

Volume 16. December 2015
Transcendent Philosophy
An International Journal for
Comparative Philosophy
and Mysticism

Editor

Seyed G. Safavi
SOAS, University of London, UK

Book Review Editor

Sajjad H. Rizvi
Exeter University, UK

Editorial Board

G. A'awani, Iranian Institute of Philosophy, Iran
A. Acikgenc, Fatih University, Turkey
M. Araki, Islamic Centre England, UK
S. Chan, SOAS University of London, UK
W. Chittick, State University of New York, USA
R. Davari, Tehran University, Iran
G. Dinani, Tehran University, Iran
P.S. Fosl, Transylvania University, USA
M. Khamenei, SIPRI, Iran
B. Kuspinar, McGill University, Canada
H. Landolt, McGill University, Canada
O. Leaman, University of Kentucky, USA
Y. Michot, Hartford Seminary,
Macdonald Center, USA
M. Mohaghegh-Damad, Beheshti University,
Iran
J. Morris, Boston College, USA
S.H. Nasr, The George Washington University,
USA
S. Pazouki, Iranian Institute of Philosophy, Iran
C. Turner, University of Durham, UK
H. Ziai, UCLA, USA

Assistant Editor:

Shahideh Safavi, University of London

Coordinator:

Seyed Sadreddin Safavi, University of London

Layout & Design

Mohamad A. Alavi, www.mediatics.net

Transcendent Philosophy Journal is an academic peer-reviewed journal published by the London Academy of Iranian Studies (LAIS) and aims to create a dialogue between Eastern, Western and Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism is published in December. Contributions to *Transcendent Philosophy* do not necessarily reflect the views of the editorial board or the London Academy of Iranian Studies.

Contributors are invited to submit papers on the following topics: Comparative studies on Islamic, Eastern and Western schools of Philosophy, Philosophical issues in history of Philosophy, Issues in contemporary Philosophy, Epistemology, Philosophy of mind and cognitive science, Philosophy of science (physics, mathematics, biology, psychology, etc), Logic and philosophical logic, Philosophy of language, Ethics and moral philosophy, Theology and philosophy of religion, Sufism and mysticism, Eschatology, Political Philosophy, Philosophy of Art and Metaphysics.

The mailing address of the *Transcendent Philosophy* is:

Dr S.G. Safavi
Journal of Transcendent Philosophy
121 Royal Langford
2 Greville Road
London NW6 5HT
UK
Tel: (+44) 020 7692 2491
Fax: (+44) 020 7209 4727
Email: philosophy@iranainstudies.org

Submissions should be sent to the Editor. Books for review and completed reviews should be sent to the Book Review Editor. All other communication should be directed to the coordinator.

Transcendent Philosophy is published in December. Annual subscription rates are: Institutions, £60.00; individuals, £30.00. Please add £6.00 for addresses outside the UK. The Journal is also accessible online at: www.iranianstudies.org.

© London Academy of Iranian Studies
ISSN 1471-3217

Articles

The Safavid order and the importance of Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili in Shi'a thought and modern history of Iran

Seyed G Safavi [7-22]

What is traditionalism?

Brian Welter [23-48]

The Modes of Perfection (*Kamāl*): The Concept of *al-Insān al-Kāmil* (the Perfect Human Being) in the Thoughts of Ibn 'Arabī and Kubrawī

Seyyed Shahabeddin Mesbahi [49-72]

Nietzsche's Transvaluation of Islam: Philosophical Orientalism and its Consequences

Dustin J Byrd [73-118]

Sufism: The Mystical Path of Islam

Mohammed Yamin [119-150]

Farabian Legacy Revisited: House Mentality versus Field Mentality

Seyed Javad Miri [151-162]

East vs. West, Orient vs. Occident: The Binary that Haunts *Orientalism* and the Clash of Civilizations

Daniel Martin Varisc [163-194]

***Deus Absconditus* in Islamic Mysticism**

Ebrahim Azadegan [195-212]

Ecstatic Language of Early Daoism: A Sufi Point of View

Esmaeil Radpour [213-230]

Zoroaster, His Life and Socio-Political Teachings

Farajollah Ali Ghanbari [231-268]

Weaknesses of Schools of Thought in Quantum Mechanics

Shaharir b.M.Z. (Shaharir bin Mohamad Zain)

[269-292]

An etiology analysis of women's clothing and Hijab during the Qajars era

Zeinab Eskandari [293-328]

Ecstatic Language of Early Daoism: A Sufi Point of View

Esmail Radpour
Department of Philosophy and Religion,
Banaras Hindu University, India.

