Untying the Knots of Love: The Qur'an, Love Poetry, and Akkad's The Message

Author(s): Muhammad U. Faruque

Source: *Journal of Islamic and Muslim Studies* , November 2020, Vol. 5, No. 2 (November 2020), pp. 112-128

Published by: Indiana University Press

Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/jims.5.2.10

REFERENCES
Linked references are available on JSTOR for this article:
https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/jims.5.2.10?seq=1&cid=pdf-reference#references_tab_contents
You may need to log in to JSTOR to access the linked references.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at https://about.jstor.org/terms

Indiana University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Journal of Islamic and Muslim Studies*

This content downloaded from
65.28.249.234 on Thu, 15 Jul 2021 03:11:02 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

Discussion and Debate Forum

Untying the Knots of Love: The Qur'an, Love Poetry, and Akkad's *The Message*

Muhammad U. Faruque

Abstract: This essay argues that the universal message of the Qur'an is best captured through the concept of "love." The essay begins with a discussion of Moustapha Akkad's famous film *The Message*, which depicts the early history of Islam. It argues that while the film is highly successful in presenting the traditional accounts of early Islam, it is less so in areas of Islam's underlying teachings, especially regarding the religion's more mystical message expressed through the Qur'an and forms of Islamic spirituality such as Sufism. I contend that the love poetry of such influential spiritual figures as Rumi (d. 1273) and Hafez (d. 1390) articulates the Qur'anic message of love by connecting it to the ultimate realization of *tawḥīd*, which for these sages implies union with the Divine Beloved Whose presence permeates the cosmos. It is further argued that if *tawḥīd* is about the relationship between the One and the many, then talking about *tawḥīd* in terms of love allows one to shift the focus away from the dos and don'ts of the Shariah or theological hair-splitting to the plight of the human condition, which is often characterized by pain and suffering because people lack what they desire. The experience of true love enables the soul to purify itself and grow spiritually. This in turn paves the way for actualizing the soul's latent spiritual potentials that are necessary to realize ultimate happiness.

Muhammad U. Faruque is Inayat Malik Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Cincinnati, OH. He earned his Ph.D. (with distinction) from the University of California, Berkeley, and served as Exchange Scholar at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, and as George Ames Postdoctoral Fellow at Fordham University, NY. His forthcoming book *Sculpting the Self: Islam, Selfhood, and Human Flourishing*, which will be published in 2021 by University of Michigan Press, addresses "what it means to be human" in a secular, post-Enlightenment world by exploring notions of selfhood and subjectivity in Islamic and non-Islamic literatures.

Journal of Islamic and Muslim Studies, Vol. 5.2, pp. 112–128
Copyright © 2020 North American Association of Islamic and Muslim Studies. doi:10.2979/jims.5.2.10

This content downloaded from
65.28.249.234 on Thu, 15 Jul 2021 03:11:02 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

Introduction: The Man, the Film, and the Religion

I remember watching the film *Lion of the Desert* when I was young and appreciating its great storyline and cinematic performance. Later on, I came to learn that the director of the film, Moustapha Akkad, is the same person who had also produced the famous movie *The Message*, which became a blockbuster in the Islamic world.[1] So, when I was approached by the *Journal of Islamic and Muslim Studies* to contribute an academic essay on the universal message of the Qur'an by drawing references to the film, I was filled with delight, since *The Message* is one of my favorites in the category of religious films. The film was a huge success from the point of its delivery and artistic quality, especially if we remember that it was made in 1976 when few, if any, first-rate films existed on Islam and its early history. To make Islam's history and message accessible to a global audience, Akkad produced two versions of the same film in both Arabic and English. The Arabic version called *Al-Risalah* featured some of the biggest names in Arab cinema at the time, while the English version starred celebrities such as Anthony Quinn as the Prophet's uncle Hamza and Irene Papas as Hind (the Meccan leader Abū Sufyān's wife).[2] Although the Arabic version of the film had the same script and sometimes even the same casts, the psychological effect of the two films on their audiences was probably different, since the use of Arabic felt more natural in view of Islam's sacred scripture and history. But after carefully watching both versions, it seemed to me the English one felt no less natural due to Akkad's ability to hold the attention of his audience through a dramatic succession of events, which at the same time kept the integrity of the "traditional accounts" of the life of the Prophet familiar to most Muslims.[3]

In the space allotted for this essay, I cannot detail the life and times of the Prophet Muhammad documented in the film. But the highlights for me were the scenes when Hamza (i.e., Quinn) entered the Ka'ba and struck Abū Jahl (d. 624) on the face violently and shouted, "Hit me back, if you dare!" because the latter was abusing and insulting the Prophet. Until that moment, Hamza took little notice of Islam, but after his conversion the dynamics between the Quraysh and the followers of the Prophet changed substantially. I also enjoyed the scene where ʿAmmār b. Yāsir (d. 657) - one of the earliest companions of the Prophet - had to face his parents after accepting Islam. His parents were initially shocked but after hearing Islam's liberating message concerning female children who were buried alive according to local custom, ʿAmmār's mother began to narrate in a heartfelt tone how her two sisters were buried alive simply because they were girls. The role played by Bilāl, the black slave who was brutally tortured because he became a Muslim, throughout the film was of great significance, since it showcased the Qur'an's message of emancipation and equality. When after several battles, the Muslim army finally conquered Mecca, Bilāl rose to the top of the Ka'ba and

This content downloaded from
65.28.249.234 on Thu, 15 Jul 2021 03:11:02 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

proclaimed the Muslim call to prayer (i.e., the adhan). From Islam's inception to the conquest of Mecca, the Prophet and his followers endured several life-threatening trials and hardships through boycotts and battles, until finally Islam became victorious in Arabia. As the film highlighted toward the very end, it seemed almost surreal how from such a humble beginning in seventh-century Arabia, Islam became a global religion today stretching from Indonesia to America.

