

## SUFI STORIES FROM THE CAIRO GENIZAH

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The Cairo Genizah preserved a fragmentary manuscript of what had once been a Sufi anthology composed of texts pertaining to different literary genres.<sup>1</sup> The manuscript, which is in the possession of the Cambridge University Library (T-S Ar. 41.1), has twenty barely legible pages, and unfortunately lacks the beginning and the end. Each page has 22–26 lines. The text is written in Arabic, with Arabic characters mostly accompanied by diacritical signs, but sometimes without it. The surviving text has three major parts:

- I. 1a–3b: ecstatic sayings of Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī (d. 261/875) with the commentary of a certain ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad
- II. 3b–7b: a chapter about reliance on God
- III. 7b–10b: epistles by an-Nūrī (d. 295/908) and al-Ġunayd (d. 297/910)

It seems probable that the author of this anthology copied these texts from different sources for his personal use. It does not seem likely that the text had been copied from one continuous compilation, for the following reasons: 1) the genre of the different parts varies considerably; 2) the parts are not interlaced by inner references; 3) the different parts show distinct grammatical features (parts I-II display peculiarities of Middle Arabic, while these are absent from part III).

There are no indications in the manuscript pointing towards the person of the author or the copyist. Although there are no Hebrew words or glosses in the text, it was obviously owned (and read) by Jews, since it was preserved in the Cairo Genizah. As it is widely known, the Cairo Genizah is a storehouse of medieval manuscripts dating back mostly to the 10<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries, and found in the attic of a synagogue in al-Fuṣṭāṭ. Jewish religion prohibits throwing away texts that contain, or might contain the name of God. These texts must be “hidden away” in the so-called *genizah* (meaning “hiding place” in Hebrew). Since virtually

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<sup>1</sup> I have dealt with this Sufi anthology, especially with its third part elsewhere. See “Sobriety and intoxication in mystical sayings from the Cairo Genizah.” In: *Proceedings of Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants 27. Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*. (forthcoming).

every text can contain the name of God, pious Jews tended to put every unneeded text in the *genizah*, including Arabic texts, secular books, letters, business accounts, poems, recipes, etc. The importance of the discovery of the Cairo Genizah (in 1896) lies in the fact that it provides an immense material concerning the life of Medieval Egypt.<sup>2</sup> Owing to this discovery it became manifest that Jews were highly interested in Sufism, they possessed and what is more, imitated Sufi works.<sup>3</sup> The Sufi anthology under discussion was compiled from various sources, possibly by a Jew for his own use.<sup>4</sup>

This paper aims to present some Sufi stories contained in the second part of the manuscript.

The full title of the chapter is the following: “Chapter about the Description of Those Who Rely on God, Who Abide by God’s Command, and Who Await Rescue from God.” (*Bāb na’t ahl at-tawakkul ‘alā Allāh as-sākinīn ‘inda amr Allāh al-muntazirīn li-farağ Allāh ‘azza wa-ğalla*). The chapter comprises two kinds of texts: 1) short sayings of various Sufi sheiks; 2) instructive stories. As indicated by the title, the subject of both the sayings and the stories is reliance on God (*tawakkul*). A common element of the stories is wandering under harsh circumstances, usually hunger and thirst. The sequence of the stories is sometimes interrupted by short dictions quoted with the chain of the transmitters. Equanimity and perseverance are the major virtues that characterize the protagonists of the stories. The act of possession is refused since it distances man from God, whether man possesses any kind of material goods or merely some basic intentions. The mystics in these stories wander without having destination, and survive without having any means of subsistence. They are sometimes led into temptation and other times rescued miraculously by the intervention of God. However, God does not always interfere in a pleasant way. Nevertheless, facing hardships or experiencing welfare is the same for the Sufi, whose attitude is not influenced by the circumstances. Elements that recur in the stories are crossing the desert without provision; meeting strangers; meeting a lion in the desert; meeting Ḥiḍr in the desert; being fed by God with bread or roasted fish; thirst and finding water; Magians; pomegranates; temptations. One of the protagonists of the stories is Ibrahīm al-Ḥawwāš.<sup>5</sup> In the *Taḍkirat al-*

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. Reif:2002.

<sup>3</sup> See e.g. Fenton:1981, especially the introduction of the book, and the bibliography cited there.

<sup>4</sup> Naturally it is also possible that the anthology was composed by a Muslim, and was copied or acquired later by a Jew.

<sup>5</sup> Abū Ishāq Ibrahīm ibn Aḥmad al-Ḥawwāš (d. 291/904) of Sāmarrā’ was a companion of al-Ġunayd and an-Nūrī. Stories about him similar to those of the Genizah fragment can be found in Abū Nu’aym, *Ḥilya* X, 325–331; ‘Aṭṭār, *Taḍkira* II, 261–274; Arberry 1966:272–276.

