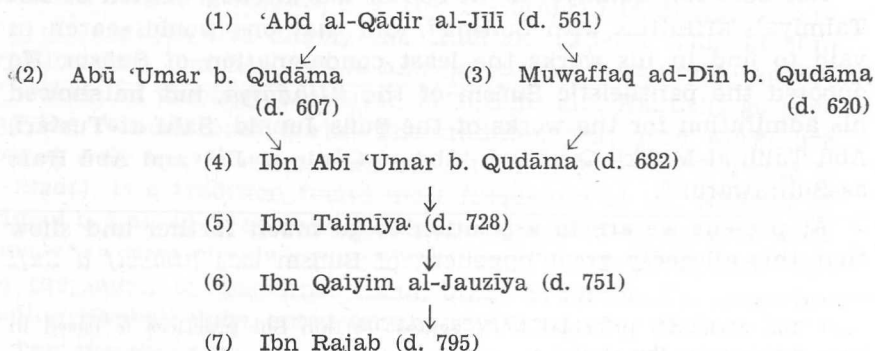
²⁸ Ibn Rajab, *Dhail* (ed. Fiqī), II, 106. See also L. Massignon, *La Passion d'al-Ḥallāj*, 377. —The *Bidāya* of Ibn Bākūya on Ḥallāj is preserved in a unique manuscript instituted as *waqf* in the Hanbali *madrasa*, aḍ-Ḍiyā'iya, in Damascus, and its chain of *rāwīs* contains several Hanbalis. See L. Massignon, *Akhbār al-Ḥallāj* (3rd edn.), 86 ff., and Planche I (opp. p. 32) with the chain of transmitters and the omnipresent signature of the Hanbali Yūsuf b. 'Abd al-Ḥādī (d. 909) as having studied the work under the direction of several of his professors.

²⁹ H. Laoust, *Essai sur les idées sociales et politiques d'Ibn Taimiyya* (Le Caire: Publications de l'Institut Français Archéologie Orientale, 1939), 89 et passim.

³⁰ H. Laoust, *Le Hanbalisme sous les mamlouks bahrides*, in *Revue des Etudes Islamiques* (1960), 35.

who belonged to more than one *ṭarīqa*³¹, but especially to that of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī³². In a Hanbali work on the wearing of the Sufi cloak (*khirqā*)³³, preserved in a unique manuscript in Princeton³⁴, and entitled *Bad' al-'ulqa bi-labs al-khirqā* by Yūsuf b. 'Abd al-Hādī (d. 909/1503), himself also a Hanbali, Ibn Taimīya is found in a Sufi spiritual genealogy with well-known Hanbali doctors, all, except one (al-Jīlī), heretofore unknown as Sufis. The links in this Sufi chain are, in descending order³⁵: (1) 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī (d. 561/1166); (2) Abū 'Umar b. Qudāma (d. 607/1210)³⁶; (3) Muwaffaq ad-Dīn b. Qudāma³⁷; (4) Ibn Abī 'Umar b. Qudāma (d. 682/1283)³⁸; (5) Ibn Taimīya (d. 728/1328)³⁹; (6) Ibn Qāyīm al-Jauzīya (d. 751/1350)⁴⁰; (7) Ibn Rajab (d. 795/1393)⁴¹.

In the above Sufi genealogy, Ibn Abī 'Umar b. Qudāma (no. 4) is linked to his uncle Muwaffaq ad-Dīn b. Qudāma (no. 3), not through his father Abu 'Umar b. Qudāma (no. 2), but with both directly, as illustrated in the following schema:



³¹ For the term *ṭarīqa* and a list of the *ṭarīqas* of Islam, see *EI*, art. *ṭarīqa* (by L. Massignon).

³² On Jīlī, see *EI*², art. 'Abd al-Qādir al-Djīlī (by W. Braune), and the bibliography there.

³³ *EI*, art. *khirqā* (by Cl. Huart).

³⁴ Yahuda Collection, in process of being catalogued. —I take this opportunity once again to express my sincere thanks to Dr. Rudolf Mach for putting at my disposal his as yet unpublished catalogue and card files, relating to the Yahuda Collection.

³⁵ See Yūsuf b. 'Abd al-Hādī, *Bad' al-'ulqa bi-labs al-khirqā*, MS. Yahuda Collection (Princeton), fol. 171b-172a.

³⁶ On him, see Ibn Rujab, *Dhail* (ed. Fiqī), II, 52-61; H. Laoust, *Le Hanbalisme*, in *REI* (1959), 123-124.

³⁷ See *EI*², art. *Ibn Qudāma* (by G. Makdisi) and bibliography there cited (in press).

³⁸ *GAL*, I, 399, Suppl. I, 691; Ibn Rajab, *op. cit.*, II, 304-310.