It is evident from the film that Akkad wanted to present through it both the early history of Islam and its social message of peace, love, and co-existence.[4] Yet while the film was successful in presenting the traditional accounts of early Islam, it was less so in areas of Islam's underlying teachings, especially regarding the religion's more mystical message expressed through the Qur'an and forms of Islamic spirituality such as Sufism. However, one cannot expect a film to do the job of a scholar who would peruse the relevant sources to construct a given religion's sacred scripture, or for that matter, its central message when asked to do so. So, in a sense, this essay begins where Akkad's film left off. I will focus on the Qur'an's universal message, which will be expressed in successive stages through the concept and meaning of "love." One might wonder why I have decided to write on "love" when there are several other candidates such as God, people, nature, or *tawḥīd* (the oneness of God). What is more, some have claimed that the Qur'an has little regard for the theme of love, since the word figures less prominently compared to other words such as *nafs*. Yet as William Chittick has argued, the issue is not a matter of "word count," rather how "love" is understood and explained in relation to *tawḥīd*, which is the underlying theme of the Qur'an.[5] If *tawḥīd* is about the relationship between the One and the many, then talking about *tawḥīd* from the perspective of love allows one to shift the focus away from the dos and don'ts of the Shariah or theological hairsplitting to the plight of the human condition, which is often characterized by pain and suffering because people lack what they desire.[6] As I will argue in the following sections, the Qur'anic message of love as elaborated by such influential spiritual giants as Rumi (d. 1273) and Hafez (d. 1390) addresses such concerns by connecting love to the ultimate realization of *tawḥīd*, which for these sages implies union with the immanent divine reality (conceived through love).[7]

A cursory look at various companion volumes or studies on the Qur'an shows that love hardly factors in recent Qur'anic scholarship.[8] Nonetheless, I agree with Chittick when he contends that love lies at the heart of the Qur'anic message, since it explains the nature of the self's quest for Ultimate Reality:

> [T]hose familiar with the histories and literatures of the Islamic peoples know that love has been the preoccupation of thousands of Muslim scholars and saints. It is so central to the overall ethos of the religion that if any single word can sum up Islamic spirituality - by which I mean the *very heart of the Qur'anic message* - it should surely be love.[9]

This content downloaded from
65.28.249.234 on Thu, 15 Jul 2021 03:11:02 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

Incidentally, I think Akkad would concur with me regarding the Qur'anic message of love, since in his own life he was a very loving person as his children and others would recount later.[10] It is very tragic that he was killed alongside his beloved daughter Rima in an al-Qaida suicide attack in Amman, Jordan.[11] The Syrian filmmaker, who left his country for the US when he was eighteen years old, was handed a copy of the Qur'an and 200 dollars by his father whose last message to him was: "All I can do for you is to give you these. From now on, I may or may not see you again. Never forget, my prayers are with you."[12]

Love: The Universal Message of the Qur'an

If the rationale for the centrality of love in the Qur'an is accepted, we can now shed light on the most important words that are used in the Qur'anic text to talk about love: *ḥubb* and *maḥabbah*, two gerunds from a root that is found in the Qur'an eighty times. The Qur'an also mentions a second word for love, whose gerunds are *wudd* and *mawaddah*, that occurs about thirty times in the text. The divine name *al-wadūd* (the Loving) derives from the root of this word. The Qur'an uses a third term, *hawā*, "fancy, caprice, or whim," to refer to misguided love, but the later Sufi literature frequently uses it without a negative connotation.[13] With this philological background in mind, let us proceed to discuss the most important verses that mention "love."

The first verse, the most commonly-cited Qur'anic passage on love in mystical literature, reads: "*He loves them, and they love Him*" (5:54).[14] It is to be noted that these two clauses are part of a longer verse, which reads differently when quoted fully: "*O you who believe! Whosoever of you becomes a renegade from their religion, God will bring a people in their stead whom He loves and who love Him, humble toward believers, hard toward disbelievers, striving in the way of God and fearing not the blame of any blamer. Such is the grace of God which He gives unto whom He wills. God is All Embracing, All Knowing*." Although Qur'anic exegetes normally discuss this verse as-a-whole, texts focusing on love frequently quote the two clauses without reference to the rest. This is a common practice that one observes in Sufi literature across the board because these texts tend to focus on the universal applicability of a given verse or a given Qur'anic phrase.[15] For instance, quoting the two above-mentioned clauses on love, Aḥmad al-Ghazālī (d. 1126), the brother of the famous al-Ghazālī, writes that the greatest honor bestowed on humans is that God's love for them preceded their love for Him.[16] The "*wa*" in the verse *yuḥibbuhum wa yuḥibbūnah*, implies "therefore" instead of the usual "and," which suggests that love's tale begin from the divine side. Sufis such as Aḥmad al-Ghazālī often relate the commentary of this verse to the famous verse of *rūz-i alast* (the day of "Am I not [your Lord]" [5:172]), according to which the covenant between God and humans on that pre-eternal

This content downloaded from
65.28.249.234 on Thu, 15 Jul 2021 03:11:02 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

day is fashioned in and through love. When humans responded to God's call, "Am I not your Lord" with "yes" (*balā*), it was an affirmative response on their part to the pre-existing divine love.[17]

The second key verse on love in the Qur'an points to the function of prophethood, and specifically to the role of Prophet Muhammad as an intermediary between divine and human love: "Say [O Muhammad!]: 'If you love God, follow me, and God will love you'" (3:31). Citing this verse, the Ḥanbalī Sufi ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī writes in his *Ṣad Maydān* that the book is based on a series of exhortations that explains how the one hundred fields (the stages of the soul's journey through attaining the mystical stations of repentance, trust, patience, etc.) are the ascending stages of the soul's quest in love as it follows in the footsteps of the Prophet.[18] After having described the one hundred fields, Anṣārī returns to the theme of love toward the very end, and says that the hundred-and-first field is love that encapsulates all other fields through the verse: "*He loves them, and they love Him*" [5:54].[19] There is a third verse which is also frequently cited in mystical literature, which reads: *As for the faithful, they love God more intensely* (2:165). Commenting on this verse, Aḥmad Samʿānī (d. 1140) notes that the believers must suffer more than the unbelievers because of their love. He asks the reader to consider the remorse of Adam, the cries of Noah, the disappointment of Abraham, the tale of Jacob's affliction, the imprisonment of Joseph, and the burnt-liver and roasted-heart of Muhammad (i.e., the emotional challenges of pain and suffering that the Prophet went through in his life).[20] The point is that the more God loves someone the more He makes that person suffer: "The more docile His burnt ones, the more refractory He is. The more abased His lovers, the more He kills them. The more tamed His yearning seekers, the more He thirsts for their blood."[21] I will come back to the topic of pain and suffering later in this essay but let me unpack the meaning of love at this point.