*awliyā'* almost all of these elements (not the stories themselves) appear in the anecdotes about him. According to the *Taḍkirat al-awliyā'*, he was called the "leader of those who rely on God" (*ra'īs al-mutawakkilīna*), and he was famous of crossing the desert without provision, relying exclusively on God. In the Genizah fragment there are two stories about him, displaying the same features as the anecdotes of the *Taḍkirat al-awliyā'*.

Other protagonists of the stories are Abū l-Ḥusayn an-Nūrī, Sahl b. Wahbān al-Anbārī,<sup>6</sup> Abū Ḥamza, 'Alī ar-Rāzī,<sup>7</sup> Ṣāliḥ b. 'Abd al-Ġalīl al-Baṣrī,<sup>8</sup> Ġa'far al-Mubārqa', Abū Ġurayṣ, Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ġawharī al-Baġdādī, Ḥasan al-Qaddār ad-Dīnawarī. Those persons mentioned in the Genizah fragment that I could identify are contemporaries of al-Ġunayd and an-Nūrī, both of whom are repeatedly mentioned in the fragment, which also contains a correspondence by them. This fact indicates that the texts preserved in the fragment are mostly early Sufi texts that originated in the circle of al-Ġunayd.

Anecdotes similar to the stories of the Genizah fragment can be found abundantly in several Sufi biographies and manuals like the *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'* by Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣbahānī (d. 1038), the *Taḍkirat al-awliyā'* by Farīd ad-Dīn 'Aṭṭār (d. ca. 1220), the *Ṭabaqāt as-sūfiyya* by as-Sulamī (d. 1021), etc.

The importance of the stories quoted in the anthology from the Cairo Genizah does not lie in their uniqueness: in fact there are plenty of similar stories. The significance of this anthology is that it reveals what kinds of Sufi texts were read by Jews in 13<sup>th</sup> century Egypt. In order to discuss the influence of Sufism in Judaism one should have a clear knowledge of what Sufi texts were possessed and read by Jews. This information contributes to the estimation of this influence in 13<sup>th</sup> century Egypt.

The next part of the paper will be devoted to the transliteration and translation of a coherent and continuous part of the text. Although in the manuscript *tā' marbūṭa* is never indicated (i.e., it is written with *hā'*) I decided to indicate it in the transliteration of the text. Most characters of the manuscript are accompanied by diacritical signs, but since the paper is stained and damaged in several places, the reading of the characters and the signs is sometimes dubious. *Hamza* is never indicated in the manuscript, therefore it also is absent from the transliteration. For the sake of convenience, the text in the English translation was divided into smaller chapters and chapter headings were also

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<sup>6</sup> According to the *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'* he was a contemporary of al-Ġunayd (Abū Nu'aym, *Ḥilya*, X, 359). He is not mentioned either by as-Sulamī (*Ṭabaqāt*) or 'Aṭṭār (*Taḍkira*).

<sup>7</sup> A certain 'Alī ar-Rāzī is mentioned as a transmitter in as-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt* 113.

<sup>8</sup> Mentioned in Abū Nu'aym, *Ḥilya* VIII, 317 without biographical details.

introduced. The Arabic original itself is also divided into parts by circular dividers that were taken into consideration when dividing the English translation into subchapters. The dividers of the Arabic text are indicated in the English translation. The chapter headings do not form part of the Arabic original.

### ARABIC TEXT

T-S Arabic 41.1 fol. 4b

- 12 [...] ○ روى ايوب بن بشير  
 13 الطالقاني عن رجل من بعض اخوانه قال رايت رجلا في مرج  
 14 الديباج وليس معه شي فدنوت منه فسلمت عليه فرد على  
 15 فقلت برحمتك الله اين تريد قال لا ادري فقلت هل رايت احد<sup>9</sup>  
 16 يريد مكانا لا يدري اين يذهب قال انا واحد قلت فاين  
 17 تنوي قال مكة قلت تنوي مكة ولا تدري اين تذهب قال  
 18 نعم وذلك اني كم مرة اردت مكة فيردني الى طرسوس  
 19 وكم مرة اردت طرسوس فيردني الى عبادان فنتيتي ان  
 20 اذهب الي مكة ولا ادري ابليها ام لا قلت فمن اين  
 21 المعاش [ش] قال لا ادري قلت اخبرني باسباب [ذلك] قال [من حيث]  
 22 يريد مرة يجيعني ومرة يشبعني ومرة يكرمني ومرة [يهيبيني]  
 23 ومرة يقول لي ما على الارض [الا وهديتك] ومرة ويقول انت

T-S Arabic 41.1 fol. 5a

- 1 لص ومرة يطردني الطرد العنيف ولا ينومني الا عند النوا  
 2 ويس قلت برحمتك الله من يفعل بك هذا قال الله قلت  
 3 فسر لي كيف هذا قال انا رجل اسير نهاري فاين جنني  
 4 الليل بت فرما اواني الليل الى قرية فاذا نظر الى اهلها قال  
 5 بعضهم لبعض هذا لص لا تدعونه ياوي الليلة في القرية  
 6 فاذا صليت عشا الاخرة يدخل على رجل المسجد فيقول  
 7 يا نايم فاقول لبيك فيقول لي بالعنف قم من هاهنا  
 8 ليس لك هاهنا موضع فاقول نعم وكرامة فاين ابيت  
 9 فيقول عند النواويس فاقول نعم وكرامة فاذا اصبحت  
 10 سرت فياوييني الليل الى قرية اخرى فاذا راني اهلها قال بعضهم  
 11 لبعض قد ورد عليكم الليلة رجل زاهد خير فاضل فيقول  
 12 كل واحد منهم عندي ببيت فاذا صليت عشا الاخرة يقول

<sup>9</sup> Sic, instead of احدا. Disappearance of *tanwīn -an* is characteristic of Middle Arabic.

- 13 لي رجل منهم قم الى البيت فاقول نعم وكرامة وامضي معه الى  
 14 منزله فيجيني بالطعام الطيب ويدهن راسي ويكحل عيني  
 15 وياتيني بالفراش اللين فينومني عليه ولا يدع شي من البر الا  
 16 فعله حتى اذا اصبحت سرت فهذه حالي وحال سيدي  
 17 قال فقلت يرحمك الله متى قدر لك ان تدخل الى بغداد فان  
 18 منزلي في موضع كذي وكذي قال فانا ذات يوم قاعد في منزلي  
 19 اذا انسان يدفع الباب فخرجت فاذا انا بصاحبي فسلمت عليه  
 20 وقلت له ايش<sup>10</sup> صنع بك مولاك فقال اخر ما فعل بي ان ضربني  
 21 ضربا شديدا وقال لي يا لص واوراني ظهره فاذا اثر الضرب  
 22 فقلت ايش القصة قال كان قد اجاعني جو عا شديدا فلما  
 23 بلغت الانبار جيت الى مقناة وقد نبذ منها المدود المر  
 24 فقعدت اكل ينظرني صاحب المقناة فاقبل الى بعصا  
 25 يجعل يضرب ظهري ويقول لي يا لص ما خرب

T-S Arabic 41.1 fol. 5b

- 1 مقناتي غيرك [...] كم انا ارصدك حتى وقعت عليك فاذا بفا  
 2 رس قد اقبل مسرعا فاقلب الصوط<sup>11</sup> في راسه وقال تعمد الي  
 3 رجل زاهد تضربه وتقول لمتله يا لص قال فما بين ان كنت  
 4 عنده لص<sup>12</sup> الى ان صرت زاهد<sup>13</sup> الا كما حدثتك فقال صاحب  
 5 المقناة للفارس لم اعلم ان هذا هكذي فاخذ بيدي فذهب  
 6 بي الى منزله فما بقي من الكرامة شي الا فعله بي واستجاني<sup>14</sup>  
 7 فخرجت من عنده وجيتك فاقام عندي وقت<sup>15</sup> وانصرف ○  
 8 قال وقال سهل بن وهبان انما لم يهتموا بالمضمون لان لا يكو  
 9 نوا للضامن متهمين ○ قال وقيل لابي الحسين النوري لما حضرته  
 10 الوفاة قل لا اله الا الله قال اليس اليه فمر ○ قال ولما حضرت  
 11 ابو حمزة الوفاة قالوا له تلامذته قل لا اله الا الله قال هذا شي قد  
 12 عرفناه ○ قال ومر على المنبوح على الساحل في غير  
 13 وقت الحج وقد جاع اياما فخطر بقلبه سمك مشوي فاذا سمكة  
 14 قد خرجت من البحر تضطرب بين يديه فاخذها فبينما هو

<sup>10</sup> The use of this interrogative is widespread in various Arabic dialects.

<sup>11</sup> *Sic*, instead of السوط. The neutralization of *ṣ* and *s* is a peculiarity of Middle Arabic.

<sup>12</sup> *Sic*, instead of لصا. Disappearance of *tanwīn -an* is characteristic of Middle Arabic.

<sup>13</sup> *Sic*, instead of زاهدا.

<sup>14</sup> The reading is dubious.

<sup>15</sup> *Sic*, instead of وقتنا.

- 15 كذلك اذا برجل قد وقف عليه فقال اتريد ناراً فجاء بنار  
 16 فشوها فهم في ذلك اذ وقف عليهما رجل فقال اتر  
 17 يدان خبزاً فاخرج خبزاً فاكلوا وهم لا يعرف بعضهم  
 18 بعضاً فسالوا صاحب السمكة من انت قال انا علي الرازي  
 19 قالوا لصاحب النار من انت قال انا سهل بن وهبان الانباري  
 20 قالوا لصاحب الخبز من انت قال انا صالح بن عبد الجليل  
 21 البصري فاعتنقوا ثم افترقوا ○ روى ابو الحسن احمد  
 22 بن محمد الرازي عن ابي الفضل المادرائي قال سمعت جعفر  
 23 المبرقع يقول عقدت بيني وبين الله جل اسمه عقداً الا  
 24 اكل من يد انسان شياً فخرجت في بعض اسفار لي من  
 25 الحجاز الي اليمن فمكثت اربعة ايام وانا مستقل

## T-S Arabic 41.1 fol. 6a

- 1 فلما كان ليلة الخامس<sup>16</sup> وجدت ضعفاً فاصبحت وانا على عين  
 2 من ما ولها مجرى فنزلت الى المجرى لاتطهر فرايت رغيفاً  
 3 فوق الماء واقف<sup>17</sup> فحدثت نفسي باخذه فخشيت ان يكون قد  
 4 سقط من يد انسان فتركته وجعلت امشي الى فوق المجرى  
 5 فاذا الرغيف يجري فوق الماء الى اول العين فذهب عني  
 6 الشك فاخذته فاكلته فبقيت عشرة ايام بعد ذلك لا احتاج  
 7 الى طعام ○ قال عبد الله نظر ابو جريش في سياحته الى  
 8 رجل شيخ فقال له ايش انت قال مجوسي فقال له ليس انت ممن  
 9 يرجوا<sup>18</sup> الثواب ولا ممن يخاف العقاب فلم هذا قال نظرت في  
 10 الاشياء فرايت لها مداً فاحببت ان اريح جسمي ○ قال وقال  
 11 ابراهيم الخواص بينا انا اسير في بادية تبوك في طريق دمشق  
 12 اذا انا برجل عليه خرقتين<sup>19</sup> فسلمت عليه ثم وجس في نفسي منه  
 13 شي فانكرت ذلك فقلت له ايش انت انت مسلم قال لا قلت فانت  
 14 يهودي قال لا قلت فنصراني قال لا قلت فويلك ايش انت قال  
 15 انا مجوسي قلت فايش تعمل هاهنا في بادية تبوك قال

<sup>16</sup> The expression is elliptical, omits the word (ليلة اليوم الخامس).

<sup>17</sup> *Sic*, instead of واقفاً.

<sup>18</sup> *Sic*. An ortographical charateristic of this text is that *verba tertiae infirmae* usually add an *alif* after the third radical *wāw*. Examples of the same phenomenon occur in this fragment on fol. 2b, line 3, fol. 4a, line 4.

<sup>19</sup> *Sic*. The use of plural suffix *-īna* instead of *-ūna* in the Nominative is characteristic of Middle Arabic.

- 16 رايت ابنا الدنيا متنافسين فيها فاحببت ان اتركها عليهم ○  
 17 قال وقال ابراهيم الخواص ونزلت في بعض المواضع فطالبتني نفسي  
 18 ان ادخل الى المنزل فابيت عليها ولم ادخل فلما جنني الليل  
 19 اذا بحية قد جات عندي فتخيلت الوان الخيال فلم التفت اليها  
 20 فلما اعيتها الحيل قالت قوم<sup>20</sup> من موضعي قلت لا افعل فجعلت  
 21 توريني وادخلت تحتي يدا شعراه او رجلا شعراه<sup>21</sup> على  
 22 ان تقلعني من موضعي فلم تقدر فقالت لي نفسي تقرا شيا  
 23 من القران فلم افعل فقلت من اجل مخلوق لا اقرا ثم غابت  
 24 عني سلمة [؟] هوية [؟] ثم جاتني فقالت هو ذا قد جيتك  
 25 بسمك مشوي حار كما خرج من شبكة الصياد

T-S Arabic 41.1 fol. 6b

- 1 فلان وجيتك برمان امليسي حلال من جبل مباح فلما اصبحت  
 2 رايت عندي سمك مشوي ورمان امليسي فلم اكل منه شيا  
 3 وتركته وانصرفت ○ قال ابو الحسن الجوهري البغدادي  
 4 كنت حاجا فلما صرنا بين الخزيمية والاجهر عطش  
 5 الناس عطشا شديدا وعطشنا معهم فنزلت من الجمل  
 6 اطلب من يسقيني شربة من ما فلم اجد وبقيت خلف السا  
 7 قة من شدة ما بي من العطش فاتيت على بركة فارغة قد  
 8 جاز الناس عليها فاطلعت فيها فاذا برجل جالس في  
 9 وسطها عليه اطمار رثة وهو يومي الى تشرب الما  
 10 فلما رايته نزلت الى البركة فلما حس بي قام فخرج منها  
 11 وجبت الى المكان الذي كان فيه فاذا بحفرة صغيرة  
 12 يخرج منها الما في وسطها فشربت حتى رويت ولحقت  
 13 القافلة فاذا بها قد عرست على ميل او ميلين فاخذت  
 14 قريتي من عدلي ورجعت اليها فملاها وجبت بها  
 15 والناس نزول فلما راي الناس الما على كنفني وقع في الناس  
 16 صيمة<sup>22</sup> الما خلف فرجع الناس فسقوا واسقوا جمالهم  
 17 فبقيت في حيرة من امري فلما رحل الناس قلت لعدلي اركب

<sup>20</sup> Sic, instead of قم.

<sup>21</sup> The reading is dubious. The text seems to be يدا شعراه او رجلا شعراه which is not correct grammatically. The last letter or character in both شعراه might be interpreted as a circular divider, but circular dividers which are used in the text in other places are completely different from these.

<sup>22</sup> The reading is dubious.

- 18 ورجعت انظرها فاذا على حافتيها جمالين<sup>23</sup> يطرحون دلاهم  
 19 ويستقون واذا الامواج تتلاطم فيها فقلت امنت بالله  
 20 ان الله على كل شي قدير ○ روى عبد العزيز بن عبد الواحد  
 21 عن حسن القدار الدينوري قال خرجت اريد دير بني ربيعة  
 22 فاجتمع جماعة من اصحابي الى فسالوني ان لا اخذ على هذه الطر  
 23 يق فقلت لا بد لي من ذلك فلما راو عزمي على ذلك قالوا لي

T-S Arabic 41.1 fol. 7a

- 1 فامضى على طريق البر لان لا يلقاك احد من اهل الذعارة فلما خرجت  
 2 وصرت في البادية وحدي اخذني العطش وشدة الحر هممت  
 3 بالرجوع اخذتني الانفة من ذلك فمضيت على حالي ذلك في شدة  
 4 الحر فاذا برجل قد عارضني وهو يقول لي يا رجل اياك السبع فبقي  
 5 يشير بيده وانا انظر الى السبع نحو يده فاذا رفع يده لم  
 6 انظر الى شي فلما طال على ذلك واعيانني قلت له يا رجل اذا اوميت  
 7 الى بيدك نظرت الى السبع واذا رفعتها لم انظر الى شي قال  
 8 فاين تريد يا فتى فقلت اريد الى موضع ذكرته له في ذلك  
 9 الوقت فقال هات يدك فدفعت اليه يدي فاذا انا في ذلك الموضع  
 10 الذي اردته قال فرجعت من سفري الى جنيد فحدثته بذلك الذي  
 11 اصابني فقال لي ايش صفة الرجل فوصفت له صفته وزيه  
 12 الذي كان عليه زي اصحابنا الفقرا فقال لي نعم هو المغيث  
 13 لهم في كل وقت لاهل الصدق ○ قال عبد الله الرحمن نعم هو الخضر  
 14 على نبينا وعليه السلام واسمه الغوث فاذا احب الله عز وجل  
 15 ان يقضى حوائج السائلين او يخلص عبدا من شدة او يفرج عنه كرب  
 16 حرك قلبه واستنقذه به فقضيت الحاجة اذ ليس فيه هس  
 17 لغير الله وانه ليزور اخوانه من صادقي هذه الامة ابتهاجا  
 18 وسرورا وفرحا بطاعتهم لله جل اسمه ○

#### TRANSLATION

##### THIEF

[T-S Arabic 41.1, fol. 4b, line 12 – fol. 5b, line 7]

[12] Ayyūb b. Bašīr

<sup>23</sup> Sic. The use of plural suffix *-īna* instead of *-ūna* in the Nominative is characteristic of Middle Arabic.



- [13] aṭ-Ṭāliqānī related on the authority of one of his brethren, he said: I have seen a man in Marg̃
- [14] ad-Dībāğ, who did not have anything with him. I approached him and greeted him, and he returned [the greeting].
- [15] Thereupon I said to him: “May God have mercy on you! Where do you want [to go]?” He said: “I don’t know.” I said: “Have you [ever] seen someone [who]
- [16] wanted [to get to] a place, but did not know where he was going?” He said: “I am one [like that].” I said: “Where
- [17] do you intend [to go]?” He said: “Mecca.” I said: “You intend [to go] to Mecca, and you don’t know where you are going?” He said:
- [18] “Yes indeed! And that is because many a time I wanted [to go to] Mecca, but He turned me to Ṭarsūs,
- [19] and many a time I wanted [to go to] Ṭarsūs, but He turned me to ‘Abadān. So my intention is
- [20] to go to Mecca, but I do not know if I get there or not.” I said: “How do you gain
- [21] your living?” He said: “I do not know.” I said: “Tell me, why is it so?” He said: “As He
- [22] wishes; sometimes He makes me starve, and sometimes He feeds me abundantly. Sometimes He honors me, but sometimes He [frightens]<sup>24</sup> me.
- [23] Sometimes He says to me: “Everything on earth I have given to you.” But sometimes He says: “You are
- [fol. 5a] [1] a thief!” Sometimes He chases me away harshly and does not let me sleep except at the
- [2] sarcophagi.” I said: “May God have mercy on you! Who treats you like that?” He said: “God.” I said:
- [3] “Explain it to me!” He said: “I am a man who walks all day long,
- [4] and I sleep where night falls upon me. Sometimes the night betakes me to a village and when its people see me they say
- [5] to each other: “This is a thief, so do not invite him to spend the night in the village.”
- [6] And when I pray the last evening prayer the man of the mosque comes to me and says:
- [7] “Hey you, sleeper!” And I say: “Here I am at your service!” And he says to me harshly: “Get up from here!
- [8] There is no place for you here!” And I say: “With the greatest pleasure. But where should I spend the night?”

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<sup>24</sup> The reading is dubious.

[9] And he says: “At the sarcophagi!” And I say: “With the greatest pleasure.”  
 In the morning  
 [10] I move on. Then the night betakes me to another village, and when its  
 people see me they say  
 [11] to each other: “A great pious ascetic has come to you this night.” And  
 [12] each one of them says: “Let him spend the night at my place!” And when I  
 have finished the last evening prayer, one of them says to me:  
 [13] “Get up, [come] to the house!” And I say: “With the greatest pleasure.” And  
 I go with him to  
 [14] his place, and he brings me good food, anoints my head, rubs my eyes with  
 antimony (*kuhl*),  
 [15] prepares a soft bed for me, and invites me to spend the night there. He  
 shows me every sign of respect  
 [16] until in the morning I move on. So that is my state (*hāl*) and that of my  
 Lord.”  
 [17] He said: Then I said: “May God have mercy on you! When [God] ordains  
 you to come to Baḡdād,  
 [18] [come to] my house [which is] is at such-and-such a place!”  
 He said: One day I was sitting in my house,  
 [19] when suddenly a man knocked on the door. I went out, and behold, it was  
 my friend! I greeted him  
 [20] and said to him: “What has your Master done to you?” He said: “The last  
 thing He has done to me was that He beat me  
 [21] badly and said to me: “You, thief!” He showed me his back, and behold, the  
 signs of the beating were there!  
 [22] I said: “What happened?” He said: “He had been starving me badly and  
 when  
 [23] I arrived at the granaries, I passed by a hut from where some bitter, worm-  
 eaten grains have been thrown out.  
 [24] So I sat down to eat, while the owner of the hut was watching me. But he  
 came to me with a stick,  
 [25] and began to beat my back, saying: “You, thief! It was you who  
 [fol. 5b] [1] robbed my hut! [...] How long I have been lying in wait for you  
 until I caught you!” But all of a sudden  
 [2] a horseman was approaching hastily, swinging the whip over his head. [The  
 horseman] said: “You mean  
 [3] to beat up an ascetic and to say to someone like him: “You, thief?!” He said:  
 “And it does not take longer  
 [4] to become an ascetic from a thief than recounting this story to you. The  
 owner

- [5] of the hut said to the horseman: “I did not know that he was an ascetic.”  
Then he took my hand and led  
[6] me to his house, and showed me every sign of respect.  
[7] After that I left him and came to you.” He stayed with me some time, and  
then he moved on. •  
[8] He said: Sahl b. Wahbān said: “They are not committed to what has been  
ensured to them, so that they would not be  
[9] accused by the Ensurer” [of being concerned with created things instead of  
the Creator himself].<sup>25</sup> •

#### LAST WORDS

[T-S Arabic 41.1, fol. 5b, lines 9-12]

- [9] He said: Abū l-Husayn an-Nūrī was told when he  
[10] was dying: “Say: There is no god other than God!” He said: “And is it not  
to him [that I am going]?” And he passed away.<sup>26</sup> • He said: When  
[11] Abū Ḥamza was dying, his disciples said to him: “Say: There is no god  
other than God!” He said: “This thing  
[12] we already know.” •

#### ROASTED FISH

[T-S Arabic 41.1, fol. 5b, lines 12-21]

- [12] He said: Walking on the shore he passed by a [ritually] slaughtered animal.  
It was not at  
[13] the time of the Pilgrimage. He has already been starving for days. It made  
him think about roasted fish. Suddenly, a fish  
[14] came out from the sea and writhed before him. He took it, and while  
[15] he was engaged in this, suddenly a man stopped by his side, and said: “Do  
you need fire?” And he brought him fire.  
[16] So they roasted the fish. While they were [engaged] with this, suddenly a  
man stopped by their side, and said:  
[17] “Do you need bread?” And he drew forth bread. So they ate [together],  
without knowing each  
[18] other. Then they asked the one with the fish: “Who are you?” He said: “I  
am ‘Alī ar-Rāzī.”

<sup>25</sup> Cf. a parallel in Abū Nu‘aym, *Hilya*, 10:359. That is the only tradition in the *Hilya* quoted in Sahl b. Wahbān’s name:

“لا تكونوا بالمضمون مهتمين فتكونوا للضامن متهمين وبعده غير واثقين”

The word *dāmin* refers to God. This usage is not unparalleled, see Lane 1968: *sub voce* “*dāmin*”.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. a similar tradition about an-Nūrī in Abū Nu‘aym, *Hilya* II, 91.

[19] They asked the one with the fire: “Who are you?” He said: “I am Sahl b. Wahbān al-Anbārī.”

[20] They asked the one with the bread: “Who are you?” He said: “I am Šāliḥ b. ‘Abd al-Ġalīl

[21] al-Bašrī.” They embraced each other, and then they parted company. •

#### BREAD FLOATING ON WATER

[T-S Arabic 41.1, fol. 5b, line 21 – fol. 6a, line 7]

[21] Abū l-Ḥasan Aḥmad

[22] b. Muḥammad ar-Rāzī related on the authority of Abū l-Faḍl al-Mādarānī: I have heard Ġa‘far

[23] al-Mubarqa‘ say: “I made an agreement with God – may His name be exalted – that I shall not

[24] eat anything [coming] from the hand of a man. I set out to one of my journeys from

[25] al-Ḥiġāz to al-Yaman. I was completely alone during four days.

[fol. 6a] [1] On the fifth night I felt weakness. In the morning I found myself at a spring

[2] of water that had a stream. I descended to the stream in order to perform the ablution, and I saw a loaf of bread

[3] floating on the surface of the water. I said to myself that I would take it, but I was afraid that it might

[4] have fallen from the hand of a man. So I left it, and started to go upward, in the direction of the source of the stream,

[5] and behold, [also] the bread was coming on the water in the direction of the source of the spring. My

[6] doubts were resolved. I took it and ate it, and after that I did not need any food for ten days.” •

#### MAGIANS

[T-S Arabic 41.1, fol. 6a, lines 7 - 16]

[7] ‘Abdallāh said: During his journey Abū Ğurayš saw

[8] an old man, and he said to him: “Who are you?” He said: “I am a Magian.” So he said to him: “You do not

[9] expect reward nor fear punishment. Why is it so?” He said: “I observed

[10] the things, and I saw that they were not lasting; I wished therefore to comfort my body.” • He said:

[11] Ibrahīm al-Ḥawwāš said: “When I was passing through the desert of Tabūk on the road of Damascus,

[12] I met a man [wearing] two patched frocks (*ḥirqatayni*). I greeted him, but somehow I had a bad feeling about him.

- [13] I ignored it, and I said to him: “Who are you? Are you a Muslim?” He said: “No.” I said: “Then  
 [14] are you a Jew?” He said: “No.” I said: “Then a Christian?” He said: “No.” I said: “Woe to you, who are you?” He said:  
 [15] “I am a Magian.” I said: “And what are you doing here, in the desert of Tabūk?” He said:  
 [16] “I have seen the sons of this world envying one another for having a greater share of it, I wished therefore to leave it [i.e. this world] to them.” •

TEMPTED BY THE SOUL OR BY THE SNAKE<sup>27</sup>

[T-S Arabic 41.1, fol. 6a, line 17 – fol. 6b, line 3]

- [17] He said: Ibrahīm al-Ḥawwāṣ said: “I arrived to a certain place, and my soul urged me  
 [18] to enter a house. But I refused and did not enter. And when the night befell upon me,  
 [19] suddenly a snake came to me. She took various shapes, but I did not turn to her.  
 [20] When her tricks run out, she said: “Get up from my place!” I said: “I will not!” So she began  
 [21] to attack me from the rear and she put a hairy hand or a hairy feet beneath me in order to  
 [22] remove me from my place, but she could not. So my soul said to me: “Recite something  
 [23] from the Qur’ān!” But I did not, since I said: “For the sake of a creature I will not recite. Then she left me  
 [24] tenderly and amorously,<sup>28</sup> and afterwards she returned and said: “Here you are, I have brought you  
 [25] a hot roasted fish freshly taken from the net of the fisherman  
 [fol. 6b] [1] [called] so and so, and I have brought you a sweet pomegranate having no stones, which is permitted to be eaten (*ḥalāl*), and which [was grown] on an allowed (*mubāḥ*) mountain.” When I woke up  
 [2] I saw a fried fish and a sweet pomegranate having no stones by my side, but I did not taste it at all,  
 [3] but I left it and I went away.” •

<sup>27</sup> The interpretation of the story requires to mention that the grammatical gender of both *naḥs* (soul) and *ḥayya* (snake) is feminine, therefore the feminine third-person singular pronoun recurring in the text can refer to both of them, which makes the text ambiguous, presumably on purpose. In my opinion the snake here symbolizes the soul that urges to evil (*an-naḥs al-ammāra bi-s-sū’*).

<sup>28</sup> The reading is dubious.

POOL FILLED WITH WATER

[T-S Arabic 41.1, fol. 6b, lines 3-20]

[3] Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ġawharī al-Baġdādī said:

[4] “I was making the pilgrimage and when we passed between al-Ḥazīmīya and al-Aḡhar

[5] the people became very thirsty. We also suffered from thirst with them. So I got off my camel

[6] in order to seek someone who could give me some water, but I did not find anyone. I remained behind the rear of the company

[7] because I was so afflicted by thirst. Then I passed by an empty pool,

[8] which the company had already left behind. I looked into it and I saw a man sitting

[9] in the middle of the pool, wearing tattered rags. He made a sign with the head toward me, [as if saying]: “Drink some water!”

[10] When I saw him I descended to the pool. When he sensed me he stood up and left the pool.

[11] I approached the place where he had been sitting and I saw a small hole

[12] out of which water was flowing into the pool. I drank my fill, and I joined

[13] the caravan, which had already stopped for a rest one or two miles further on. I took

[14] my water-skin from my companion and I returned to the pool. I filled the water-skin and brought it

[15] while the people were having a rest. When they saw me bringing water on my shoulder, the people also

[16] wanted to draw water.<sup>29</sup> So they returned [to the pool]. They drank and watered their camels,

[17] but I remained there confused because of what had happened to me. When the people were gone I said to my companion: “Mount [your camel]!”

[18] I went back to see the pool, and behold, on its two rims there were camel-drivers throwing their buckets [into the pool]

[19] and drawing water, and waves were clashing in it! I said: “I believe in God,

[20] God is indeed almighty!” •

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<sup>29</sup> The reading is dubious. صيمة can be interpreted as a *nomen vicis* from the stem *ṣ-w-m*, meaning “abstention”. The word *ḥ-l-f* is probably in Accusative (= adverbial case), but the case ending is not indicated, as it is normal in Middle Arabic. The stem *ḥ-l-f* can bear the meaning “remaining behind” or can be an equivalent of “*ḥilf*” = the act of drawing water. See Lane, *sub voce* “*ḥalafa*” and “*ḥilf*”.

## MEETING WITH ḤİDR

[T-S Arabic 41.1, fol. 6b, line 21 – fol. 7a, line 18]

[21] ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. ‘Abd al-Wāḥid related

[21] on the authority of Ḥasan al-Qaddār ad-Dīnawārī that he said: “I set out on my way to the monastery of Banū Rabī‘a

[22] but some of my companions gathered around me, and asked me not to take the

[23] road [I wanted]. But I said: “I have no other possibility.” When they saw that I was so resolute, they said:

[fol. 7a] [1] “Then go on the desert road, so that no dangerous person would meet you!” When I departed

[2] and I was alone in the desert, thirst and heat became so insupportable that I decided to

[3] return. But I was too proud to return, so I went on steadily in the intense

[4] heat. Suddenly, there was a man standing in my way and he said to me: “Hey you, beware of the lion!” He was continuously

[5] waving with his hand and I beheld the lion in the direction of his hand. But when he lifted his hand,

[6] I did not see anything. And when he continued doing this for a long time and I was fatigued, I said to him: “Hey you! If you make signs

[7] for me with your hand, I see the lion, but when you lift it [your hand], I don’t see anything!” He said:

[8] “And where do you want [to go], boy?” I said: “I want to go to a certain place” – which I specified to him

[9] then – and he said to me: “Give me your hand!” So I gave him my hand, and all of a sudden I was in that place where

[10] I wanted [to go] to! He said: “I returned from my journey to al-Ġunayd and I told him

[11] what happened to me.” He said to me: “How did the man look like?” I described him his outfit and the cloth

[12] he was wearing, the cloth of our companions, the *faqīrs* (*aṣḥābunā al-fuqarā’*). He said to me: “Yes, he was the one who succours (*al-muġīṭ*)

[13] the people of Truth (*ahl al-ṣidq*) at all times.” • ‘Abd Allāh ar-Rahmān said: “Yes, he was the Ḥidr,

[14] peace may be with our Prophet and with him, and his name is succour (*al-ġawṭ*) because when God – may he be exalted – wills

[15] to supply the petitioners’ needs, or to deliver a servant from distress, or to ease his grief,

[16] He [God] moves His [Ḥidr’s] heart, and He delivers him [the servant] by means of him [the Ḥidr], and then his needs will be supplied, since this does not entail whispering

[17] to other than God. He [Ḥiḍr] visits his brethren (*iḥwān*) from among the righteous of this nation, and he is glad,  
 [18] pleased and delighted at their obedience to God, may His name be exalted.”•

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