Abstract

Various esoteric traditions apply different modes of expression for the same Metaphysical truths. We may name the two most known esoteric languages as ecstatic and scholastic. Early Daoist use of reverse symbolism as for metaphysical truths and its critical way of viewing formalist understanding of traditional teachings, common virtues and popular beliefs show that it applies an ecstatic language, which, being called *shatḥ* in Sufi terminology, has a detailed literature and technical description in Sufism. This article tries, after a short survey of the concept of *shatḥ* in Sufism, to consider some early Daoist teachings such as *wuwei*, disparagement of moralism, and disparagement of rationality from an Eastern Sufi point of view regarding *shatḥ* to achieve a clearer insight into the gnostic aspects of the tradition, and to avoid certain possible misunderstanding of the teachings.

Keywords: Shatḥ, Malāmma, Eastern Sufism, Early Daoism, Reverse analogy, Paradoxical statement

Introduction

The first encounter with Daoism creates a lot of wonders for those who are familiar with Sufism because of their substantial and formal resemblances. Most of the Eastern traditions share common metaphysical principles; above all, the concepts of Non-duality and Universal Man can be traced in all authentic traditions of the East. However, Sufism and Daoism, not only in essence, but also in form and application, have many similarities; as though, from a Sufi point of view, Daoism can be regarded as Sufism in a Chinese form; likewise, Sufism is Daoism with an Islamic cover.¹ Their formal similarity mostly refers to their application of the same esoteric 'language of ecstasy'.

In a comparative study of religion, one can easily differentiate between two expressive modes of esoterism either in the same or different traditions. Here, we name one as scholastic language and the other as ecstatic language. Each one of them has a specific usage of symbolism, theoretical viewpoints, and practical application. The esoteric traditions employing a scholastic language often use a confirmatory symbolism in which symbols are in direct conformity with the referent, while ecstatic language demands a reverse symbolism in which symbols have a deviated form from the principal objects. However, it is very important to note that differentiating between intellectuality and sentimentality, which can be envisaged as a vertical aspect of categorizing modes of expression, has nothing to do with the mentioned terms of the aspect which can hardly be envisaged vertically. Moreover, esoteric teachings, as those with which we are concerned here, are, by their very nature, intellectual.

Eastern Sufism, as an excellent representative of the ecstatic language of esoterism, has an extensive doctrine for its ecstatic modes of expression, commonly called '*shath*'. As we do not intend to involve with the scholastic language of esoterism here,

we limit ourselves to survey only Early Daoist language of teachings from an Eastern Sufi point of view.

Sufi Doctrine of the Ecstatic Language

Sufism has appeared in various forms in the Islamic history. At least we can name two main points of view in this tradition as *Wahdat al-Wujūd* (the unity of Existence) and *Wahdat ash-Shuhūd* (the unity of Witness). The latter historically has priority on the former and after the emergence of the Sufi school of *Wahdat al-Wujūd* in Western regions, the school of *Wahdat ash-Shuhūd* has played its role mostly in the Eastern regions of the Islamic world, including Iran and India. It is this school which, in a sense, has established its mode of expression on the base of *shaṭḥ*.² *Shaṭḥ*, for Sufis, is the expression of the hidden mysteries, in accordance to exact terms of knowledge, through the intellect as the eye of the soul, on the tongue of the wondered reason in ‘reverse words’.³ “I am the Truth” (Hallāj), “Pure I am, how exalted is my state” (Bāyazīd) are the most famous sayings regarded as *shaṭḥ*. Behind the claiming form of these words, the ecstatic spokesmen indicate a truth contrary to what may be understood from its external form.⁴ *Shaṭḥiāt* (pl. form of *shaṭḥ*) are included in Sufi literature as the collections of short statements. The masterpiece of these collections is the work of Rūzbihān Baqli, named “*Sharh-i Shaṭḥiāt*” (*Interpretation of shaṭḥs*).⁵ At the outset of his book, Rūzbihān describes the meaning of *shaṭḥ*:

When something moves people call it ‘*yashṭahu*’ in Arabic [from *sha-ṭa-ḥa*, the same root from which *shaṭḥ* is derived]. *Shaṭḥ* means movement.... Then in the vocabulary of the Sufis, *shaṭḥ* is derived from the agitations of the intimate consciences of their hearts. When ecstasy becomes strong and the light of manifestation becomes elevated in the inmost part of their consciences, by the quality of the annunciation and revelation and strengthening of the spirits illuminated by the inspiration that appears in their intellects, it stirs up the fire of their longing for

the eternal Beloved. They reach the vision of the seraglio-curtain of Majesty, and they are moving in the hidden, and the secrets of the hidden of the hidden, and the mysteries of greatness—intoxication enters in upon them unasked, the soul enters into ebullience, the consciousness enters into commotion, the tongue enters into speech. Speech comes forth from the ecstatic, from his incandescent state (*hāl*) and from his spirit's exaltation, regarding the science of the stations (*maqāmāt*). The outward form of it is paradoxical (*mutashābih*). It is an expression the words of which are found to be strange. When others do not understand the inner aspect through the outward forms, and they do not see the method of it, they are led astray to denial and refutation of the speaker.⁶