Love: Meaning and Origin

Now we may begin to explore the deeper dimensions of love through such questions as "What is love?", "What happens in love and why does it matter for the human self?," and "Are pain, suffering, and transformation part and parcel of the reality of love?" Since Islamic literature on love is vast, I will draw on two of the most famous Sufi poets, namely Rumi and Hafez whose work unveils the Qur'anic message of love in a succinct way. As is well-known, both Rumi and Hafez had been tremendously influential in the Persianate world and elsewhere, or in what Shahab Ahmed calls the "Balkans-to-Bengal complex."[22] Rumi is perhaps the most well-known Sufi poet around the world today.[23] Thanks to American poets such as Coleman Barks, Rumi's books topped bestseller lists

This content downloaded from
65.28.249.234 on Thu, 15 Jul 2021 03:11:02 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

in America and Europe in recent times. Rumi's famous *Masnavī* is commonly referred to as "the Qur'an in Persian" (*qur'ān dar zabān-i pahlawī*), and it stands out for its large number of commentaries of Qur'anic verses, which is the reason some have called it a Qur'anic commentary.[24] As for Hafez, Shahab Ahmed writes that the *Dīvān* of Hafez is "the most widely-copied, widely-circulated, widely-read, widely-memorized, widely-recited, widely-invoked, and widely-proverbialized book of poetry in Islamic history - a book that came to be regarded as configuring and exemplifying ideals of self-conception and modes and mechanisms of self-expression in the largest part of the Islamic world for half-a-millennium."[25] Hafez's own relationship with the Qur'an can be gleaned from the following verse that summarizes the source of and inspiration behind his poetry:

> Among the Qur'an-memorizers of the world (*ḥāfiẓān-i jahān*),[26]
> No one like me was able to fuse together
> The penetrating subtleties of wisdom with the book of the Qur'an (*kitāb-i qurʿānī*).[27]

Be that as it may, there is little doubt that the love poetry of Rumi and Hafez bears a direct relationship with the Qur'an, although most often this is expressed in an indirect manner in the sense that they are concerned with the underlying reality of love mentioned in the Qur'an, rather than the contextual interpretation of a given verse. But what is love? Is love limited to love for one's family, spouse, friends, or some material objects? For the Sufis, as Rumi argues poignantly, love is fundamentally "indefinable." So, it is one thing to talk about love and quite another to experience it first-hand:

> Someone asked, "What is love?" I said,
> "Don't ask about these meanings
> When you become like me, you'll come to know.
> When He calls you, you'll delineate its tale."[28]

Speaking of love's experiential dimension in contrast to a mere theoretical understanding of it, Rumi also says:

> While the pen was making rapid progress in writing,
> It split into two as soon as it came to love.
> A donkey stuck in mud is intellect's fate as it tried to expound love,
> It was love alone that unveiled the mystery of love and loverhood.[29]

Likewise, Hafez writes:

> The tale of love is free from words and sounds,
> Yet there is commotion from the lament of the tambourine and the reed.
> The conversations that took place in that ecstatic gathering
> Far outstripped the quibbling that one had encountered in school.[30]

This content downloaded from
65.28.249.234 on Thu, 15 Jul 2021 03:11:02 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

To understand this perspective more fully, we have to be able to make sense of their distinction between true and metaphorical love (*ʿishq-i ḥaqīqī* and *ʿishq-i majāzī*). For the Sufis, a metaphorical love is mere attraction to material things or a love that is self-centered and egoistic, hence unable to show the true nature of things. In contrast, a true love is always bound up with truth and beauty. Since everything in the universe manifests divine love and beauty in some way, true love is to be found in everything. But this is usually not the case, since according to the Sufis, what veils us from true love is our own limited nature or the ego, whose attention is always directed to its own desires and inclinations. For this reason, a true experience of love can uproot the ego from its habitual mode of existence, thereby enabling it to realize the latent, transformative power of love that is boundless, unconditional, and pure. Yet, for the Sufis, there is no proper line of demarcation between true and metaphorical love, since all love is an expression of the one true Love, which is found in everything. As Jāmī (d. 1492) says:

> Even as you experiment with a hundred things in this world,
> It is love alone that will free you from yourself (*az khūd rahāyī*).
> Do not turn away from your love of a rose-face,
> even if it be metaphorical (*majāzī*),
> Though it be not real (*ḥaqīqī*) love, it is still preparatory.
> For, if you do not first study "A" and "B" on a slate,
> How, then, will you learn to read the Qur'ān?
> I've heard of a disciple who went to a Sufi master
> That he might guide him upon his wayfaring.
> The master said, "If you have not yet tasted love;
> Go! First, become a lover (*ʿāshiq shaw*), and only then return to us!"[31]

Before moving to the next section, it is necessary to say a word about the cosmology of love that reveals the inevitability of love on the human plane. In his *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1240) explains that the movement which ultimately brought the cosmos into existence is the movement of love (*ḥarakat al-ḥubb*).[32] Referring to the oft-quoted tradition of the Hidden Treasure. "I was a hidden treasure, and I loved to be known. Hence, I created the world so that I would be known." Ibn ʿArabī affirms that the movement of the cosmos from non-existence to existence is the movement of the love of its Originator.[33] Thinkers in the School of Ibn ʿArabī such as Saʿd al-Dīn al-Farghānī (d. 1300) elaborate on this idea by suggesting that the absolute, unmanifested reality of God was equipoised between the two possibilities of manifestation (*ẓuhūr*) or non-manifestation (*lā-ẓuhūr*). The state of non-manifestation was the intrinsic state of the Divine Self (*al-dhāt al-ilāhī*), which, however, moved toward manifestation due to original love (*al-maḥabbah al-aṣliyyah*) through which It wanted to be known objectively in the mirror of non-existence.[34] Dāwūd