³⁹ H. Laoust, *Essai sur les idées sociales et politiques d'Ibn Taimīya* (Le Caire: PIFAO, 1939), and *Le Hanbalisme*, in *REI* (1960), 7 ff.

⁴⁰ *GAL*, II, 105 f., Suppl. II, 126 ff.; H. Laoust, *Le Hanbalisme*, in *REI* (1960), 66-68.

⁴¹ *EI*², art. *Ibn Radjab* (by G. Makdisi) and bibliography cited there in press).

Elsewhere in this same work⁴², Ibn Taimiyya's Sufi pedigree is traced to 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī, through the same two intermediaries as cited above; namely, Ibn Abī 'Umar b. Qudāma (no. 4) and Muwaffaq ad-Dīn b. Qudāma (no. 3).

Further corroboration of two links in the chain separating him from 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī comes from Ibn Taimiyya himself as quoted in a unique manuscript in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin. This work is entitled *Targhib al-Mutahabbbin fi labs khirqat al-mutamayyizīn*, by Jamāl ad-Dīn aṭ-Ṭalyānī⁴³. Here are Ibn Taimiyya's own words, as quoted from a work of his, *al-Mas'ala at-Tabriziyya*, confirming his affiliation with 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī with two links between them: "I wore the blessed Sufi cloak of 'Abd al-Qādir (al-Jīlī), there being between him and me two (Sufi Shaikhs)"⁴⁴.

In a lost work entitled *Iṭfā' ḥurqat al-ḥauba bi-ilbās khirqat at-tauba*, by Ibn Nāṣir ad-Dīn⁴⁵, of which frequent use was made by Yūsuf b. 'Abd al-Hādī in *Bad' al-'ulqa*, Ibn Taimiyya is quoted affirming his Sufi affiliation in more than one Sufi order and praising that of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī as the greatest of them all: "I have worn the Sufi cloak of a number of Shaikhs belonging to various *ṭariqas*, among them the Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī, whose *ṭariqa* is the greatest of the well-known ones"⁴⁶. When Ibn Taimiyya died, he was buried in the Sufi cemetery in Damascus, where other Damascene members of his family, also Sufis, were buried before him.

The foregoing remarks will suffice, I believe, to show that Ibn Taimiyya hardly qualifies as an opponent of Sufism.

⁴² Yūsuf b. 'Abd al-Hādī, *op. cit.*, fol. 169b.

⁴³ Chester Beatty Ms. 3296 (8), folios 49a-70b, sec. fol. 67a.

⁴⁴ *Labistu 'l-khirqata 'l-mubārakata li 'sh-Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir wa-bainī wa-bainahu 'thnān*.

⁴⁵ Shams al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Qaisī ad-Dimashqī ash-Shāfi'ī, known as Ibn Nāṣir ad-Dīn (777-842), see Sakḥāwī, *ad-pau' al-lāmi*, VIII, 103-106; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt-ad-dhahab* 8 vols. (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qudsi, 1350-51/1931-32), VII, 243, 245; his work *Iṭfā' ḥurqat al-ḥauba bi-ilbās khirqat at-tauba* is cited in both of these biographical notices; see also Ismā'īl b. Muḥammad al-Bābānī, *Idāḥ al-maknūn fi 'dh-dhail 'ala Kashf aṣ-ṣunūn* (Istanbul, 1945-47, 2 vols.), I, 95, s. v. *Iṭfā'*.

⁴⁶ Cited by Ibn Nāṣir ad-Dīn in his *Iṭfā'* as quoted in Yūsuf b. 'Abd al-Hādī's *Bad' al-'ulqa*, fol. 154a: "*wa-qad kuntu labistu khirqata 'l-tasawwafi min ṭuruqi jamā'atin min ash-shuyūkhī min jumlatihimi 'sh-Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī wa-hiya ajallu 'ṭ-ṭuruqi 'l-mashhūra*". The *Bad' al-'ulqa* continues as follows (*loc. cit.*): "(Ibn Taimiyya) said on another occasion: 'the greatest *ṭariqa* is that of my Sufi master (*saiyidi*), Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī — May God have mercy on him'" (*wa-qāla marratan fa-ajallu 'ṭ-ṭuruqi ṭariqu saiyidi 'sh-Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī— rahmatu 'llāhi 'alaihi*).