In ecstatic modes of expression, gnostics moan about the shortage of language before the greater consciousness, hence, to them, it is inevitable to use symbolical language and reverse analogy, the best-known form of which is called *shaṭḥ*.⁷

Beside the metaphysical implications of the concept of *shaṭḥ*, it is a social reaction against religious formalism of Muslim jurists (*fuqahā*) and pious hypocrisy of Muslim hermits (*Zuhhād*). From this point of view, it can more closely be related to the concept of *malāma* (lit. blame) which can be regarded as the behavioral form of *shaṭḥ*.⁸ Compared to *shaṭḥ*, a Sufi *malāmatī* (one who readily seeks after being blamed) commonly pretends to be an unorthodox Muslim standing against the restriction of jurists in concerning merely the external surface of the Islamic teachings.

Ecstatic Mode of Expression in Early Daoist Sources

Similar to Sufi *shaṭḥ*, both as a way of expression of the metaphysical principles and as a disagreement with formalism, Early Daoism, through an esoteric interpretation of the primordial Chinese tradition, socially made a reaction against exteriorized morals of that time – when Confucianism tried its best to keep the ancient forms alive. In what follows, we will see how considering

the early Daoist ecstatic language as *shatḥ* can help us to have a better understanding of the teaching and to explain *raison d'être* of such methods of expression.

From a Sufi point of view, the *Daodejing* 道德經, being a collection of *shatḥiāt*, is an esoteric text which, on the one hand, is to be differentiated from the exoteric outlooks, and on the other, is to express metaphysical realities by the language of symbols and inverse analogy. Daoist *shatḥiāt* are descended from the realm of the 'greater knowledge': "The greater knowledge is wide and the lesser knowledge is narrow; the greater speech is short and the lesser speech is verbose."⁹ The greater knowledge, first of all, is the knowledge of the Principle (the Dao) and it begins with not-knowing as "the Yellow Emperor said, 'you can get to know the Dao without thinking or contemplating. You can comply with the Dao without going in any direction or taking any approach' ... 'You and I are far from the Dao since we know what to do'" (*Zhuangzi*, Ch. 22). Knowing without knowing, doing without doing, being without being are paradoxical expressions (*mutashābihāt*) inherent everywhere in Sufi *shatḥiāt* for which a rich science of interpretation (*ta'wīl*) is established.¹⁰

Action and Non-Action

One of the most important Daoist doctrines is *wuwei* 無為 (non-action) which, according to the *Laozi*, is an attribute of the Dao itself,¹¹ and hence that of the Daoist gnostic (*shengren* 聖人) who beyond his individuality has achieved the Dao (*dedao* 得道). Of course, *wuwei* is something more than being in a state of contemplation; in fact, it is, before everything else, a metaphysical state transcendent to action and non-action. Realizing the Dao's attributes, which can be expressed principally in negative forms, the 'transcendent man' (*shenren* 神人) acts like the Dao. Attaining *wuwei*, "the transcendent man with all his integrity can lead everything under Heaven into the One. When the people expect him to rule over the world, how can he busy himself in doing

anything about it. Nothing can harm the transcendent man. He will neither be drowned in a great flood that rises to the sky¹² nor feel the heat in a drought that melts the metal and the rocks and scorches the earth and the hills.”¹³

From a Sufi point of view, we may say, there is a spirit of *malāmma* in the notion of *wuwei*. What should one do for being righteous, learning arts, increasing knowledge, or even for reconciling the chaos of the world? While Confucians, as might be expected, dedicate themselves to find some answers, a Daoist says, “in the pursuit of learning, one increases each day. In the practice of the Dao, one decreases each day. Decreasing and again decreasing, one eventually arrives at *wuwei*. Through non-action, nothing is left undone. Do not amuse yourself with what are under heaven. If you are amused to what are under heaven, it is not you who is proper to govern what are under heaven.”¹⁴ “Therefore, the [Daoist] gnostic abides in a condition of non-action, practicing a teaching that does not require words.”¹⁵

Around the center where the gnostic is placed, the wheel of actions works. The center does not interfere into the working of the wheel but all actions emerge from it. Therefore, “thirty spokes unite around the hub of wheel; using the non-being of this center arises the utility of the wheel.”¹⁶ Taking the idea of *shatḥ* into consideration, one can find a connection between the reverse symbols of the *Laozi*, such as, the “hub of wheel” (*gu* 轂), “non-being” (*wu* 無), “emptiness” (*chong* 沖, *xu* 虛), “softness” (*rou* 柔), “childhood” (*hai* 孩, *er* 兒), “uncarved block” (*pu* 樸), “feminine” (*ci* 雌, *pin* 牝), and so on. In symbolism of these Daoist *shatḥiāt*, we notice when something extraordinary is going to be said, an ordinary symbol is employed, and inverting exoterists of China who thorough erudite terminology want to differentiate themselves from ordinary people, Daoists not only present themselves as all the more ordinary and common but also they pretend to be worst of all people.¹⁷ While Confucians want to be well-educated, morally developed, and strong in upholding their tradition, Daoists

pursuit the way of becoming absolutely untaught like a child, completely simple like an uncarved block, and mysteriously flexible and soft like water: “Renounce learning and be free from sorrow.”¹⁸ “[Daoist] gnostics are all children.”¹⁹

Disparagement of Humaneness, Righteousness, and Rites

‘Humaneness’ (*ren* 仁), ‘righteousness’ (*yi* 義), and rituals (*li* 禮) are among the most important pre-Confucian virtues, and the idea is transmitted to Confucianism as constituents of the ‘five constant virtues’ (*wuchang* 五常). These concepts are in many ways disesteemed in early Daoist sources, especially because of their being transformed largely to mere conventional ethical covers in those times:

Let’s get rid of humaneness and discard righteousness, may the people return to filial piety and compassion.²⁰

While Confucianism deals with teaching the way of benevolence (*ren* 仁), Laozi says,

Heaven and Earth are not humane;
They regard the ten thousand beings as straw dogs.
The [Daoist] gnostic is not humane;
He regards the people as straw dogs.²¹

Heaven is the domain of the gods and it is the impersonal aspect of the ‘Celestial Godhead’ (*shangdi* 上帝), and Earth is its complementary principle. In old times, solely an emperor could offer sacrifice to Heaven and Earth. Purging humaneness from Heaven and Earth, as well as, the Daoist gnostic (who possess a high rank in the Daoist hierarchy of human development)²² is a *shath*, seemingly unorthodox, essentially referral to some metaphysical truths. According to Wangbi,²³ “Heaven and Earth consign things to *ziran* 自然,²⁴” that is, both leave ten thousand beings, whole of the formal manifestation, to their own selves, their innate nature, flowing spontaneously, and “neither engages in

an effort.” “Heaven and Earth do not make the grass grow for the sake of beasts, yet beasts [following *ziran*] eat grass.” And so does the gnostic, whose *de* 德 (rectitude, power, virtue, stamina) is one with that of Heaven and Earth.²⁵ Any conscious effort is an interference in the natural order of the ten thousand beings, and correspondingly, against *ziran*, but the effortless effort is an effort in conformity with the actionless activity of Heaven and Earth or with that of the Dao and *de*.²⁶

When the *Dao* 道 (the Truth, Principle) is lost, there will be *de* 德 (‘uprightness,’ specification of the *Dao*); when *de* is lost there will be humaneness; when humaneness is lost there will be righteousness; when righteousness is lost there will be rites.²⁷

To envisage the Daoist disparagement of moralism as *shatḥ*, is to be on guard against the moralist misunderstanding of this attitude: Daoism advocates to keep the innate nature intact and to flow in the natural courses of the Dao, far from advocating deprivation or wickedness through the refusal of moralism. A realized gnostic is compassionate; not everybody who is compassionate is a gnostic. The heartfelt compassion of a gnostic flows naturally from within, but a convened behavioral compassion does not make one a gnostic.

To carve the timber into vessels is the fault of an artisan; to destroy the *Dao* 道 and *de* 德 for the sake of humaneness and righteousness is the mistake of a sagely man.²⁸

Disparagement of Rationality

Another Daoist objection, expressed in a *malāmatī* tone, is against the formalist understanding of knowledge. Disparagement of rationality, however, had been always along with the praise of intellectuality. Before going any further on this point, we must take a look at the difference between rationality and intellectuality. This difference is of the same kind that one finds between *renxin*

人心 (human intelligence) and *daoxin* 道心 (*dao* intelligence) in the *Shujing*,²⁹ between *xin* 心 (the mind) and *bixin zhixin* 彼心之心 (another mind within the mind)³⁰ in the *Neiye*,³¹ between the outward knowledge which produces at best wiseness and the inward knowledge which brings on illumination according to the *Laozi*,³² between the subject of the greater and lesser knowledge in the *Zhuangzi*,³³ between *xin* 心 and *shen* 神 in the *Huainanzi*³⁴ and many later Daoist teachings. In short, the gradation of intelligence into the reason and the intellect had never been unknown in early Daoism. To describe the gradation of intelligence in the language of Islamic philosophy, either the human reason is material (*al-'aql al-hayūlani*), being passive and individual, in the case of most of the people who solely receive external perceptions and collect information, or at best it is actualized (*al-'aql bil-fi'l*), being active and individual, in the case of the people who have begun to think and analyzing the collected information from outside alone. When the reason is subdued, it reflects what is illumined in the acquired intellect (*al-'aql al-mustafād*), being passive and supra-individual, which in turn receives its objects from the Universal Intellect (*al-'aql al-fa'āl*), being active and supra-individual, as the source of all true knowledge.