This content downloaded from
65.28.249.234 on Thu, 15 Jul 2021 03:11:02 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

al-Qayṣarī (d. 1350) also relates the tradition of the Hidden Treasure to the original impulse of divine love as the motive force of all existence.[35] Although he refers to the Hidden Treasure in various contexts, Rumi, for his part, emphasizes cosmic love from a slightly different perspective:

> The Wisdom of God through Its decree
> made us lovers of one another.
> As a result of this pre-ordainment,
> all the particles of the world are paired as mates that are in love with each other.
> Every particle of the universe is desiring its mate,
> just like amber and the blade of straw.
> Heaven says to the earth, "Welcome!
> We are like the iron and the magnet."[36]

So, for Rumi, love is found not only on the human plane but also in every cosmic movement embracing everything.[37]

Love: Pain, Suffering, and Spiritual Growth

As explained in the previous section, for the Sufis, love is the very reality of existence and consequently, of the self itself. So, although love can occur in various ways, each originates from the one Source which is Love itself, i.e., Reality or God. That is to say, all love is a reflection of divine love in infinitely varied ways. Hence, all authentic love leads one back to its source in the divine. However, among all forms of loves, "romantic love" stands out for its unique ability to transform the ego or the lower self that the Sufis identify as the root of all veiling and ignorance.[38] Moreover, romantic love exposes the ego's imperfections and limitations, since it is often accompanied by intense pain, suffering, and a separation from the beloved. The everyday, lower self suddenly finds itself entangled in an inextricably complex network of painful emotions that seem impossible to overcome. To my mind, no one expresses such "pain of love" (*dard-i ʿishq*) better than Hafez:

> So much have I suffered love's pain (*dard-i ʿishqī*) that don't ask!
> So much have I tasted the venom of separation that don't ask!
> So much have I wandered around the world, and in the end,
> I've chosen such a beloved that don't ask!
> In the desire of the dust of her door,
> So much have I wept that don't ask!
> Last night, from her mouth, with my own ear,
> I have heard such words that don't ask!
> Why do you bite your lips to signal me not to speak!
> Yet I have bitten such a ruby lip that don't ask!
> Without you in my humble house,
> I have suffered such pains that don't ask!

This content downloaded from
65.28.249.234 on Thu, 15 Jul 2021 03:11:02 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

Like Hafez who is a stranger on the path of love
I have reached such a destination that don't ask![39]

For Hafez, suffering that one encounters at the hands of one's seemingly unattainable beloved continues until the very end of the world:

How else should I complain when my path is blocked from six directions,
By the beauty of her mole, line, tresses, cheek, face, and stature!
O you who show off love in writing and speaking,
Goodbye and farewell, for I am done with you!
Set fire to your Sufi cloak, for the curve of the Sāqī's eyebrow
breaks the corner of the Imam's prayer niche.
Let the tale of her tress not break your heart, Hafez
For the chain of her tress extends all the way to the Day of Resurrection![40]

Hafez also conveys the unbearable pain of such suffering through exquisite imageries, as in the following:

When the spring cloud saw the infidelity and betrayal of time,
Its tears fell on the jasmine, the hyacinth, and the daffodil.[41]

As one reads the text of the *Dīvān*, one finds numerous ghazals expressing the agonizing experience of love, since the beloved seems forever out of reach. Yet, in contrast to some readers of Hafez like Shahab Ahmed, I think that the pain and suffering that one encounters on the path of love reveals one side of the coin only.[42] Just as Hafez describes pain, he also talks about the attainment of inner peace that can only come about through suffering. As he says:

The waystation (*maqām*) of peace does not come about except through suffering.
Since the "Yes" (*balī*) of the "covenant of the *alast*" is forever entwined with affliction (*balā*).
Be happy and do not agonize the soul with what you have or have not, or with what you gained or lost.
Because in the end, everything (all perfection) is gained through the path of your nothingness.[43]

In a brilliant turn of phrase (i.e., *balī bih ḥukm-i balā*), Hafez connects the source of all our suffering and affliction to the pre-eternal "yea" that humans uttered in response to the divine call of *alast* (i.e., "Am I not your Lord" Q 7:172).[44] That is, according to Hafez, by saying "yes" at that time, we separated ourselves from the bosom of divine reality, which used to be our true home. But like other Sufi poets, Hafez reckons that the road to union and inner peace is very much attainable, even if it involves a world of suffering:

I will never stop seeking until my desires are fulfilled: Even if it means
Either my body reaches the beloved or my soul leaves the body.

This content downloaded from
65.28.249.234 on Thu, 15 Jul 2021 03:11:02 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

Open my grave after my death and see how
The smoke from the fire of my heart rises above my shroud![45]

This night is the night of power (*shab-i qadr*) and the tale of separation is over.
You will find happiness in it until the break of dawn (*maṭlaʿ al-fajr*).
O heart, be steadfast on the path of love,
For no effort go unrewarded on this path.
Hafez, if you want fidelity, endure cruelty,
For there is both gain and loss in business.[46]

Thus, for Hafez, what matters in love is that one has to be persistent, steadfast, and strong enough to endure all the pain and suffering, because only then one would be able to attain union with the beloved. Accordingly, he exhorts the wayfarer of love to exercise patience:

O heart, the road of love is full of perils and turmoil.
One who traverses this path in haste falls off the track.[47]

One can now begin to see the higher meaning of suffering that these Sufi teachers are able to derive from the experience of love, which is that it enables the soul to purify itself and grow spiritually. That is to say, the self in its untutored state often lacks spiritual qualities such as patience, perseverance, and forbearance. As it is destabilized through the powerful currents of love and frantically seeks the beloved, it is forced to develop such qualities, as it were, on pain of not attaining the beloved. In the process, the self is able to actualize latent spiritual potentials that are necessary to cultivate inner peace and realize ultimate happiness, although such a process can be very painful. Hafez writes:

They say stones turn into rubies with patience.
Yes, they do, but at the expense of the liver's blood![48]

The reward of the patience I endured in the fortress of sorrows,
Is the reason I am blessed with Joseph's company in my old age.[49]

To actualize its latent spiritual potentials, the self also needs to let go of all its attachments to material objects that only result in transient happiness. For Hafez, life itself is built on a fragile foundation that deceives us through false hope or false dreams. As he says:

Come, for the palace of hope is fragile and weak in its foundation.
Bring wine,[50] for the foundation of life is built on the wind.
I am the slave of his spiritual will (*himmat*)
He who under this azure sky is free from all attachments.[51]

On the whole, in the Hafezian worldview, love and beauty are to be celebrated for they are built into the very fabric of reality, but this also requires

This content downloaded from
65.28.249.234 on Thu, 15 Jul 2021 03:11:02 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

one to undergo the painful experience of suffering since the ego is often attracted to ephemeral love or ephemeral beauty. For instance, Hafez uses the expression "the tresses of the idol" (*silsila-yi zolf-i butān*) to make the point on ephemeral beauty:

> I said to him, "What is the tresses of the idol for?"
> He replied, "Hafez complains of his frenzied heart.[52]

But this does not prevent him from celebrating the sweet melodies of love:

> Love's minstrel has wonderful harmony and melody.
> So, every song in his repertoire leads to a lofty place.
> May the world be never empty of the moaning of lovers!
> For it bears a sweetly melodious and heart-touching song.[53]

Hafez even goes on to admonish the hard-hearted rationalist thinker, for whom all of this might appear loose talk:

> If the rationalist only knew how rapt my heart is in the bond of her tress,
> The rationalist would lose his senses seeing my imprisonment.[54]

However, the path of love ultimately requires transcending the ego and unveiling of one's true self:

> Lift the veil of your selfhood O Hafez, for you *are* your own veil.
> Oh, happy is the one who can walk this path unveiled![55]

Not unlike Hafez, Rumi, in his ways, also reminds the reader of the intrinsic worth of suffering, since it allows the self to transform itself:

> Pain and suffering make the old medicine new;
> Pain and suffering lop every bough of weariness.
> Suffering is the elixir that makes things new:
> How can there be weariness and exhaustion when there is suffering?
> Oh, do not sigh heavily from weariness: seek pain, seek pain, seek pain![56]

For Rumi, as for Hafez, the most important phase in one's spiritual development is true knowledge of the self, which is inseparable from knowledge of the fleeting nature of the world and the absolute nature of the divine. As mentioned earlier, for these Sufi poets, love is the very stuff of reality, and yet what prevents us from seeing the reality of love everywhere is our own ego. As such, love requires nothing less than the death of the ego. In a famous fictional dialogue between a housewife and a chickpea in the *Masnavī*, Rumi describes how the chickpea complains to the housewife for cooking it in boiling water.[57] It comes up continually to the top of the pot and raises a hundred complaints, but the housewife lovingly tells it to give in and bear the pain so that no amount "self" or "existence" (i.e., the lower self) will remain. Realizing that it has no

This content downloaded from
65.28.249.234 on Thu, 15 Jul 2021 03:11:02 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

escape, the chickpea finally submits and becomes one with the boiling water. The point of the analogy is that the ego must submit to the "cruelty" of the beloved and bear patiently. Only then the alchemical power of love would operate within the self and in its external actions. Love, along with realized knowledge, is what enables one to melt the walls of the ego and what makes it possible for its roots, sunk in the world as veil and separation, to wither away. And when the veil of the ego is lifted, one is able to dwell permanently in the ocean of love, peace, and happiness. For Hafez, such a station of profound inner contentment is more precious than both this world and the next:

> I will not trade my spiritual rank (*maqām*) either for this world or for the next,
> Even as they constantly persuade me to do it.
> Whoever trades the station of contentment[58] for the treasure of this world,
> Ends up selling his "Joseph of Egypt" at the lowest price.[59]

Love: Concluding Thoughts

This essay explored the deeper dimensions of the Qur'anic message of love through Sufi literature, and in particular, through the love poetry of Rumi and Hafez. In talking about love, Sufis talk about its relation to "meaning in life." More precisely, they ask, "What makes life truly worthwhile?" Is it just a matter of deriving pleasure or satisfaction from this or that activity (e.g., playing chess or tennis or inventing new computer programs or being successful in something unique or being a caring parent or something much more profound and all-encompassing)? Put another way, how might one avoid the "infinite jest" of life in a secular age and find "meaning?"[60] Can "love" be one such response to the question of meaning in a secular age? I will let the readers decide and make up their minds when it comes to answering these questions. However, critics might object that love is too other worldly to deal with any serious social or political matters. Worse still, it might make people passive and philosophical, and hence make them neglect real-life social justice activism.[61]

To such critics, Rumi and Hafez would say that pursuing love requires the observance of both the wider path of the Shariah and the narrower path of the Ṭarīqah, and their life itself testifies to their concern with the mundane issues of everyday social life, even though on another level, they never stop celebrating the intoxicated life of the inner spirit.[62] Perhaps the difficulty here lies in our failure to deal with the multi-dimensionality of the self that involves paradoxes and even apparent contradictions. That is, if we accept that the self is a multi-layered entity (which it is for these Sufis), then it is not difficult to see how the socio-cultural self can exist in harmony with the inner, spiritual self that matters so deeply for individual destiny and happiness.[63] More to the point, Sufi theories of love which lie at the heart of the Qur'anic message have the potential to address

This content downloaded from
65.28.249.234 on Thu, 15 Jul 2021 03:11:02 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

some of the persistent social justice issues of racism and gender inequality in our fragile, globalized world. One thinks of Muqtedar Khan's recent *Islam and Good Governance*, in which he applies the Sufi concept of *iḥsān* (a principle that has substantial overlap with love) to a communal setting to confront the issues of good governance and anti-identity politics.[64] Examples such as these show that far from being only a matter of personal concern, the path of love would be very relevant in dealing with issues that affect both the individual and society. However, one would have to wait until such a creative articulation of "love" does take place in Islamic studies scholarship. The rational thinkers are at the center of the protractor of existence, but love knows that they are bewildered in this circle.[65]

