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**SOME SUFI SPECULATIONS ON SOME  
ESCHATOLOGICAL VERSES OF THE QUR'AN**

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Ever since the dawn of history, eschatological ideas have been always a fascinating and puzzling integral part of Man's legacy.

These ideas derive from Man's intellect and intuitive perception of another world, full of wonders and marvels and embody in a special way Man's recurring aspiration towards immortality.

It is through the revealed religions that this aspiration has found a stable and secure expression.

Islam has participated in the enrichment of this field in a very special way. The Qur'an, Islam's Holy Book, presents belief in the Last Day as one of the five major components of the Islamic creed :

( ولكن البر من آمن بالله واليوم الآخر والملائكة والكتاب والنبیین . . .

Righteous is he who believes in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the scripture and the prophets..).

QUR., II, 177.

As for the events of the Last Day, they are elaborated in many other Qur'anic verses in such detail and with such literary brilliance that it is easy to establish the enormous contribution of the Qur'an in the field.

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The main purpose of the Qur'an in doing this is to initiate an enthusiastic desire for the next life through God's promise and threat وعد الله ووعيده. Once this is established, sound and moral behaviour in this world will certainly follow.

Muslims, for their part, followed the example of the Qur'an, and so numerous exegetes, men of letters, philosophers, theologians and mystics have each, in their own way, contributed to the clarification and elaboration of the eschatological verses of the Qur'an.

This paper is intended to point out only some Sufi contributions to this field.

A bird's eye view of the Sufi currents in relation to our subject will allow us to classify them into three main currents :

1. The orthodox current.
2. The ecstatic current.
3. The theosophical, philosophical and rational currents.

The orthodox current deals with moderate Sunni Sufis such as Mohasibi, Ghazali and their schools. Systematically, they do not differ much from orthodox non-Sufi ideas and personalities. So there is no urgent need to deal with them at the moment, especially as they have been studied by some contemporary scholars (1).

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1. C.F. Massignon, *Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane* ; Textes Hallâgiens, p. 244 where he dealt with Mohasibi's 2 books : *Kitâb al ba'th wa'l noshoûr* + *kitâb al Tawahhom*. C.F. also Dr. Abdel Halim Mahmoud : *Al-Mohâsibî, un mystique musulman religieux et moraliste*, p. 45, ed. Paris, 1940, notice his interesting discussion on the authenticity of the book : *al-ba'th wa'l noshoûr*, and chap. VI entitled *l'eschatologie chez mohâsibi*, pp. 122-127.

C. F. also : Smith, Margaret, *An early mystic of Baghdad*, p. 47-8, London, 1977.

As for Ghazali, his sources are so numerous and too many to be particularized. C.F. Abdel Rahman Badewi : *Al-Ghazali's Works*, Cairo 1961, arabic version.

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The theosophical, philosophical current deals with the Sufi systems of such personalities as Ibn Arabi and his school, with the exception, more or less, of al-Djili.

Although this third current is as important as the ecstatic current, I shall, however, in this paper, limit myself to dealing only with the second current in so far as the Qur'anic eschatological verses are concerned.

Rabi'a al-Adawiyya (+ 185 H.) is considered by many scholars of Sufism as the first real Sufi in Islam. So it is fitting that I should begin my discussion with her.

Abdel Ra'uf al-Minawi (+ 1013 H.) a distinguished biographer of Sufi personalities, narrates the following incident :

Rabi'a heard someone reciting : «Lo ! Those who dwell in paradise this day are happily employed.» Rabi'a commented on this recitation by saying : «Poor are the people of Paradise. They and their wives are pre-occupied» (2).