Now, due to its exteriorizing character and being in the bondage of the transformation of the ten thousand beings, *xin*, refers to the reason in its lowest states, and its negative aspects are pointed when used in early Daoist sources. This state of intelligence, in the Buddhist teachings, and followingly in some later Daoist and Neo-Confucianist texts, is called the 'monkey of rationality' (*xinyuan* 心猿) and the 'horse of circumspection' (*yima* 意馬). According to the Daoist teachings, if the monkey does not become subdued and the horse tamed, they can harm the divine intellect (*shen* 神), in other words, the liberation of the *shen* and its returning to the emptiness (*xu* 虛) demands the silence of the mischievous reason (*wanxin* 頑心).

The [Daoist] gnostic is always a man without a mind—he takes the mind of the hundred clans [i.e. populace] as his mind.³⁵

All the others have a superabundance; I alone seem to have missed out. Oh, my simpleton's mind! So confused. Ordinary men are so bright; I alone am so dull. Ordinary men are so sharp; I alone am so stupid.³⁶

And so, the government of the [Daoist] gnostic: empty their mind, fill their bellies.³⁷

Here, the color of *shatḥ*, again, can be seen. To refer to the higher states of intelligence and wisdom, in accordance to reverse symbolism, the intelligence itself is opposed, using the terms such as *inconstant mind* (*wuchang xin* 無常心), dull (*hun* 昏), emptying the mind (*shuxin* 虛心), etc.

Regarding the Daoist disparagement of rationality as *shatḥ* helps us to avoid two common misunderstandings about this attitude. The first is the rationalist misunderstanding, to take non-rational states simply as irrational ones. As if Daoism has propounded the people's ignorance of their inner depths, their innate nature, and their stupidly only being passive to external accidental objects and their lack of discernment of the essential. The second is the sensationalist and sentimentalist misunderstanding, to take advantage of this attitude in favor of sentimentality, to interpret the tradition in a romanticistic manner, to escape, on a non-rational basis, from rational judgment, and to reduce the cause of all non-theological knowledge to sensible perceptions.³⁸

Conclusion

Early Daoism, as much as Confucianism, if not more, had been on the wisdom of the primordial Chinese tradition, but of course, in a quite different way. For Daoism, as the esoteric center of the Far East, the way of primal nature, which is placed inside all things, obviously has superiority on human conventional concepts like

humaneness, righteousness, etc. Avoidance from mundane knowledge and subduing the mischievous reason in order to let the intellect to shine wisdom and to let the soul gain *de* 德, uprightness, is much closer to the way of wisdom, as one of the five Confucian constant virtues, than seeking for accumulation of all these limitless and solely informatory knowledge in a limited lifespan. Therefore, Daoism employs a specific language that can give it the ability to denote both metaphysical principles, in a reverse mode of expression, and deficiency of formalist methods. Such a mode of expression is called *shath* in eastern Sufism. To look at the Daoist teachings from a Sufi point of view regarding principles of *shath*, helps one to achieve a better understanding of the teachings in many ways. Moreover, this approach prevents one from moralist, rationalist, and sentimentalist misinterpretations.

A lot more can be said about the Daoist ecstatic language and its relevance to the Sufi *shathīāt*. But we did not have the intention, here, to deal with all the Daoist implications of the ecstatic language. Nonetheless, further research is required to demonstrate all the causes of unfoldment of ecstatic modes of expression on the base of their essential principles.

Bibliography

English:

- Chittick, William C. *The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi*. Albany: Suny Press, 1983.
- Ernst, Carl. *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism*. New York: Suny Press. 1985.
- Guénon, René. *Initiation and Spiritual Realization*. first French ed. 1952. New York: Sophia Perennis, 2001.
- _____. *The Great Triad*. first French ed. 1946. New York: Sophia Perennis, 2001.
- _____. *Insights into Islamic Esoterism and Taoism*. first French ed. 1973. New York: Sophia Perennis, 2004 2nd ed.
- Hendrichske, Barbara (translator). *The Scripture on Great Peace: The Taiping Jing and the Beginnings of Daoism*. California: UC Press, 2006.

- Izutsu, Toshihiko. *Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts*. California: UC Press, 1984.
- Komjathy, Louis. *Handbooks for Daoist Practice: Book of Venerable Masters*. Hong Kong: The Yuen Yuen Institute, 2008.
- LaFargue, Michael. *The Tao of the Tao Te Ching: A Translation and Commentary*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992.
- Lynn, Rechar. *The Classic of the Way and Virtue: A New Translation of the Tao-Te-Ching of Laozi As Interpreted by Wang Bi*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
- Roth, Harold. *Original Tao: Inward Training and the foundations of Taoist Mysticism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
- Schipper, Kristofer; Verellen, Franciscus. *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Van Els, Paul. *The Wénzǐ: Creation and Manipulation of a Chinese Philosophical Text* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Leiden University, Leiden, 2006.
- Wang, Rongpi. *Zhuangzi*. Beijing: Hunan People's Publishing House, 1999.

Chinese:

- Bo Yuchan, *Haiqiong Bo Zhenren Yulu* 海瓊白真人語錄 (Zhang Jiyu, and Wang Ka, *Daoist Canon of China* 中華道藏 [Beijing: Huaxia Chubanshe 華夏出版社, 2004], vol. 19, pp. 545-576).
- *Huainanzi*, 淮南子 (Web: <http://ctext.org/huainanzi>).
- *Laozi Daode Jing*, 老子道德經 (Web: <http://ctext.org/dao-de-jing>).
- Liu Yiming, 劉一明, *Wuzhen Zhizhi* 悟真直指 (in *Daoshu Shi'er Zhong* 道書十二種 [Beijing : Shumu Wenxian Chubanshe 书目文献出版社, 1996], pp. 107-196)
- *Lunyu*, 論語 (Web: <http://ctext.org/analects>).
- *Neiye*, 內業 (Web: <http://ctext.org/guanzi/nei-ye>).
- *Shujing* 書經 [Classic of Historical Records], ed. by Kongzi 孔子 (Web: <http://ctext.org/shang-shu>).
- *Taipingjing* 太平經 (Web: <http://www.xiulian.com/xmzhf/035tpjhj.htm>).
- Wangbi, *Laozi Daodejing Wangbi Zhu* 老子道德經王弼注 (Web: <http://ctext.org/dao-de-zhen-jing-zhu>).
- *Wenzi*, 文子 (Web: <http://ctext.org/wenzi>).
- *Zhuangzi*, 莊子 (Web: <http://ctext.org/zhuangzi>).

Persian:

- Alikhani, Babak. *Barrasiye Latayef-e Erfani dar Nosus-e Atiq-e Avestayi* [A Survey of Gnostic Subtleties in Old Avestan Texts]. Tehran: Hermes Publication, 2000.
- Baqli, Ruzbihan. *Sharh-e Shaḥīat* [Interpretation of *Shaḥḥs*]. Corbin, Henry (editor). Tehran: Institute of Iranology of France, 1966.

Endnotes

¹ Ivan Aguéli (for the first time in 1911), René Guénon and Toshihiko Izutsu had tried to represent some essential correspondences between these two traditions. See René Guénon, *Insights into Islamic Esoterism and Taoism* (New York: Sophia Perennis, 2004); Toshihiko Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts* (California: UC Press, 1984).

² Among many great Sufis akin to the early eastern Sufism, one immediately reminds of Bayazid and Hallaj when the idea of *shaḥḥ* is under discussion. In medieval Sufism, great figures of *Wahdat ash-Shuhūd*, whose teachings are relevant to *shaḥḥiāt* and their interpretation, are Ahmad Qazali, Ayn al-Qudhāt Hamadāni, and Rūzbihān Baqli.

³ On the theoretical meaning of *shaḥḥ* and its history of development in Sufi writings, see the first part of Carl Ernst's brilliant work, *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism* (New York: Suny Press, 1985), pp. 9-24.

⁴ In this connection, it is not without interest to quote the great Daoist master of Song dynasty, Bo Yuchan's ecstatic sayings: "Dao and Heaven and Earth and I have the same essence, ten thousand beings and I have the same substance." (道天地與我同根，萬物與我同體。) (*Haiqiong Bo Zhenren Yulu*, iii.3) "It is I who am the Saint, the ten thousand beings become one with me ... I am Heaven and Earth, Heaven and Earth are I." (Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang* [Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004], vol. 2, p. 662)

⁵ *Sharh-e Shaḥḥiāt* is mainly a Persian version of *Mantiq al-Asrār fī Bayān al-Anwār*.

⁶ Rūzbihān Baqli, *Sharh-e Shaḥīyat* (Tehran: Institute of Iranology of France, 1966), pp. 56-7, based on the translation of Carl Ernst (*Words of Ecstasy in Sufism* [New York: Suny Press, 1985], p. 18).

⁷ There are, of course, other forms of ecstatic expression in Sufism, such as *tāmāt*, *da'wī*, *ramz*, *īmā*, *kināyat*, *ishārat*, etc.

⁸ The concept of *malāma* is mostly developed by an extinct order of Sufism in 9th century A.D. called *Malāmatiyya*, however, it is a widespread concept in later Sufism.

⁹ 大知閑閑，小知閒閒；大言炎炎，小言詹詹。(Zhuangzi, Ch. 2) “The greater words have lesser benefits, and the lesser words have greater benefits, but the benefit of greater words is eternal and that of the lesser words is temporary.” (上言者下用也，下言者上用也，上言者常用也，下言者權用也。) (Huainanzi, xiii.15 quoted from the *Lost History of Zhou* 逸周書)

¹⁰ From the very outset, the *Laozi* is concerned about paradoxical statements: “Dualities are one [in the state of *wuming* (namelessness)], they become manifested and separated in the state of *ming* (being named). Their sameness should secretly be told of, using secrets within secrets; the gate of all mysteries.” (此兩者同出而異名，同謂之玄。玄之又玄，衆妙之門。) (*Daode Jing*, Ch. 1)

¹¹ “Dao never does an action, yet there is no action undone by It” (道常無為而無不為) (*Daodejing*, Ch. 37). Aristotle’s ‘Unmoved Mover’ can be a proper means to understand this notion, insofar as both at least refer to the Principle, but, of course, not insofar as the former could in any way be considered as the ultimate state of realization.

¹² Hafiz Shīrazī, the great Persian Sufi poet says, “If waves of the ocean of misery reach heaven, the Sufi's clothes shall not be found wet.”

¹³ 之人也，之德也，將旁礴萬物，以為一世蕪乎亂，孰弊弊焉以天下為事！之人也，物莫之傷，大浸稽天而不溺，大旱、金石流、土山焦而不熱。(Zhuangzi, Ch. 1) Translation by Wang Rongpi (*Zhuangzi* [Beijing: Hunan People's Publishing House, 1999], pp. 9-11)

¹⁴ 為學日益，為道日損。損之又損，以至於無為。無為而無不為。取天下常以無事，及其有事，不足以取天下。(Daodejing, Ch. 48) English translation by Louis Komjathy (*Handbooks for Daoist Practice: Book of Venerable Masters* [Hong Kong: The Yuen Yuen Institute, 2008], p.71).

¹⁵ 是以聖人處無為之事，行不言之教 (Daodejing, Ch. 2; see also Ch. 43) English translation by Louis Komjathy (*Handbooks for Daoist Practice: Book of Venerable Masters*, p.56).

¹⁶ 三十輻，共一轂，當其無，有車之用。(Daodejing, Ch. 11)

¹⁷ “The elite, by the fact that the people is its extreme opposite, truly finds therein its most direct reflection (just as in all things the highest point is directly reflected not at any intermediate point but at the lowest point). Admittedly, it is an obscure and inverse reflection.” (René Guénon, *Initiation and Spiritual Realization* [New York: Sophia Perennis 2001a], p. 143). Let us note in passing that Persian Sufi literature has borrowed a large part of its symbols from the customs of the gamblers and drinkers.

¹⁸ 絕學無憂。(Daodejing, Ch. 20)

¹⁹ 聖人皆孩之。(Ibid, Ch. 49)

²⁰ 絕仁棄義，民復孝慈。(Ibid, Ch. 19)

²¹ 天地不仁，以萬物為芻狗；聖人不仁，以百姓為芻狗。(Ibid, Ch. 5) — “People bound grass together to make dogs and used them as sacrificial offerings, but when they have concluded the ritual, they cast them aside and trampled on them.” Rechar Lynn, *The Classic of the Way and Virtue: A New Translation of the Tao-Te-Ching of Laozi As Interpreted by Wang Bi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 61, cited from Wei Yuan, *Laozi benyi* [*Original meaning of the Laozi*], A:6).

²² For an early view of the Daoist hierarchy of human development, see *Wenzi* (Ch. VII, quoted from *Zhonghuangzi*); Paul Van Els, *The Wenzī: Creation and Manipulation of a Chinese Philosophical Text* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation) (Leiden University, Leiden, 2006); René Guénon, *The Great Triad* (New York: Sophia Perennis, 2001), and *Taipingjing* (Ch. LVI and LXI, for an English translation see Barbara Hendrischke, *The Scripture on Great Peace: The Taiping*

Jing and the Beginnings of Daoism (California: UC Press, 2006), pp. 207-210 and 268.

²³ Wangbi wrote the first commentary the *Laozi*. What he has done in interpretation of Laozi's teachings and authenticating them is, to a large extent, comparable to Ruzbihān Baqlī's exposition of *shāḥīāt* of *Hallāj* and other Sufis.

²⁴ *Ziran* would be quite clear to one who is familiar with Islamic tradition if one reminds *al-fītrah* (primal inner nature containing the true way of conduct, as explained so by Quran 30:30). *Ziran* 自然 can be translated as self-so, self-self, nature and so on.

