

Critical revision of *Adaab al-Sufiyya* treatise by Abulghasem Qushairi

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Abstract

Sufism has evolved around the principles of etiquettes and has become well-established. Behavioral etiquettes derived from Quran, traditions, and the biography of spiritual leaders are considered part of the spiritual journey and are classified in relation to the self (nafs), rights (adab with Allāh), and interactions with others. Abu al-Qasim Qushayri Nishaburi (376-465 AH) briefly outlined some of these etiquettes in his work “Sufi Etiquettes” (*Ādāb al-Sūfiyya*). The significance of “Sufi Etiquettes”, in addition to understanding Qushayri’s philosophical system as one of the influential Sufi leaders, lies in recognizing the favorable practices of the monastic communities of that time and how the development of mystical concepts occurred. Despite its great importance and recognition by both earlier and later bibliographers, this concise educational treatise had not been introduced and edited until the discovery of two complete and ancient manuscripts from the first half of the eighth century. This research aims to provide an overview of the tradition of writing Sufi etiquettes, introduce this treatise, and present an edited and revised version of the text.

Keywords: Sufi Etiquettes, *Ādāb al-Sūfiyya*, Spiritual Journey, Abū al-Qāsim Qushayrī Nishaburi.

Introduction

Abū al-Qāsim Abd al-Karim Qushayrī Nishaburi (376-465 AH) is one of the influential figures in the history of Islamic mysticism, and his works and ideas have always been referenced by Sufis. The treatise *Sufi Etiquettes* (*Ādāb al-Sūfiyya*) is one of Qushayri’s writings that is mentioned in ancient sources on biography and bibliography; however, due to the rarity of its copies, it has not been critically revised and examined to date. The current research, after citing ancient sources that mention Qushayri’s “*Ādāb al-Sūfiyya*,” with access to two complete and ancient manuscripts (one from the National Library of Azerbaijan, dated 739 AH, and another from the Library of Shahid Ali Pasha in Istanbul, dated 722 AH), engages in a critical revision and aims to present a text close to what Qushayri wrote.

Research Findings

Qushayri composed the treatise *Sufi Etiquettes* (*Ādāb al-Sūfiyya*) at the request of his disciples. In this work, he elucidates some of the Sufi behavioral etiquettes related to the self, rights, and interactions with others. *Sufi Etiquettes* consists of twenty chapters, with the most detailed one being *Their Etiquettes in Listening* (*Adaabihim Fi al-Samā*). Qushayri’s approach here, in contrast to the treatise that deals with the sayings and lives of



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the spiritual leaders, provides only a brief explanation of the Sufi or mentioned conduct. In some chapters of the treatise, Qushayri's brief explanations alongside the statements of the spiritual leaders are presented, which can be considered the author's reception of those Etiquettes/concepts. Interestingly, in Sufi Etiquettes, sometimes these short explanations are elaborated more explicitly, which is significantly noticeable in terms of content similarities. One of the aspects of the importance of Sufi Etiquettes lies in its inclusion of the author's opinions, which is more limited in the treatise. Through a general examination of mystical texts, it was revealed that Sheikh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (471-561 AH), who lived a century after Qushayri, extensively utilized Qushayri's Sufi Etiquettes in his composition *The Etiquettes of the Disciples (Adāb al-Muridin)* (*The Etiquettes of the Disciples*) without citing the source. The introduction of an ancient translation of Qushayri's "*Ādāb al-Sūfiyya*" into Persian is another finding of this research.

Conclusion

Sufi Etiquettes (*Ādāb al-Sūfiyya*) by Qushayri is part of the educational tradition of etiquettes writing in Sufism, indicating that Sufis had personal and social etiquettes for their spiritual journey, encompassing all aspects of their lives. These etiquettes signify the coherence and integration of inner spiritual journey with adherence to tradition from the perspective of Sufis. They are defined in relation to the self, others, and the divine and refine the Sufi in dealing with them. Qushayri's etiquettes address the social aspects of a Sufi's mutual duties with the spiritual leader, family, fellow disciples, strangers, the wealthy, and the poor, mentioned in various contexts such as during meals, travels, and spiritual gatherings. Moreover, Qushayri enumerates etiquettes related to spiritual levels, such as striving, reliance on God, humility, sincerity, and good character. Therefore, "*Ādāb al-Sūfiyya*" can be considered a practical guide for the seeker in achieving spiritual perfection.

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