In order to have a comprehensive understanding of Rabi'a's response we need to refer to the related verses which depict the Qur'anic eschatological panorama. The following selections provide us with some insight : «and the trumpet is blown and lo ! from the graves they hasten unto their Lord, crying : /Woe upon us ! Who hath raised us from our place of sleep ? / This is that which the Beneficent did promise and the messengers spoke the truth. It is but one shout, and behold them brought together before us ! This day no soul is wronged in aught ; nor are ye requited aught save what ye used to do. Lo ! Those who merit Paradise this day are happily employed. They and their wives, in pleasant shade on thrones reclining. Theirs the fruit (of their good deeds) and theirs (all) that they ask. The word from a Merciful Lord (for them) is : Peace ». (3)

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2. Abdel Raouf al-Minawi (+ 1031 H.), *Tabaqat al-awliya'*, Ms. Damascus, No. 4164, Fol. 105 vers. 105 ver. C.F. also, Abdel Rahman Badawi : *Rabi'a al-adawiyya*, p. 84, p. 84, ed. Cairo, 1962, and also *Ibid* : *Shatahat al Sufiyya*, p. 27, ed. Kuwait 1976.

3. Qur. XXXVI, 50-57.

These verses, however do not themselves give us a sufficient clue for deciphering correctly the real meaning of Rabi'a's comment. Dr. Abdel Rahman Badawi took the liberty to interpret her phrase. He forcefully presented the argument that for Rabi'a the phrase «happily employed» meant, «deflowering virgins». This interpretation was in accordance with that of many exegetes. Dr. Badawi concluded that such a lusty and sensuous meaning created in Rabi'a's consciousness, accustomed to the idea of a spiritual Paradise, a sense of repugnance and sickness. Thus she made her comment. Although Dr. Badawi justified Rabi'a's behaviour, yet he attacked her on the grounds that she criticized what he termed «the sensual or sensuous descriptions included in the Qur'an, in particular, and in a more general sense, the sensual and sensuous aspects of Islam». (4) Badawi states, «Doing such a thing constitutes an unprecedented and very grave degree of daring and audacity which previously never occurred during the period of the Prophet or the Caliphs as well as the Umayyads». He sums up his point of view by stating that Rabi'a could be considered the first person to deal with a criticism of the Qur'an and Islam, especially the sensual and sensuous descriptions in the Qur'an related to Paradise. She could have been influenced by the Zanadqa Movement current at the time, in a way that the state was obliged to attack severely.

Lastly Badawi states that «the purpose of Rabi'a's criticism is neither abuse nor destruction but rather it is a sublimation of the religious life and the meanings of the Qur'an and Islam to the highest possible standard of spiritualism ... » (5).

At the end of Badawi's hypothesis, He expresses his inability to decipher the real purpose of Rabi'a's statement : «The shortness of her statement will not allow us to reveal her purpose : was it a criticism against the exegetes' interpretation of the Qur'an ? If so, then the statement was intended as a mockery ; or was it a criticism of the Qur'an itself ? ... » Badawi goes on to say, «The latter hypothesis is more probable in view of the circumstances in which the statement was made, that is upon hearing a man reciting

4. Badawi, Rabi'a, p. 84-5.

5. Ibid, op. cit., op. cit., p. 86.

the verse. She was not facing an exeget, but merely a reciter of the Qur'an » (6).

I am sorry to quote Dr. Badawi's opinion in detail, but the reasons for that are three fold :

- 1) Dr. Badawi is reputed to be a brilliant and prolific scholar.
- 2) He is a Muslim and an Arab by birth.

Both reasons would ensure that his opinions, especially on Islamic and Arabic subjects, would be almost taken for granted, no matter what misinterpretations they might contain.

3) I want to point out the wrong ideas he defended and the unscientific method he applied to Rabi'a's case, so that a more objective and scientific analysis can be put forward.

Could Rabi'a be criticising the exegetists' interpretation of that Qur'anic verse ?

The interpretation of « happily employed » to mean « deflowering of virgins » was never unanimously agreed upon by exegetists. In fact some exegetists even neglected to mention it (7). But one thing is certain, all the exegetists who rendered that sensual interpretation of the verse, mentioned at the same time six or seven various interpretations (8). If such is the case, why would Rabi'a choose one particular interpretation in preference of the others ? I do not think that she did so, nor do I think that she was criticising the Qur'an because if she did, why would she hide behind such a vague and ambiguous statement ? The stories about the Zanadiqa port:

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6. Op. cit., p. 87

7. C. F. Baidawi Tafsir, p. 586, ed. Cairo 1305 H. ;

8. C. F. for example : Tabari, vol. 22., p. 12-13, ed. Cairo 1329 H. ; Qurtubi, vol. 15., pp. 43-44, ed. Cairo 1946 ; Abul-Saud, vol. 4., pp. 510-11; Ibn Kathir, vol. 3., p. 575, ed. Syria 1980; Alusi, vol. 23., p. 32, ed. Cairo (n. d.); Sayuti and Galali, p. 520, ed. Cairo (n. d.).

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ray them all as outspoken and audacious. If Rabi'a was one of them, why should she be an exception, particularly in the matter of this Qur'anic verse ?

Dr. Badawi misunderstood Rabi'a and so he jumped to a very biased and conjectural conclusion. Also, by accusing her of being influenced by the Zanadiqa Movement, Dr. Badawi was certainly misguided in following the conclusions drawn by the late Prof. Massignon on this very subject (9).

In my opinion Rabi'a was criticising neither the exegetists nor the Qur'an. In fact she was not criticising anyone or anything at all. She was simply uttering a statement, or rather, she was giving an impressional, ecstatic and auditional exclamation.

At this point I would like to somewhat elaborate on the phenomenon of ecstasy as a resultant state of audition, in order to make my analysis clearer.

Ecstasy is a very much desired psychological phenomenon of most Sufis because it is a sign of God's bliss and contentment. But divine ecstasy is so rare and so «delicious» that Sufis would not hesitate to take any risk to enjoy such an experience. The next logical step is the artificial process of initiating ecstasy. This can be achieved through various means, foremost «Sama'» or audition. «Sama'» basically means to hear something. However, for Sufis Sama' is a complex phenomenon which is produced by such sound stimuli as poetry, prose, and music on the one hand, and impressional reactions on the other. The resultant state of ecstasy is assured for the Sufi. But for the spiritual supervisors, ourselves and the scholastic observers, it still has one more function inseparable from the former one : it helps to reveal and manifest the dominant state and the central idea obsessing the Sufi's heart. Let me give you one concrete example given by Sarag al-Tusi and Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali : «... a

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9 C. F. la Passion de Hallag, vol. 1., p. 431-33, nouvelle édition, Gallimard 1975, where M. Massignon goes through the details concerning what he considered as «Zanadiqa of Sufies» i.e. heresies, and he mentioned : Hasan al-Basri, zul-Nun al-Misri and Hallag, but he did not mention Rabi'a.

hawker was selling a herb called thyme. Wandering the streets he called out : « O » wild-thyme ! يا سعترا برى !

Abu Helman, a Sufi, upon hearing the hawker's call was overwhelmed and fainted. On regaining his senses, he was asked about the reason for his reaction. He replied, « I heard him saying : « move ! in order to see my benevolence » (10). اسع تری برى !

Al-Sarrag al-Tusi, made the following comment : « (Sama) audition, is in response to that which is innate in the heart, in terms of its pre-occupation, time, mood and presence. Don't you see that when the voice of the hawker reached Abu Helman, he responded to it according to his mood and pre-occupation» (11).

Ibn Rajab gives a slightly modified but significant version : « The same call « O' wild thyme ! » reached another Sufi who also reacted in a similar way ». When asked the reason why, he said, « Because I heard the words 'at once, you shall see my benevolence'. (12) الساعة تری برى !

Ibn Rajab's comment on both these Sufis is most interesting. (I quote) « While the former was in the station مقام of toil (12) the latter was in the state of vision حال المشاهدة مجاهدة

Ibn Rajab's analytical comment is most precise and fitting in this context, because the station of toil مقام المجاهدة entails movement and seeking, in which case the elicited response, « move in order to see my benevolence » اسع تری برى ! is most expressive and suitable. On the other hand the state of vision entails looking at, expecting and watching. Thus : « At once you shall see my benevolence ! الساعة تری برى ! is a very appropriate expression ». Sama is in a Way, a sort of intoxication or rather a

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10. Luma', p. 362, ed. Cairo 1960; C.F. also Ibn Rajab's Tract, Föl. 9 rec. Ms. Cairo, DK. No. 21613. C.F. also Qushairi tract, p. 326-27.

11. op. cit., loc. cit.

12. Op. cit., loc. cit. Notice the pun in the phrase اسع تری برى ! and الساعة تری برى !

hypnosis, the Sufi is intoxicated, hypnotized by audition, so he is given to ecstasy and the subconscious, or rather the innermost, is « afloat ».

So much for the ordinary Sama' through poetry or prose. Now I shall briefly deal with Sama' through the recitation of the Qur'an. Sarrag comments on Sama' through the recitation of the Qur'an by stating : « it needs a presence of heart, contemplation, meditation and remembrance ». The candidate's ability to listen to the Qur'an is in accordance to the dominant obsessive mood of his heart. But if he has no spiritual state at all, nor has his heart any ecstatic appeal to audition of the Qur'an in a harmonious way, which entails movement, then his likeness would be : « as the likeness of one who calleth unto that which heareth naught except a shout and a cry. Deaf, dumb, blind, therefore they have no sense perception. » (13)

To give an example of the great impact that audition of the Qur'an has on a Sufi, I quote Mulla Jami : « Al Fadil b. 'ayad (+ 187 H.) had a son called Ali who excelled himself in asceticism, piety and worship ». Upon hearing a man reciting at the well of Zamzam ; « thou wilt see the guilty on that day linked together in chains » he cried out and fell dead. (14) Jami, commenting on this incident, states : « The lover makes a signal, whereas the gnostic pays with his life ».

»(14) « من المحب إشارة ، ومن العارف بذل الروح »

Jami's comment cannot be considered as a final solution and interpretation for the problems of ecstasy and audition, and I think it is too early to reach such a criterion, if there is one at all. It is interesting to notice, however, that Jami's comment can be applied with validity to our case of Rabi'a al-adawiyya. Her statement is a mere signal of what is obsessing her innermost and subconscious. What could there be in the innermost of an avowed lover such as

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13. op. cit. p. 355 and C.F. Qur'an 11, 171, also Qushairi tract, p. 360.

14. Mulla Abdel Rahman al-jami' (+ 898 H.), Nafahatu L-uns. arabic version by Zakariyya al Qorshi, Ms. DK. No. 9795, Fol. 23 rec. C. F. Qur.XIV, 49; C. F. also Qushairi, p. 361.

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Rabi'a ? One aspect of her can be shown through the following lines of her poem :

« Two ways I love thee : selfishly, and next, as worthy is of thee. (Tis selfish love that I do naught; Save think on thee with every thought ;  
(Tis purest love when thou dost raise the veil to my adoring gaze. Not mine the praise in that or this, thine is the praise in both, I wis ». (15)

Another aspect of Rabi'a is clearly illustrated by the following story. She was also asked : « Do you love God Almighty ? »

« Yes. » « Do you hate the Devil ? » « My love of God », she replied, « leaves me no leisure to hate the Devil ». « I saw the Prophet in a dream ». He said : « O Rabi'a do you love me ? » I said : « O Apostle of God, who does not love thee ? - but love of God, hath so absorbed me that neither love nor hatred of any other thing remains in my heart ... » (15)

Rabi'a, in short, was absorbed in Divine Love through the intoxication and hypnotic effect of Sama'. All hidden and subconscious elements would rush to the surface, whether positively or negatively.

Now, to return to the core of our discussion. When Rabi'a, upon hearing the aforementioned Qur'anic verse, showed pity for the people of Paradise. She was, in fact, revealing, unconsciously and negatively, the obsessing subject of her innermost : Divine Love. And if Rabi'a is told to denounce the pre-occupation and business of husbands and wives in Paradise for their sensual and pursuits, this is not because she wanted to criticize either the exegetists or the Qur'an, as we have shown before.

It seems also that Rabi'a was obeying and observing the moral code of the subi cononical sama' which is unanimously accepted by all Sufis and in al-Djili's phraseology :

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15. Nicholson, R.A., a literary history of the arabs, p. 234, Cambridge 1962.

« The hearer should not hear but through God or through his prophet (s.a.s.) or that which is related to his path to Almighty God. He should not confine (himself) to the external meaning of words, rather he should pass to their internal meaning, unless the words were definite. A « faqir » (one in need of spiritual enrichment) should not affect interpretation, rather he should direct his innermost towards Almighty God, and accept with all his being whatsoever he decrees. He should not hear through many of the corporal things relating to this world or the other world to come, such as the « fair ones » الجور , and the palaces التصور for all these are due to the soul's lusty desire and sensual excessiveness, whereas the path of men is otherwise. (16)

Such is the moral code of the Sufis in relation to Sama'.

In conclusion, Rabi'a was attacking neither the Qur'an nor the exegetists ; but she was reacting in a mystical way to the Sama' of the Qur'anic verse, and she was obeying and observing its moral code as well.

It is still more interesting to note how al-Hallag (+ 309 H.) dealt with the same Qur'anic verse with which Rabi'a dealt. Al-Hallag's comment was rendered by Solami (+ 412 H.) in the following way : « . . . the Almighty Truth has interrupted the enjoyment of the people in Paradise, through His manifestation, because he made them pass away ~~from paradise~~ <sup>افناهم</sup> from paradise through his manifestation, for fear that their enjoyment might continue and they would be bored. Thus their return to themselves, after the Almighty Truth's Manifestation to them would enable them to regain their enjoyment, whereas the Almighty Truth is not to be enjoyed (17).

It is clear that Hallag's text contains three major elements : God's Manifestation, the act of interruption and the enjoyment of the people in Paradise. These three elements at first glance, seem to be in contradiction with each other, but in fact, they are harmonious, because each has a definite and limited function which would not overlap with the other. We can notice also that whereas Rabi'a

16. Ghonyat Arbab Al-Sama', Fol. 76 ver., Ms. DK. No. 360 Tasawuf.

17. C. F. Masignon, Essai, p. 393, No. 136, ed. Paris 1954.

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satisfied herself with concentrating on the people of Paradise, Hallag added the Divine Element with His Manifestation, side by side with Rabi'a's element. Yet, both of them never attacked the Qur'an, nor the exegetists, nor can she (or he) be following in the footsteps of any Zindiq (heretic). Both practised a personal experience, and each recited in his own way, in accordance with his mood, temper and his (or her) innermost.

But Hallag has other aspects in his personality which appears in many texts, some of which are rendered by Solami in his « tafsir ». It reads :

« When he was escorted to the execution, he was heard reciting the following Qur'anic eschatological verse : 'those who believe not therein seek to hasten to it, while those who believe are fearful of it and know that it is the Truth ....' and he uttered no other word until he was excuted ». (18)

To better understand al-Hallag we should mention the contextual verses which read :

« Allah it is who hath revealed the Scripture with Truth, and the Balance. How canst they know ? it may be that the hour is nigh. Those who believe ... the Truth ... Are not they who dispute, in doubt concerning the Hour, far astray ? » (19)

It is curious to notice here that al-Hallag is reversing the mechanism of audition : He recites Qur'anic verses to fit in with the dramatic situation that confronts him and which give him courage to face such a situation, In doing this, Hallag seems not only a sincere, pious Muslim but also a normal human being and he reacts in the

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18. Ibid, op. cit., p. 395-6, Text No 148

19 Qur., XLII, 17-18.

same way any human-being would : quoting one's Holy Scripture to calm down and soothe one's nerves and fears. Now that we have dealt with the last part of the text we shall now concern ourselves with the first part of the text. The first part of the text provides us with another aspect of Hallag's innermost, which is purely ecstatic, auditional and raptured, though it is still in the reverse form to ordinary Sama'. Solami narrated that : «When it was morning, and he was led out to be executed, he rose and said : «It is sufficient for someone in ecstasy to be individualized by the One.» Then he went out to meet the executioner, swaggering in shakles and uttered the following lines of poetry : « My pot companion is not attributed to injustice. He gave me to drink, the same as he drank ; just as a host would to his guest. When The cup was circulated, he called for the skin rug and the sword.» Such is the case with one who drank wine in the company of a dragon in summer ... » (20)

The literal meaning of these lines of poetry is horrible ; the least they can amount to is a sense of blame and rebuke and a sense of treachery, dishonesty and savagery. (81)

But such a literal method will bring us back again to the point from which this paper started; and we judged this as an invalid method.

Hallag, at the beginning of his long statement, was passing through ecstasy; in the face of an impending execution. As a result of this, Hallag was absorbed in agonizing ecstasy and burst into ecstatic expression.

However, to finish his statement with the recitation of the Qur'anic verse of «The Hour», means that he came back to his senses and began to react normally. It is also very significant for «The Hour» verse, adds to the bitterness and gloominess of the preceding lines of poetry. It reflects a simple man's cry for help, where no help can be given.

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20. C.F. Massignon, op. cit., loc. cit., and also : Akhbar al-Hallag, Texts No. 16, 17, pp. 34-36, french translation on p. 70-71, C.F. Solami, Tafsir XLII, 17.

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We still have other Hallagean statements on some other Qur'anic eschatological verses, most of which are theosophically and philosophically stamped; for such reasons we shall not deal with this third current found in Hallag's statements, but strictly limit ourselves to the second current (ecstatic) (21).

The next personality that I shall deal with in this paper is Bayazid of Bistam (+ 261 or 234 H.). Bayazid heard a man reciting the following verse : « On the day when we shall gather the righteous unto the Beneficent, a goodly company ». (22) Bayazid wept profusely, tears fell on the pulpit even blood gushed out of his eyes, and he cried out : (in additional ecstasy) : « How come ! He who is His associate is gathered unto Him ? » (23) In another version he said : « Whosoever is with Him, he is in no need of being gathered (unto Him) because he is His perpetual associate ! » (24)

Dr. Badawi, once more, considers that Bayazid follows the footsteps of Rabi'a. The resemblance between them is very clear, even the way of interpreting some Qur'anic verses and denouncing their external meaning. He denounces here the gathering of the Righteous, because it indicates a corporal gathering on a known day, the spirits of the Righteous are rather enjoying the Divine Presence forever, they are the Truth's perpetual associates. So, how can it be said that they will be gathered unto the Beneficent as a group one day ! (25)

Dr. Badawi's analysis shows lack of understanding of Muslim Sufis. I am of the opinion that it was a very ordinary ecstatic and auditory reaction.

Ibn Arabi's criticism of Bayazid's comment is most revealing. Ibn Arabi considers it wrong to bring together the Righteous المتقين

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21. C. F. Massignon, *Essai*, p. 409, *Tex.* 194, and also p. 415, 418.
  22. Qur. XIX, 85.
  23. Ibn. Arabi, *Futuhāt*, vol. III, p. 2977, Cairo 1974.
  24. Abu No'aym al-asfahani : *Hilyatu al-Awliya'*, vol. 10., p. 41. ed. Cairo 1351 H.
  25. Badawi, *Shatahat*, p. 34-35.

(Literary : The protected) unto the Beneficent, because that divine name is in harmony with gentleness, and forgiveness from whom no one needs protection. Therefore the Righteous (or the protected) are apt to be gathered unto the Divine Name, the Compeller.

الجبار The protected المؤمنون are liable to be associates of the Compeller, in order to avoid His Authority, (26) Ibn Arabi, following a theosophical and philosophical method, inserted the question into the field of Divine Names with all its pro's and con's. However, a discussion of this lies outside the scope of this paper.

The fourth personality I would like to discuss is Abu-Bakr al-Shibli (+ 334 H.) who heard a man reciting the following verse : He saith, « Be gone therein and speak not unto me ». (27) Al-Shibli said : « I wish I could be one of them ». (28) Before I quote the comment of Sarrag al-Tusi, it is convenient to mention the following contextual verses : « Our Lord ! Oh bring us forth from hence ! If we return (to evil) then indeed we shall be wrong-doers ». He saith : « Be gone ... ».

Sarrag Tusi points out that Shibli meant that he would like very much to be one of those to whom an answer from God is given even in hell. (29). The dominant idea in Shibli's innermost, at that moment, is Divine Love. He wants to speak with him even in hell.

Our fifth person, Isma'il al-Gabarti (+ 806 H.) al-Djili's spiritual supervisor, or sheikh, was well reputed for his additional ecstasies. He heard a man reciting : « Lo ! Those unto whom kindness hath gone forth before from us, they will not hear the slightest sound thereof, while they abide in that which their souls desire. The Supreme Horror will not grieve them, and the angels will welcome them, (saying) : this is Your Day which ye were promised ». (30).

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26. Futuhat, vol. III, p. 297-8. ed. Cairo 1974.

27. Qur. XXIII, 108.

28. al-luma', p. 490, ed. Cairo 1960.

29. op. cit., loc. cit.

30. Qur. XXI, 101-3.

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Gabarti commented : « The state of the poor has risen, how wonderful it is ! » And he recited the following line : « What harm could occur to whomsoever would come in honour on the Last Day if he were insulted and humiliated in the world ? » (31)

It is clear that Gabarti understood the Qur'anic description of the good people on the Last Day as a signal to the « fakir » (Sufis) and the rise of the Sufi state. It is again a revival of the typical function of audition.

Gabarti was reported to have said that « Same' (audition) is a slippery stone upon which only experienced men's feet could be fixed » (31).

Abdel Karim al-Djili (+ after 820 H.), the prince of Sufi audition, is the last personality in the ecstatic current with which we are dealing.

Al-Djili is, in my opinion, the last form in the development of the school of Ibn Arabi. However, we can discern in Al-Djili, not only the theosophical, philosophical and rational elements, typical of Ibn Arabi and his school, but the ecstatic, auditory one, typical of many personalities before Ibn Arabi. This can be discerned in his whole system, including his view on the eschatological verses of the Qur'an. However, again, we will restrict ourselves to the ecstatic aspect of al-Djili as we did with al-Hallaj. Al-Djili dealt exhaustively with the Manifestations of the Divine Attributes. From among them the Manifestation of the Omnipotence Attribute is our concern, because it was such a challenge to Djili that he found no other way to describe it, than by referring to three famous eschatological chapters in the Qur'an. These include the « over-through » chapter التكوين , rending asunder الإنشاق and some verses from the chapter of « the cave » الكهف . These verses give details of the « Rising of the dead (resurrection) – Day ». يوم القيامة . Djili also uses a kind of explosive language to cope with the eschatological verses he quoted and the description of the Manifestation of the Omnipotence Attribute that he termed صلصلة الجرس .

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31. Ahmad al sharagi, Tabaqat al-Khawwas, p. 38-9 ;  
Manawi, Kawakib, Ms. DK. No. 259, vol. 2., Fol. 289 ver.  
C.F. also my Ph. D. thesis, p. 90, 325-26.

In that manifestation, God would manifest Himself to the worshipper through the attribute of Omnipotence, pride, greatness... In this manifestation the worshipper would hear a sound of the «clanking of the bell» صلصلة الجرس. The background of that sound is related in Islamic legacy to the story of the Prophet's (s.a.s.) Revelation. The «clanking of the bell» صلصلة الجرس describes one of the most burdensome kinds of Revelations. (32).

Djili considers the clanking to be a result of the clashing together of Sublime Realities. Divine Realities emerge to prevent Sufi hearts from daring to enter the Divine Presence of Greatness الحاضرة العظيمة and the revelation of the Divine Grade, it is the grandest veil between the Divine Grade and hearts of his worshippers. There is no way to remove this veil except after hearing the clanking of the bell» صلصلة الجرس (33).

Now, the hearing of this clashing together of Realities, or rather, the صلصلة الجرس Causes horrible physical reactions. In one of his works, Djili likens his state, during this agony, to a piece of old torn cloth, hung in a high tree blown to and fro by a very severe wind ; his stature was crushed and his form was decomposed ... (34) This is a recurring theme in his works.

In another place, he said, (and I quote in full) : « That night I was taken on a nocturnal journey to the heavens. Upon my arrival to this sublime station, the most beautiful scene I found such fear on this occasion that my forces were dissolved, my stature decomposed, my parts smashed and my limbs broken. I did not hear but a clanking from fear of which the mountains are pulverized and to whose dignity the humans and the jinn submit ; and I do not see but clouds of lights, filled with tongues of fire. However I am in darkness of seas of the Essence الذات one above

32. C. F. Bokhari's Sahih, vol. I, No. 2. باب كيف كان بدء الوحي and C.F. also Kirmani's commentary on S.B., I., p. 27 ; also al-Badr al einy : omdatuL - Qari', I, p. 40 ; my Ph. D. p. 659.

33. C. F. al-Insanul Kamel, I., p. 107; Manazer Ilhiyya, p. 53.

34. CF. op. cit., I, p. 67.

the other, under which there is neither sky nor earth; thus the motionless mountains were removed, and I saw the earth protruding (and we shall gather them, all together, nor shall we leave out anyone of them. And they will be marshalled before thy Lord in ranks) (35) and they will continue like that forever. I asked : « What happened to the sky ? » « It is rent asunder, and hearkens to (the command of) its Lord. And it must needs (do so) (36)... » I was answered. I asked : « What happened to the earth ? » « It is flattened, and casts front what is within it and becomes empty » (36) I was answered. I asked : « What happened to the sun ? » « It is folded up and the stars fall, losing their lustre, the mountains vanish, and the she-camels, ten months with young, are left untended, and the wild beasts are herded together, and the oceans boil over with a swell and the souls are sorted out. And the female (infant) buried alive, is questioned, for what crime she was killed. And the scrolls are laid open and the sky is unveiled, and the blazing fire is kindled to fierce heat, and the garden is brought near » (37). I was answered. And I asked : « What happened to me ? » The Grand answered : « A soul knows what it has put forward ». (38) This is a small resurrection, the Truth rendered to me as an example of the Grand one in order that I might be sure of my God, and so I could guide to Him whosoever is of my party (39).

Again, al-Djili, like Hallag, faces a situation, a violent and very impulsive one, that of the Manifestation of the Divine attribute of Omnipotence, or rather that of *صلصلة الجرس*. For the description of the claking of the bell. At the height of his experience, he found no adequate way of expressing this state except through the Qur'an : Suras and verses concerning eschatology, because he considered his experience a small resurrection as a model of the future resurrection *يوم القيامة* described in the Qur'an.

35. Qur. XVIII, 47-48.

36. Qur. LXXXIV, 1-4.

37. Qur. LXXI, 1-13 with a slight change at the beginning of every verse ( *وإذا* ) becomes just ( *.* ).

38. Qur. LXXXI, 14.

39. al-Djili, *al Insanul-kamil*, I, p. 107.

Now, to come to the end of the paper, I should mention the main results and outcomes of this paper, and summarize them as follows :

1. Sufis undergo a very special kind of personal experience : and as such, general, external methods of analysis cannot be safely applied to their experiences.
2. Rather, we need some very private and very personal, internal method of analysis to cope with the Sufi private and personal modes of experiences. Even these kinds of the so-called private and personal methods, cannot be applied on a wide scale, or in a general way. We need, in fact, for every mystic, rather, for every Sufi statement and experience, a separate, personal method to be applied, especially in the ecstatic current. The case of the Sama' method applied in this paper is just one example. These private and personal methods cannot be specified and prescribed in the way we do in a medical diagnosis or a physician's prescriptions. They are chosen, mostly, according to the researcher's insight and his penetrative spirit, both of which are ambiguous and apt to be governed, often, by the researcher's eccentricities and whims. However, there is no other way out.
3. The final result is that our understanding of the Sufi personalities and legacy, in general, and the ecstatic current, in particular, is relative and proportional, nether decisive nor final. However, this would not prevent our enjoyment of reading and tasting their efforts, pursuits and persistence, as elite human beings, in bridging the wide gap between the Divine Presence, the Last Day, on the one hand, and the human aspirations towards an immortal kind of existence, there beyond that veil of our wordly present life.

Last and not least, I should add that orthodox Islam has tolerated the ecstatic Sufi personalities and their statements ; the case of al-Hallag's execution is not an exception, because he was killed for involvement in political matters and not because of his Sufi views. Nevertheless, Islam would not agree with them, because they represent a very undisciplined kind of movement with their ec-

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tacies and auditional raptures, whereas orthodox Islam is a moderate form of religion :

«Thus, we have appointed you a moderate nation that ye might be witnesses to all mankind, and that the Apostle might be a witness to yourselves ».

«وكذلك جعلناكم أمة وسطا لتكونوا شهداء على الناس ويكون الرسول عليكم شهيداً ...» ( صدق الله العظيم )

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentleman : Thank you very much for your attention.