²⁵ Wangbi, *Laozi Daodejing Wangbi Zhu*, Ch. 5.

²⁶ From a deeper point of view, in reality, no action can occur outside of *ziran* and the Dao, for, "the Dao fills the entire world. It is everywhere that people are, but people are unable to understand this." (道滿天下，普在民所，民不能知也) (*Neiye*, XIV) Based on the translation of Harold Roth (*Original Tao: Inward Training and the foundations of Taoist Mysticism*, [New York: Columbia University Press, 1999], p. 72)

²⁷ 失道而後德，失德而後仁，失仁而後義，失義而後禮。(Daodejing, Ch. 38)

²⁸ 夫殘樸以為器，工匠之罪也；毀道德以為仁義，聖人之過也。(Zhuangzi, Ch. 9) Based on the translation of Wang Rongpi (*Zhuangzi*, pp. 137-9).

²⁹ "Human intelligence is troublemaker, *dao* intelligence is concealed, essential, and one pointed; it gives one the ability to guard the Center." (人心惟危，道心惟微惟精惟一，允執厥中。)(*Shujing*, 1.3.13).

³⁰ Here, we use the word 'mind' not in its etymological sense, according to which it cannot be higher than the reason, but, in its common meaning in modern usage, as the set of perceptual faculties in common usage.

³¹ "[T]he calmness of the mind: when your mind is well ordered, your senses are calmed. What makes them well ordered is the mind; What makes them calm is the mind. By means of the mind you store the mind: Within the mind is yet another mind. That mind within the mind: it is an awareness that precedes the words." (心安，我心治，官乃治。我心安，官乃安。治之者心也，安之者心

也；心以藏心，心之中又有心焉。彼心之心，意以先言。） (*Neiye*, XIV) (English translation by Harold Roth [*The Original Tao*, p. 72]). — The term “‘*aql-e 'aql*” for the first time in Islamic tradition is ecstatically used by Ruzbihan Baqli (*Sharh-e Shaḥīyat*, p. 5 and 482). Afterwards, this concept became detailed in Rumi’s famous *Mathnavi*. — Rumi: “Intelligence is of two kinds: The first is acquired. You learn it like a boy at school. From books, teachers, reflection and rote, from concepts and from excellent and new sciences... The other, the intellect is a gift of God. Its fountainhead lies in the midst of the spirit.” Based on the translation of William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi* (Albany: Suny Press, 1983), p. 35.

³² *Daodejing*, Ch. 33.

³³ The greater knowledge is wide and comprehensive; the lesser knowledge is partial and restricted. The great speech is exact and complete; the small speech is (merely) so much talk. (大知閑閑，小知閒閒；大言炎炎，小言詹詹。) (*Zhuangzi*, Ch. 2).

³⁴ The intellect is the lake of wisdom; let it be refined to illumine the wisdom ... To see their reflection in a mirror, people do not look at a flooded water, but at a settled one, because of its stillness ... [Therefore, let the intellect be refined and the reason be at peace, to be able to project things as such.] Therefore, their usefulness will be in their non-usage. (神者智之淵也，淵清則明矣 ... 人莫鑒於流潦而鑒於止水，以其靜也 ... [故神清意平乃能形物之情，] 故用之者必假於不用也。) (*Huainanzi*, II.17) The sentence inside the square brackets [] is added in the *Wenzi* (III.7).

³⁵ 聖人無常心，以百姓心為心。 *Daodejing*, 49. Based on the translation of Michael LaFargue (*The Tao of the Tao Te Ching: A Translation and Commentary* [Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992], p. 130).

36 衆人皆有餘，而我獨若遺。我愚人之心也哉！沌沌兮，俗人昭昭，我獨若昏。俗人察察，我獨悶悶。 (*Daodejing*, 20) English translation by Michael LaFargue (*The Tao of the Tao Te Ching*, p. 28).

³⁷ 是以聖人之治，虛其心，實其腹。 (*Daodejing*, 3) Based on the translation of Michael LaFargue (*The Tao of the Tao Te Ching*, p. 172). — Liu Yiming comments: “‘emptying the intelligence’ denote ‘emptying the human intelligence’

and nourishing the ‘essential innate nature’ (*xing* 性). ‘filling the bellies’ denote ‘filling the dao intelligence’ and nourishing the ‘substantial innate nature’ (*ming* 命).” (Liu Yiming, *Wuzhen Zhizhi* 悟真直指 [*Straight Direction to Realization of the Truth*], II.9 in *Daoshu Shi'er Zhong* [Beijing: Shumu Wenxian Chubanshe, 1996], p. 137).

³⁸ See Frithjof Schuon, *Sufism: Veil and Quintessence* (IN, Bloomington: World Wisdom, 2006), pp. 90-92.