We must now turn our attention to Ibn al-Jauzī whose work *Talbīs Iblīs* is perhaps the most important single factor in keeping alive the notion of Hanbali hostility to Sufism. This work has been printed more than once, translated into English by D. S. Margoliouth, and studied by Professor Walther Braune in his *Ibn al-Gauzī's Streitschrift gegen den Sufismus*. In reality, this work was not written against Sufism as such, nor against Sufis alone⁴⁷. It was written indeed against certain Sufi practices; but it was written also against certain practices of several other groups: philosophers, pagans, theologians, traditionalists, jurists, preachers, philologists, poets, Sufis, common people and the rich. *Talbīs Iblīs*, or *The Devil's Delusion*⁴⁸, is an indictment of "unorthodox", i. e. unscriptural, doctrines and practices wherever found in the Islamic community, especially in Ibn al-Jauzī's times. That the section on the Sufis is the lengthiest should not make us lose sight of a very important fact; namely, that Ibn al-Jauzī did not spare those groups in the community to which he himself belonged, such as traditionists, jurists and preachers.

Ibn al-Jauzī has written other works which are quite obviously in favor of Sufism. Two works considered as pillars in the field of Sufism were abridged by him: (1) Abū Nu'aim al-Iṣfahānī's *Ḥilyat al-auliyā'* was abridged by him in *Ṣafwat aṣ-ṣafwa*⁴⁹; and *Ghazālī's Iḥyā' 'ulūm ad-dīn* was abridged in his *Minḥāj al-qāsidīn wa-mufīd aṣ-ṣādiqīn*⁵⁰. Full length biographies of the *Faḍā'il* and *Manāqib* type in praise of the early Sufis are due to Ibn al-Jauzī's pen; such as his *Faḍā'il Ḥasan al-Baṣrī*⁵¹, and the *Manāqib*'s⁵² on Ibrāhīm b. Adham, Bishr al-Hāfi, Ma'rūf al-Karkhī, not to mention a number of hagiographical works. In the biographical sections of his history, *al-Muntaẓam*, several biographical notices may be found in praise of Sufis⁵³. It is true that a work is attributed

⁴⁷ It is also known under the title *Naqd al-'ilm wa'l-'ulamā'*, au [= or]: *Talbīs Iblīs* (Cairo: Muniriya Press, 1368/1949); see GAL, Suppl. I, 918 (no. 38), for other editions.

⁴⁸ D. S. Margoliouth, *The Devil's Delusion* by Ibn al-Jauzī, in *Islamic Culture*, IX-XII (1935-1938), XIX-XXI (1945-1948).

⁴⁹ GAL, Suppl. I, 614, line 14.

⁵⁰ GAL, I, 504 (no. 36), Suppl. I, 748, no. 25, 2.

⁵¹ GAL, Suppl. I, 917 (no. 17).

⁵² Ibn Rajab, *Dhail* (ed. Fiḡī), I, 418.

⁵³ Ibn al-Jauzī, *al-Muntaẓam fī tārikh al-mulūk wa'l-umam*, ed. Krenkow (Ḥaidarābād: Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif Press, 1357-59/1938-40, 6 vols. = V-X); see for instance, vol. X, p. 64 (Ibn al-Jināza, d. 530); p. 75 (Abū Ghālib aṣ-Ṣaiqālī ad-Dāmaghānī, d. 532); p. 97 (Abū Sa'd az-Zauzanī, d. 536, whom he defends against criticism of as-Sam'ānī, author of the *Ansāb*); p. 99 (Abū Naṣr al-Hamadhānī, d. 536); p. 100 (Abū 'l-Khair at-Takritī, d. 536); p. 113 (Abū 'l-Ma'ālī al-Bazzāz, d. 539); p. 127 (Abū Muḥammad aḍ-Ḍarīr al-Jubbī, d. 542); p. 182

to him in which he *censures* the great contemporary Sufi, his fellow Hanbali, 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī⁵⁴; on the other hand, he has another work to his name in which he *praises* the great woman Sufi, Rābi'a al-'Adawiya (d. 185/801)⁵⁵.

Ibn al-Jauzī's qualifications as an opponent of Sufism are hardly any better than those of other so-called Hanbali opponents of Sufism. He could not have opposed Sufism, since he himself was a Sufi, as one can see in the chain of Sufi affiliation cited in Yūsuf b. 'Abd al-Hādī's *Bad' al-'ulqa*. It is in the same spiritual pedigree in which we found Ibn Taimiyya and Ibn Qudāma.

Muwaffaq ad-Dīn b. Qudāma, on coming to Baghdad, was received by 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī who died fifty days later, after investing Ibn Qudāma with the Sufi cloak (*khirqā*) of initiation⁵⁶. Ibn Qudāma then worked under the direction of Ibn al-Jauzī, with whom he later was in correspondence, as can be seen in *Kitāb at-Tauwābīn*⁵⁷. The schema shown above, when completed with Ibn al-Jauzī's name, appears as follows⁵⁸:

'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī (d. 561) Ibn al-Jauzī (d. 597)

Abū 'Umar b. Qudāma (d. 607) Muwaffaq ad-Dīn Qudāma (d. 620)

Ibn Abī 'Umar b. Qudāma (d. 682)

Ibn Taimiyya (d. 728)

Ibn Qaiyim al-Jauziyya (d. 751)

Ibn Rajab (d. 795)

There is no denying the fact that Ibn 'Aqīl, Ibn al-Jauzī, and Ibn Taimiyya, as well as other Hanbalis before and after them, censured Sufi practices and Sufi doctrines. But this does not necessarily mean that they condemned Sufism as such. Whatever censure issued from the pens of these Hanbali doctors should be understood for what it was: not an indictment of Sufism itself, but of practices and doctrines considered by the censurers as heretical, as with no basis in scripture or tradition, deviating from the Koran and from the Sunna of the Prophet. Sufism, itself, was not being condemned, no more than jurisprudence, preaching and traditions were being condemned. What was being condemned were

(as-Sijzī al-Harawī, d. 553); p. 226 (Hibat Allāh b. 'Abd Allāh, d. 563); p. 128 (Tahir b. Sa'īd al-Hitī, d. 542); p. 239 (Naṣir al-Khuwayrī, d. 567); and others.

⁵⁴ See Ibn Rajab, *Dhail* (ed. Fiqī), II, 420 (line 17): *Kitāb fī dhamm 'Abd al-Qādir*.

⁵⁵ See Ibn Rajab, *op. cit.*, II, 418 (line 7): *Manāqib Rābi'a al-'Adawiya*.

⁵⁶ See G. Makdisi, *La Chaine d'initiation mystique de Muwaffaq ad-Dīn b. Qudāma*, in *Cahier de l'Herne* (Paris, in press).

⁵⁷ Ibn Qudāma, *Kitāb at-Tauwābīn*, 77 (para. 185).

⁵⁸ See Yūsuf b. 'Abd al-Hādī, *Bad' al-'ulqa bi-labs al-khirqā*, fol. 171b-172a.

the innovations introduced by Sufis, jurists, preachers or traditionalists.

One must recall the function of disagreement in Islam, in order to put such polemics in proper perspective. Orthodoxy in Islam, as is well-known, is not determined by councils or synods. It finds its instrument in the concept of *ijmā'*, consensus, agreement. Agreement may be tacit; and tacit agreement is as binding as spoken or written agreement. Since silence can be interpreted as tacit agreement, there is a serious obligation upon doctors of Islam to voice their views. This they did in their polemics. Polemic is one of the most widely represented genres in the history of Islamic religious literature. *Khilāf*, or disagreement, must be made known vocally or in writing. To keep quiet, to hold one's peace, when in fact one opposes a published doctrine, or a given practice, is tantamount to giving one's tacit consent to it.

In the Islamic community, polemic is not the preserve of Hanbali doctors. Other Muslim doctors, acknowledged as great Sufis, have also criticized the Sufis; as did al-Junaid, al-Bisṭāmī, Sarī as-Saqatī, al-Ḥusain an-Nūrī, and al-Ghazzālī, among others. This criticism did not dub them as enemies of Sufism any more than it should have dubbed Hanbali Sufis as enemies of Sufism. Sufism itself was not being brought into question. By the same token, Hanbali doctors are also known to have criticized other Hanbali doctors, without bringing Hanbalism itself into question⁵⁹.

The Hanbali School preserves Sufism in the spirit of the early Sufis who, as Massignon has pointed out, belonged to *Ahl al-Ḥaḍīth*, the Traditionalists, from whose ranks al-Ḥallāj emerged and which he never renounced. The function of Traditionalism in Islam has been to safeguard Islamic culture, overseeing all that developed within Islam, sanctioning what is finally accepted in the Islamic community. For the Traditionalists there is a right kind of law, of theology, of Sufism, of dialectic; and any kind but the right kind was stubbornly fought and opposed. Thus Traditionalist Sufis, proponents of a moderate Sufism, opposed what to them was the wrong kind of Sufism; as Ibn 'Arabī's Sufism was opposed by Ibn Taimīya. But they did not oppose Sufism itself. They could not have done so without denying their own Sufism: a Sufism which they proudly proclaim as being '*alā ṭarīqat as-salaf*, that is, inspired by the pious forefathers, and adhered to by the early Sufis.

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⁵⁹ Cf. Ibn al-Jauzī, *al-Bāzī' al-ashhab al-munqadd 'alā mukhālifī al-madhhab* wherein he censures three important Hanbali doctors, Ibn Ḥamid (d. 403), Qādī Abū Ya'lā (d. 458), and Ibn az-Zāghūnī (d. 527) who was his teacher; *GAL*, I, 504 (no. 29).