Endnotes:

1. Moustapha Akkad, *The Message* (Tarik Film: 1976), at https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0074896/

2. Moustapha Akkad, *Al-Risalah* (Tarik Film: 1976), at https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0075143/

3. By "traditional accounts," I have in mind some of the standard biographical sources of the Prophet such as Ibn Isḥāq and Ibn Saʿd. See e.g., Ibn Isḥāq/Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, critical notes by Maḥmūd 'Alī Murād (Cairo: Dār al-Hilāl, 2000); Muḥammad Ibn Saʿd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, edited by ʿAlī Muḥammad ʿUmar (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī 2001). Akkad mentions at the beginning of the film that scholars at Al-Azhar have approved the historical accuracy of the film, but one should note that Western "revisionist" scholarship casts doubt on the reliability of Muslim sources. The revisionist historicism ranges from the denial of the historical Muhammad to the "late origins hypothesis" of the Qur'an, which states that the Qur'an crystallized gradually within the Muslim community over a period of two hundred years or more. See e.g., Patricia Crone and Michael Cook, *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977); and John Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977). It is to be noted that Crone and Cook later rejected their controversial hypothesis of "Hagarism." See also, Patricia Crone, *Meccan trade and the Rise of Islam* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987); *The Qur'anic Pagans and Related Matters*, edited by Hanna Siurua (Leiden: Brill, 2016). In recent times, Fred Donner has suggested that the origins of Islam lie in the "Believers' movement" that emphasized strict monotheism and righteous behavior rather than in "Islam." See Fred Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010). For a more nuanced view of the context of the life of the Prophet, see Jonathan E. Brockopp, *The Cambridge Companion to Muḥammad* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Similarly, revisionist approach/historical criticism to the Qur'an advocates disregard for the commentary tradition and the *sīrah* as a methodological principle. Others such as Neuwirth embrace a more literary-critical approach that claims "multiple authorship" of the Qur'an. See e.g., Angelika Neuwirth, *Scripture, Poetry, and the Making of a Community: Reading the Qur'an as a Literary Text* (Oxford University Press: 2015). By contrast, for a study that argues for the single authorship of the Qur'an, see Behnam Sadeghi, "The Chronology of the Qur'ān: A Stylometric Research Program," *Arabica*, 58 (2011): 210–299. For a response to the historical-critical approach, see Mustafa al-Azami, *The History of the Qurʾānic Text: From Revelation to Compilation* (Leicester: Islamic Academy, 2003).

This content downloaded from
65.28.249.234 on Thu, 15 Jul 2021 03:11:02 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

4. R. H. Greene, "40 Years On, A Controversial Film: On Islam's Origins Is Now A Classic," *NPR News* (2016), at https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2016/08/07/485234999/40-years-on-a-controversial-film-on-islams-origins-is-now-a-classic

5. William Chittick, *Divine Love: Islamic Literature and the Path to God* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 381.

6. Chittick, *Divine Love*, 381.

7. An early expression of this can be found in ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī, *Manāzil al-sāʾirīn*, anonymous editor (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1988), 135–139.

8. See e.g., recent studies on the Qur'an that mainly focus on linguistic or literary or social justice issues to the exclusion of love: Mustafa Shah and M. A. S. Abdel Haleem (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020); Jane McAuliffe (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Qurʾān* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Andrew Rippin (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to the Qurʾān* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006). Fazlur Rahman, *Major themes of the Qurʾān* (Minneapolis, MN: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1980); Muhammad Abdel-Haleem, *Exploring the Qur'an: Context and Impact* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2017). The only exception in this regard is Ghazi bin Muhammad's fine study on the Qur'an. See Ghazi bin Muhammad bin Talal, *Love in the Holy Qurʾan* (Chicago, Ill.: Kazi Publications, 2011).

9. Chittick, *Divine Love*, xi.

10. See e.g., the Al Jazeera documentary on his life ("al-Akkad") at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rim_rTJbXLg

11. https://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/12/obituaries/moustapha-akkad-75-who-produced-religious-and-horror-films-is.html

12. See Ali Tufekci, "Understanding Moustapha Akkad through '*The Message*' He Left," *Daily Sabah* (2020), at https://www.dailysabah.com/arts/cinema/understanding-moustapha-akkad-through-the-message-he-left

13. Ghazi bin Muhammad lists thirty-six Qur'anic terms associated with various kinds of love. See Ghazi bin Muhammad, *Love in the Holy Qurʾan*, 191ff.

14. Cf. 4:133; 6:133; 14:19; 35:16; 47:38. This verse has been extensively discussed among theological and mystical exegetes because of the reciprocal nature of love between God and humans. Theologians such as Zamakhsharī gloss this verse as implying "obedience" rather than love because of the incommensurability between divine and human love. Others such as Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1210) and al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) argue that this verse cannot simply be glossed as obedience to God, since obedience (the servant's love for God) should precede God's, whereas this verse suggests the reverse. See Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf ʿan ḥaqāʾiq al-tanzīl*, edited by ʿAlī Muhammad Muʿwwiḍ et al. (Riyadh: Maktabat al-ʿAbīkān, 1998), 2: 255–256; al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, anonymous editor (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifah, 1982), 4: 393; and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Fakhr al-Rāzī*, edited by Khalīl al-Mays (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981), 12: 19-26.

15. Even standard Sufi commentaries on the Qur'an are based on the levels of "inner meaning" of the Qur'an. For a general study on Sufi *tafsīr*, see Kristin Z. Sands, *Ṣūfī Commentaries on the Qurʾān in Classical Islam*, (London: Routledge, 2006).

16. Aḥmad al-Ghazālī, *Sawāniḥ*, edited by ʿAlī Ṣābirī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ḥaqīqat, 2006), 10–11. For a fine study on Aḥmad al-Ghazālī's life and thought, see Joseph Lumbard, *Aḥmad al-Ghazālī, Remembrance, and the Metaphysics of Love* (Albany, NY: SUNY, 2016).

17. al-Ghazālī, *Sawāniḥ*, 19–20.

18. ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī, *Ṣad Maydān*, edited by ʿAbd al-Ḥayy Ḥabībī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Dunyā-yi Kitāb, 1997), 25–26.

19. al-Anṣārī, *Ṣad Maydān*, 230.

This content downloaded from
65.28.249.234 on Thu, 15 Jul 2021 03:11:02 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

20. Aḥmad Samʿānī, *Rawḥ al-arwāḥ fī sharḥ asmāʾ al-malik al-fattāḥ,* edited by Najīb Māyil Hirawī (Tehran: Shirkat-i Intishārāt-i ʿIlmī wa Farhangī, 1989), 58. Rashīd al-Dīn Maybūdī (fl. ca. 12th century) frequently mentions lovers being slain in the path of love. For him, their Shariah is different from the Shariah of those who simply follow the letters of the Law: "In the outward shariah, all is gentleness, benevolence, blessing, and caressing. In love's shariah, all is severity, harshness, killing, and spilling blood." Maybūdī, *Kashf al-asrār wa ʿuddat al-abrār,* 9: 269, on Q 49:10, cited in Chittick, *Divine Love,* 369.

21. Samʿānī, *Rawḥ,* 58, cited in Chittick, *Divine Love,* 355.

22. For this expression, see Shahab Ahmed, *What is Islam?: The Importance of Being Islam*ic (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 32.

23. For a comprehensive study on Rumi's life and thought, see Franklin Lewis, *Rumi: Past and Present, East and West; the Life, Teachings and Poetry of Jalâl al-Din Rumi* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2000).

24. See Jawid Mojaddedi, "Rūmī," in Andrew Rippin (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to the Qur'ān* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 363.

25. Ahmed, *What is Islam?,* 32. Moreover, between the fifteenth and the late-nineteenth centuries, the *Dīvān* had a profound and pervasive literary presence in the discourse of educated Muslims in the vast regions extending from the Balkans through Anatolia, Iran and Central Asia down and across Afghanistan and North India to the present-day Bangladesh. Two of the most famous and wide-ranging commentaries on Hafez's *Dīvān* are Abū al-Ḥasan Khātamī Lāhurī, *Sharh-i ʿirfāni-yi ghazal-hā-yi Ḥāfiẓ,* edited by Bahā al-Dīn Khurramshāhī et al. (Tehran: Nashr-i Qaṭrah, 1995); and Bosnawī Sūdī, *Sharḥ-i Sūdī bar Ḥāfiẓ,* edited by ʿIṣmat Sattār-zādah (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Nigāh, 2011). For a general study on Hafez, see Leonard Lewisohn and Robert Bly, *The Angels Knocking on the Tavern Door: Thirty Poems of Hafez* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2009).

26. Hafez was called Hafez because of being a memorizer of the Qur'an.

27. Hafez, *The Dīvān of Hafez: A Bilingual Text,* translated by Reza Saberi (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2002), qaṣīdah # 2, 596, trans. mine. Also, "Whatever I have done, I have done it with the blessings of the wealth of the Qur'an (*har chih kardam hamah az dawlat-i qurʾān kardam*). Hafez, *Dīvān of Hafez,* # 319 (Qazwīnī-Ghanī edition). There are two critical editions of Hafez's *Dīvān,* and they are by Qazwīnī-Ghanī and Khānlarī respectively. Saberi's text is based on the Khānlarī edition. I chose to use this bilingual edition, since it is easily available in the US.

28. Rumi, *Kulliyyāt-i Shams yā dīvān-i kabīr,* edited by B. Furūzānfar, 10 vols. (Tehran: Dānishgāh, (1957–67), 29050– 51.

29. Rumi, *Masnavī-yi maʿnawī,* edited and translated by R.A. Nicholson as *The Mathnawí of Jalálu'ddín Rúmí* (London: Luzac, 1924–40), 1: 113–115, translation significantly modified.

30. Hafez, *Dīvān of Hafez,* # 208 (trans. mine).

31. Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad Jāmī, *Masnavī-yi haft awrang,* edited by Murtażā Mudarris-i Gīlānī (Tehran: Kitābfurūshī-yi Saʿdī, 1958), 594. Cf.:

> Count it a grace that loss comes from the lane of love:
> Let go of metaphorical love, the goal is love for the Real.
> The warrior gives a wooden sword to his son
> so that he may become a champion in the battlefield.
> Love for a human being is that wooden sword.
> When the trial comes to its end, you will love the All-Merciful. Rumi, *Kulliyyāt,* 336–38.

This content downloaded from
65.28.249.234 on Thu, 15 Jul 2021 03:11:02 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

32. Ibn ʿArabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, edited by A. ʿAfīfī (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyyah, 1946), 203. See also, Ibn ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya: fī maʿrifat maqām al-maḥabbah*, edited Aḥmad Shams al-Dīn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub alʿIlmiyyah, 1999) 3: 480ff.

33. Ibn ʿArabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, 203. See also, William Chittick, "The Divine Roots of Human Love," *Journal of Muhyiddin Ibn ʿArabī Society*, 17 (1995): 55–78. Sufi thinkers such Ibn ʿArabī acknowledge that this tradition is not found in the canonical sources, but it is, nonetheless, claimed to be valid through unveiling (*kashf*). For more information, see William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-ʿArabī's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany, NY: SUNY, 1989), 250–251.

34. Saʿd al-Dīn al-Farghānī, *Muntahā al-madārik fī sharḥ Tāʾiyyat Ibn Fāriḍ*, edited by ʿĀṣim Ibrāhīm (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1971), 19–25. Cf. Jāmī, *Yūsuf wa Zulaykhā*, edited by Nādir Wazīnpūr (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1970), 8–9.

35. See al-Qayṣarī, *Maṭlaʿ khuṣūṣ al-kalim fī maʿānī Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (*Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*), edited by Ḥasanzādah Āmulī (Qum: Būstān-i Kitāb, 2007), 515–555, 705–765, 905–990.

36. Rumi, *Masnavī*, 3: 4400–04 (trans. significantly modified). Cf. *Masnavī*, 6: 2676–8. See also, ʿAyn al-Quḍāt al-Hamadānī, *Zubdat al-ḥaqāʾiq*, edited by ʿAfīf ʿAsīrān (Tehran: Nashr-i Dānishgāhī, 2012), Ch. 9.

37. The Islamic philosopher Mullā Ṣadrā also argues that love (*ʿishq*) permeates all of existence, since all things seek to unite with Ultimate Reality as they yearn to perfect their forms. Love here is defined as the innate tendency of entities to reach their natural perfection. Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Ḥikmah al-mutaʿāliyah fī al-asfār al-ʿaqliyyah al-arbaʿah*, eds. Gholamreza Aavani et al. (Tehran: Bunyād-i Ḥikmat-i Islāmi-yi Ṣadrā, 2005), 7: 197.

38. The most popular romantic love-story in Sufi literature is Niẓāmī's *Laylī wa Majnūn*. See Niẓāmī Ganjawī, *Laylī wa Majnūn*, edited by Muḥammad Rowshan (Tehran: Ṣidā-yi Muʿāṣir, 2015).

39. Hafez, *Dīvān of Hafez*, # 265 (trans. mine).

40. Hafez, *Dīvān of Hafez*, # 90 (trans. mine).

41. Hafez, *Dīvān of Hafez*, # 172 (trans. mine).

42. Ahmed, *What is Islam*, 32.

43. Hafez, *Dīvān of Hafez*, # 20 (trans. mine). This idea closely parallels the self's journey in ʿAṭṭār's *Muṣībat nāmah*. See Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār, *Muṣībat nāmah*, edited by Shafīʿī Kadkānī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Millī, 2007), 437ff.

44. For ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, suffering (*miḥnat*) is inscribed into the very nature of love (*maḥabbat*) through a primordial transposition of letters:

Alas! The first letter that appeared on the Preserved Tablet was *maḥabbat*.

Then, the dot of the b was conjoined with dot of the n, making it *miḥnat*! ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 245, § 320, cited in Mohammed Rustom, *Inrushes of the Heart: The Mystical Theology of ʿAyn al-Quḍāt* (Albany, NY: SUNY, forthcoming), 211.

45. Hafez, *Dīvān of Hafez*, # 229 (trans. mine).

46. Hafez, *Dīvān of Hafez*, # 246 (trans. mine).

47. Hafez, *Dīvān of Hafez*, # 216 (trans. mine).

48. Hafez, *Dīvān of Hafez*, # 221 (trans. mine).

49. Hafez, *Dīvān of Hafez*, # 312 (trans. mine).

50. "Wine" in Sufi literature symbolizes love, knowledge or intoxication depending on the context. As Hafez says: "O Sāqī, illuminate my cup with the light of wine (*nūr-i bādih*); Minstrel, sing, for the world is now as I desired." Hafez, *Dīvān of Hafez*, # 11. Just as physical wine leaves one intoxicated, the experience of love animates the mystical wayfarer with a feeling of intoxication.

51. Hafez, *Dīvān of Hafez*, # 37 (trans. mine).

This content downloaded from
65.28.249.234 on Thu, 15 Jul 2021 03:11:02 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

52. Hafez, *Dīvān of Hafez,* # 136 (trans. mine).
53. Hafez, *Dīvān of Hafez,* # 119 (trans. mine).
54. Hafez, *Dīvān of Hafez,* # 10 (trans. mine).
55. Hafez, *Dīvān of Hafez,* # 216 (trans. mine).
56. Rumi, *Masnavī*, 6: 4302–04.
57. Rumi, *Masnavī*, 3: 4160–64; 97–98.
58. Referring to the Q 89:27–28 that mentions the state of profound peace, contentment, and tranquility.
59. Hafez, *Dīvān of Hafez,* # 468 (trans. mine). Hafez also frequently mentions the Sufi practice of "retreat" (*khalwat*) through which one experiences deep inner peace. See e.g., *Dīvān of Hafez,* # 50.
60. For the phrase "infinite jest," see David F. Wallace, *Infinite Jest* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2006).
61. See for instance, the following poem in Muhammad Iqbal's (d. 1938) *Asrār-i khūdī*, in which he associates Hafez's poetry with passivism:

> Beware of Ḥāfiẓ the drinker
> His cup is full of the poison of death. . . .
> There is nothing in his market except wine
> With two cups his turban has been spoiled.
> He is a Muslim but his belief is girdled with the unbeliever's belt
> His faith is fractured by the beloved's eyelashes.
> He gives weakness the name of strength
> His musical instrument leads the nation astray. . . .
> The sound of his music betokens decline
> The voice he hears from on high is the Gabriel of decline.

Muhammad Iqbal, *Mathnavī-yi asrār-i khūdī* (Lahore: Union Steam Press, n.d. [1915]), 66–72, translated by Qasim Zaman, based on Abu Sayeed Nur-ud-Din, "Attitude towards Sufism," in *Iqbal: Poet Philosopher of Pakistan*, ed. Hafeez Malik (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), 287–300, at 294. When the poem was first published in 1915, these lines caused a great deal of commotion in influential circles, which forced Iqbal to omit them from later editions of the *Asrār*.

62. For instance, one thinks of the letters of Rumi, which show his concern with life around. See e.g., Camille Helminski, *Rumi and His Friends: Stories of the Lovers of God* (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2013).
63. For an elaboration of this particular point, see Muhammad Faruque, *Sculpting the Self: Islam, Selfhood, and Human Flourishing* (University of Michigan Press, forthcoming [2021]). Ch. 1.
64. Muqtedar Khan, *Islam and Good Governance: A Political Philosophy of Ihsan* (New York: Palgrave, 2019).
65. Hafez, *Dīvān of Hafez,* # 188 (trans. mine).

This content downloaded from
65.28.249.234 on Thu, 15 Jul 2021 03:11:02 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms