



الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA
وَتَبَرُّونَ إِسْلَامَآ إِذَا بَخَسْنَا مِلْقِيَاتِنَا

THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT
AND CIVILIZATION (ISTAC)

ABU TĀLIB ALMAKKI'S CONCEPTION OF KNOWLEDGE
A TRANSLATION OF THE RELEVANT CHAPTER OF THE AUTHOR'S *QUT AL*
QULUB
(THE NOURISHMENT OF THE HEART)

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC
THOUGHT AND CIVILIZATION (ISTAC)
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

BY
SAMIA ALI MUSA NOR AL-DIEN

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA
DHU 'L-HIJJAH 1418 / MARCH 1998

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a translation of the chapter of knowledge in *Qūt al-Qulūb*, the chief work of Abū Talib al-Makki (d. 386 AH / 996 CE) who left a great influence on al-Ghazālī and many scholars after him. Out of the forty-eight chapters in the book I have chosen *bāb al-‘ilm* for its significance and importance in Islām.

This thesis consists of an introduction and six chapters. The introduction provides essential information about al-Makki’s life and works, lists the different methods of translation, and emphasizes what method I choose in translating this text and why. Chapter one is about the nature of knowledge. It discusses the various branches of knowledge and defines the knowledge that is obligatory on all Muslims by citing the opinions of different scholars of different schools of thought. Chapter two deals with the excellence of the knowledge of gnosis and certainty over all other kinds of knowledge. Chapter Three is about the importance of silence in knowledge and how the pious gain the knowledge of different sciences.

Chapter Four deals with the excellence of esoteric knowledge (*‘ilm al-Ma‘rifah*), which is actually the knowledge of God (*al-‘ilm bi Allāh*). Chapter Five is about the difference between the scholars of the hereafter and the worldly scholars who are dispraised for seeking worldly pleasure with their knowledge. Chapter Six deals with the description of knowledge and how the ancestors used to acquire it. This final chapter provides the salient qualities of the true learned of the hereafter.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Prof. Dr. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, the Founder-Director of ISTAC, from whom I learned a great deal about Islām; and to his Deputy Director, Prof. Dr. Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud who encouraged me to study at ISTAC.

Professor Dr. Bilāl Kuspinar has both suggested and supervised this undertaking with patience and keen interest. I respectfully thank him for his thoughtful insights, high standards and valuable comments. My gratitude also goes to the academic staff of ISTAC who helped me to expand and deepen my knowledge in the exciting fields of Islamic Thought and Civilization.

I'm extremely grateful to my husband Hassan El-Nagar and to my brother Mohtady for their vital support and encouragement. I would like to thank them together with my family in Sudan, the Sudanese community in Malaysia, and all my teachers who taught me at different levels of education in my homeland.

Above all these, my deepest thanks are to Allāh Almighty, for goodness cannot be complete but by His help.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ii
THE TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION	1
A. Makki's Life	3
B. The Description of <i>Qūt al-Qulūb</i>	6

THE TRANSLATION OF *QUT AL-QULUB* (THE FOOD OF THE HEART)

THE INTRODUCTION	12
CHAPTER ONE	
ON THE NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE QUALITIES OF THE LEARNED	19
CHAPTER TWO	
ON THE EXCELLENCE OF THE GNOSTIC KNOWLEDGE (<i>MA'RIFAH</i>)	29
CHAPTER THREE	
THE IMPORTANCE OF SILENCE IN KNOWLEDGE.. 'I DON'T KNOW'	45
CHAPTER FOUR	
ON THE EXCELLENCE OF THE ESOTERIC KNOWLEDGE AS COMPARED TO THE EXOTERIC	55
CHAPTER FIVE	
ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE SCHOLARS OF THIS WORLD AND THOSE OF THE HEREAFTER	59
CHAPTER SIX	
ON THE ANCESTORS' ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE	81
BIBLIOGRAPHY	138

THE TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

All thankfulness is due to Allāh, for His bounties, our thanks are given out of gratitude for goodness is not complete but by His help.

Every nation or group of nations uses a special language to communicate and to record the fruits of its knowledge and its experiences. Because a universal language does not exist, therefore by learning different languages and their translations, nations can benefit from each other. Islām was introduced in the Arabic tongue, but after a while it was spread and carried to non-Arabs who speak various languages, and here lies the great importance of translation to non-Arab Muslims and to non-Muslims as well. Allāh said: "In the perspicuous Arabic tongue"¹. Indeed all the Islamic sources are in Arabic language. Non-Arab Muslims need to practice their religion. The easiest way to do so is to translate Arabic to their own languages, the harder but the better way is to learn the Arabic Language itself.

History is the accumulation of the experiences and knowledge gained by peoples past. This wealth of knowledge is being continuously transmitted in our world of today through the electronic as well as the printed media. This process enables us to learn the successes and mistakes of our ancient ancestors. It is hoped that my translation of Ibn 'Abbās al-Makkī's chapter on knowledge will be a valuable contribution in this process. Generally speaking, there are two kinds of translation:

- (1) Literal translation, (*tarjamah lafziyyah* (or) *ḥarfīyyah*): This kind of translation is a word to word exercise. It seeks the direct equivalent meaning of a word, phrase, or sentence from one language to another.
- (2) The second kind of translation primarily focuses on the translation of the meaning. It mainly concerns itself with transferring the notions,

¹ 'Abd Allāh Yūsuf 'Ali, trans. *The Translation of the Meaning of the Holy Qur'ān* (Brentwood: Amanah Corporation, 1411/1991), *Al-Shu'arā'* (26): 195. All further verse references are to this edition.

concepts, and ideas contained in a sentence, paragraph, or a whole article from one language to another.

Thus, if the translation of a text results in approximately the same length in both source and receptor languages, the translation of the meaning in a long article can be rendered in few sentences only. For a translation endeavor to be successful, four essential elements must be observed:

- (1) The translator must be well acquainted with both source and receptor languages.
- (2) The translator must have good knowledge of the material he wishes to translate.
- (3) The translator must have good knowledge of the culture and the socio-historical realities of the epoch in which the text had been written.
- (4) The translator must possess the linguistic proficiency that enables him/her to draw meanings and concepts from expressions and discourse contained in both source and receptor languages.

In this work I have tried - to the best of my ability - to translate the meaning of chapter thirty one (which is about knowledge) in al-Makki's *Qūt al-Qulūb*. Indeed, nothing has been more emphasized in our culture and traditions more than the importance of seeking knowledge. The intellectual existence of man, his basic humanity will not be attained without knowledge which is the major distinguishing factor between man and animal. Knowledge is as important to the existence of man as air, food, and water. It is an indispensable means by which man can gain happiness in this world as well as in the hereafter. It is for these reasons that I chose to translate this chapter about knowledge.

(1) AL-MAKKĪ'S LIFE AND WORKS

Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī's name is Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. 'Aṭīyyah who was known for being a devoted worshipper and for being intensely active in spiritual exercise. Actually, not much had been written about him in the past. Apart from a few remarks scattered here and there, almost nothing had been written about al-Makkī's early life. I did not find his birth date in any of the available references. All we know about his birth is that he was born in a place called *al-Jabal* (which means mountain), in Irān.

Among the teachers of al-Makkī was Abū Zayd al-Marūzī under whose supervision he studied *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*². Al-Makkī always spoke about al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī as his leader in the knowledge of the heart and gnosis, as is to be noted in the translation of the text as well. In addition to these two teachers al-Makkī also studied under Abū Bakr b. al-Jalā' whom he always referred to as "our Shaykh". However, it was 'Abd Allāh b. Ja'far b. Fāris who taught al-Makkī the science of *ḥadīth* and gave him authorization (*ijāzah*) to narrate *ḥadīth*. Among the people who narrated *ḥadīth* on the authority of al-Makkī are³: Abū Bakr al-Ājirī, 'Alī b. Aḥmad al-Maṣīṣī, Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Ḥamid Ṣan'ānī, Aḥmad al-Ḍaḥḥāk, 'Abd al-Ḥamid al-Azji and Muḥammad b. Muẓaffar al Khayyāt.

In addition to being a *ḥadīth* narrator, al-Makkī used to offer religious circles both in al-Baṣrah and Baghdād where he served as preacher for muslims.

In addition to being a Ṣūfī and a *ḥadīth* narrator, al-Makkī was also the head of the theological school (*madhhab*) of the Sālīmiyyah in Baṣrah. When Ṣūfism appeared in Baṣrah it was patroned and presented through the teachings of Abū al-Ḥasan Aḥmad and his father Muḥammad b. Sālīm Sahl al-Tustarī. Actually, al-Tustarī combined the patronage role of both Ṣūfism and Sālīmiyyah *Madhhab*. After al-Tustarī's death, it was al-Makkī who took his place in spreading the teachings of this school. Throughout *Qūt al-*

² Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, *Qūt al-Qulūb*, Edited by al-Hafnī, (Cairo: Dār al-Rushd, 1412/1991), 1: 8.

³ F. Muḥtabā'ī, "Al-Makkī", *Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-Shī'iyyah*, (1981), 3: 630-32.

Qulūb al-Makkī presented and highlighted the principal teachings of this school which are⁴ :

- Firm adherence to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah
- Gaining one's subsistence through lawful (*halāl*) means.
- Avoid harming the others in any way.
- Refraining from sins.
- Repentance.
- Giving others their due rights.

But among all of his teachers, it was perhaps al-Tustarī who left the greatest impact on al-Makkī. This may be due to the fact that al-Tustarī was a man of outstanding and versatile qualities. He was a strict traditionalist, a devout Ṣūfī, and a scholar. Among his writings are a commentary on the holy Qur'ān and his book *Raqā'iq al-Muḥibbīn*.

Muslim biographers speak of the various spiritual exercises which al-Makkī had practiced. He used to endure long hours of hunger and coldness. He lived long years by eating nothing but grass and desert fruits till this resulted in the change of his face and skin colour. Other ascetic practices which al-Makkī put himself through included avoiding sleep, refraining from physical desires, practicing silence and taking to loneliness. Later Ṣūfīs who followed al-Makkī's example are al-Ghazālī, b. Barjān Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shāzālī and Ibn 'Arabī.

Al-Makkī did lots of traveling⁵ as a means of spiritual purification. Such a task was not easy in his time, given that it was done moving on foot or riding mounts. These journeys took al-Makkī from his native land in Irān to Baghdād and Baṣra in Irāq, and finally to Makkah al-Mukarramah where he settled for sometimes and where he got his nick-name "al-Makkī". Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī said that Ibn al-Nadīm in his *Fihrist* classified Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Makkī as a follower of the Mu'tazilite school. Ibn al-Nadīm's source of this allegation was a report given by Abū al-Qāsim al-Balkhī in 919

⁴ Al-Makkī, *Qūt al-Qulūb*, 1:13.

⁵ Ibn Khallikān, *Waṣīyyāt al-A'yān*, (Qumm: Manshūrāt al-Riḍā, 1968), 4: 303-304; Ibn al-'Imād, al-Hanbalī, *Shadhardt al-Dhahab* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Tijārī, n.d.), 3: 120-21.

C.E. in which he alleged that al-Makki was a Mu'tazilite. At the time of this report either al-Makki was not born or he was very young. The fact is that al-Makki shares the views of the Mu'tazilites only on the essence of God and His attributes. Other than that he was in total disagreement with the rest of the Mu'tazilite thought. Indeed a scholar who always referred to al-Hasan al-Basri as his teacher and who strictly followed his footsteps, especially in the knowledge of God cannot be a Mu'tazilite.

Perhaps it is interesting to note here al-Makki's displeasure with Baghdad and its inhabitants, despite his displeasure with Baghdad and with its inhabitants, al-Makki spent most of his life there even until his death in 386 A.H./996 C.E. Being an ascetic Sufi and a strict follower of the teachings of Islam, did not get along well with the people of Baghdad whom he once described in the chapter of satisfaction as being "impatient in hardship and ungrateful to the grace of God"⁶. Thus, because of the tempting life of this city some scholars believe that "whoever settled in Baghdad, then died as a righteous will enjoy the bliss of this world and the eternal bliss of paradise." Feeling guilty somehow by settling in Baghdad without shifting to another place, al-Makki used to spend a certain amount of money every now and then seeking Allah's forgiveness. His sincere advice in this respect is, "If you have a choice, do not settle in a place where people are disobedient to God"⁷.

Some scholars attribute to al-Makki five additional books other than *Qut al-Qulub*. These are⁸:

- (1) A book on forty *hadith*.
- (2) A book on monotheism (*Tawhid*).
- (3) A book of a commentary on the Holy Qur'an (*Tafsir*).
- (4) *Al-Mujmal al-Mukhtasar*.
- (5) *'Ilm al-Qulub*.⁹ However, with the exception of *Qut al-Qulub*, none of these books are available today in a published form.

⁶ Al-Makki, *Qut al-Qulub*, 1: 15-16.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ F. Mujtaba'i, "Al-Makki", *Da'irat al-Ma'arif al-Shi'iyah*, (1981), 3: 630-632.

⁹ Carl Brockelmann, "*Qut al-Qulub*, '*ilm al-Qulub*', *Tarikh al-Adab al-Arabi*, (1993) 3,4: 472-73.

(2) THE DISCRIPTION OF QŪT AL-QULŪB

It is not certainly established when al-Makki started writing *Qūt al-Qulūb*. Some scholars give the death-date of Abū al-Ḥasan b. Sālim (after 360 A.H.), who was al-Makki's teacher, as an approximate date for its composition. The reason for this being that whenever al-Makki mentions his teacher's name he follows it with, "May Allāh's mercy be upon him".

Qūt al-Qulūb is considered as one of the great significant sources on Ṣūfism. Although its primary focus is on Ṣūfism, the book does contain as well essential material on the performance of prayers and on what is lawful and what is unlawful.

In my view al-Makki follows a scientific methodology in writing his book, beginning with the very famous *ḥadīth* of the prophet, which in fact constitutes the centre of the chapter thirty one on knowledge: "Seeking knowledge is an obligation on all Muslims". Before al-Makki suggests his own understanding and opinion of the subject, he first enumerates all the different schools at his time together with his commentary on them, then he moves to formulate his position. Al-Makki follows this method through out *al-Qūt*. In other words, he picks up a matter and mentions the scholars' views about it, expresses his agreement or disagreement with these views, and-finally-he either prefers one of the scholar's views over the others or adopts his own views after giving sufficient reasons as to why he thinks that his own views are better.

As one reads through the book, one observes al-Makki's keen criticism, not only of his generation but also of his contemporary and earlier scholars as well. His outstanding analytical and comparative ability, especially in matching and outweighing the opinions of different scholars is indeed striking. He treats his subject-matter with great depth and insight. What renders *al-Qūt* so powerful and colourful is the fact that it is riddled with the utterances and remarks of the companions and their followers. Besides, the book is replete with parables and wise sayings.

But like any other book, *Qūt al-Qulūb* too has its share of both admirers and critics among the scholars. Ibn 'Abbād al-Randī says that "it is one of the earliest and

most important references on *Şūfism*," a view shared by most scholars. Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhālī acknowledges that "by reading *al-Ihyā'* one gains knowledge and by reading *al-Qūt* one gains light." He also recommends the book, saying, "read *al-Qūt*, for it is true nourishment [to the soul]". 'Ayn al Quḍāt al-Hamadhānī believes that *al-Qūt* is one of the earliest books on *Şūfism* but the way it has been written resembles theology."

Al-Makkī had left a clear impact on many scholars after him. As mentioned previously his book is one of the most quoted references on *Şūfism*. But of all scholars, al-Makkī left no doubt a noticeable influence on al-Ghazālī who came after him by sixty four years. Indeed, one's reading of *Ihyā'* reveals that al-Ghazālī had profound knowledge of *al-Qūt*, which he has extensively quoted over and over again in the former. In fact some scholars claim that al-Ghazālī copies verbatim in *Ihyā'* entire pages¹⁰ from *al-Qūt*. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī thinks that al-Ghazālī had memorized *al-Qūt* by heart and had summarized it in his *Ihyā'*. But al-Ghazālī's treatment of the subjects appear to be more extensive, and more elaborate than that of Makkī's in *Qūt*. Furthermore, al-Ghazālī provides more chapters and sub-chapters, and his classification of his material is more refined. If we take the chapter of knowledge in *Ihyā'* as an example for this we find al-Ghazālī to be more analytical and discursive in his expansion of it and also he adds, in contrast to al-Makkī's an additional chapter on intellect ('*aqf*). In short, it is the contention of the present author that, despite al-Ghazālī's borrowing from Makkī's *Qūt*, his *Ihyā'* not only adds to the content of the latter's but also expands with further substantial examples. Therefore, these two books are complimentary for each other.

Many scholars criticize al-Makkī for using unauthentic traditions, among whom are Ibn Kathīr in his *al-Bidāyah wa 'l-Nihāyah* and Ibn Taymiyah in his *Fatāwā*¹¹. Al-Makkī is very clear about all the traditions he uses in his book. He has a very clear opinion about learning the fundamentals (*uṣūl*) before one can learn the branches (*furū*). This is why al-Makkī learned al-Bukhārī, the most authentic book of *ḥadīth*. However, al-

¹⁰ L. Massignon, "Al-Makkī", *The Encyclopaedia of Islām*, new ed. (1980), 1: 153.

¹¹ Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa Nihāyah* (Cairo: Dār al-Hadīth, 1413/1992), 11,12: 342-343; Ibn Taymiyah, *Majmū' Al-Fatāwā* (Beirut: al-Dār al-Arabiyyah, 1985).

Makki would use a weak tradition if it does not contradict the Qur'ān and the Sunnah and is in agreement with the general consensus of the *Ummah (ijmā' al-Ummah)*. Additionally, if a particular *ḥadīth* is known to one to four generations, al-Makki would not reject it even if it is not supported by the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, because to him, this kind of *ḥadīth* has internal proof that supports its rightness. He believes that a weak tradition is better than the scholars' opinion or *qiyās*. This is not something unique to al-Makki, for Ahmad b. Hanbal shares the same view with al-Makki. Nonetheless, Ibn Tayimiyah believes that al-Makki is the most strict Ṣūfi in following the fundamental teachings of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.

Ibn al-Jawzi criticizes al-Makki for abstaining from lawful food and for asking others to do the same¹². This, to Ibn al-Jawzi is nothing more than the deception of Satan. But the most serious accusation is what had been related to al-Makki that he once said that "nothing is more harmful to the creature than the Creator."¹³ This serious statement which is clear *shath* has been mentioned in many references. Because of this incident many people accused al-Makki of being an innovator (*mubtadi'*) and refused to attend his assemblies. After this incident al-Makki himself stopped teaching until he died.

While the authenticity of this statement cannot be questioned (since it has been documented in major references) one can definitely defend al-Makki as a profound scholar who has piety and deep knowledge of God and of Islām. Indeed every word and chapter in *al-Qūt* attest to this fact. But being a devout Ṣūfi perhaps al-Makki detested a certain pride in himself and might wanted to humble himself so that people could neglect him. A kind of a rationalized *taqiyyah* (preferential pretension) may be in place here for perhaps al-Makki may have felt the nearness of his death and then wanted to be left alone. Indeed different people may have different interpretations to this incident. To me, such a statement is unbecoming of a person who has so much devotion and knowledge. But only Allāh Almighty knows what is in the heart of his servant.

¹² Al-Makki. *Qūt al-Qulūb*, ed. 'Abd al-Mun'im Hifni, 1: 8-9.

¹³ Ibn Khallikān, *Wafiyāt al-A'yān*, 4: 303-304.

Al-Makki in *al-Qūt* did not merely collect different sayings, rather he established himself as a true authentic thinker with his different vision and view of the different religious sects which emerged in his time.

The claim that al-Makki committed an error in *tawhīd* to the extent that people kept away from him is not in harmony with what he says:

The core of *tawhīd* is the belief in the heart that Allāh Almighty is one without number; the one who has no second, the Existing without a doubt; the Present who is never absent; the All-Knowing who is never ignorant; the All-Powerful who is never incapable; the All-Living who never dies; the Everlasting Who is never forgetful; the Forbearing who is never impudent; the All-Hearing, All-Seeing; the King whose Kingdom never comes to an end; the Pre-Eternal, and Infinite, without an existing limit; He is always is; existence is one of His Attributes, never created by Him; the Everlasting with no end to duration; permanence is one of His Attributes-never created by Him; there is no beginning to His Being, no first to His Firstness, and no limit to His infinite duration; He is the last in firstness, the First in His lastness; His Names, Attributes, and lights are neither created for Him nor separate from Him; He is before everything, behind everything, and above everything; He is closer to the thing than the essence of the thing to itself; He is not a locus for things, and things are not a residence for Him; He is firmly established on the throne the way He wanted without shape or similarity. He knows everything and is capable (of doing) everything; He encompasses all things. He is matchless with no parallel to Him; He is in (absolute) Unity with His attributes; He does not mix of form a pair with anything; He is obvious among all of His creation. He does not occupy bodies and accidents do not reside in Him. There is nothing in His essence except Him and nothing of His essence exists outside of Him. There is nothing inside the creation except creation and nothing inside the essence except the Creator. glorified be He, the best creator; He is as He describes Himself and (He is) above His creatures' description of Him. We describe Him with true authentic narration from the Prophet of Allāh (pbuh). Nothing is like unto Him in all things. We affirm His names and attributes, and we reject His similarity to others and His need for devices; glorified be He. He is always with His attributes which are always there. He exists with his attributes with no end or limit, with no shape or similarity. (He has no second - rather, He exists in unity which is of Him, with a matchlessness that is unique to Him, analogy is not applied to Him. He is not likened to people. He is not described by a sex. He cannot be touched with sensory perception or with a species of anykind. He is the everlasting who always exists, the eternal who never occupies a space. (He is) the One and only, the

Absolute who begetteth not, nor is He begotten. This means that He is not begotten of anything, nor does He beget anything. Similarly, nothing is created of His essence, and His essence is not created from anything. Glorified and elevated be He of what the atheists say (about Him)¹⁴.

Qūt al-Qulūb was published twice in Egypt. The first print appeared in two volumes in 1921 C.E. The second print came out in 1961 C.E. in two volumes also. *Al-Qūt* was summarized by al-Shaykh al-Imām Muḥammad b. Khalaf al-Amawī al-Andalusi (died in 485 A.H.) who gave it the title of *Al-Wuṣūl ilā al-Gharāḍ al-Maṭlūb min Jawāhir Qūt al-Qulūb*. (The Arrival at the Desired Aim in the Substances of the Nutriment of the Hearts).

¹⁴ Al-Makki, *Qūt al-Qulūb*, 1: 8-9.

THE TRANSLATION OF *QUT AL-QULUB*

(THE FOOD OF THE HEARTS)

“SECTION OF KNOWLEDGE”

INTRODUCTION

Qūt al-Qulūb fī Mu'āmalat al-Maḥbūb wa-Wasf Ṭarīq al-Murīd ilā Maqām al-Tawḥīd, was written by our master, the saint, the elder (*al-shaykh*), the leader (*imām*) the learned and the magistrate (*muḥaqqiq*), Abū Ṭālib Muḥammad b. Abī al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. 'Abbās al-Makkī, May Allāh's mercy cover him! May he dwell in the wide Paradise! Amen.

There are two marginal books; the first is *Sirāj al-Qulūb wā 'Ilāj al-Dhunūb* written by the elder Abū 'Alī Zāyn al-Dīn 'Alī al-Ma'irī al-Ghannānī. The second is *Hayāt al-Qulūb fī Kayfiyyāt al-Wuṣūl ilā al-Maḥbūb*, by 'Imād al-Dīn al-Amawī (may Allāh have mercy on them all). *Qūt al-Qulūb fī Mu'āmalāt al-Maḥbūb* is written about Ṣūfism. This book is also well known by the title: *Ṭarīq al-Murīd li'l Wuṣūl ilā Maqām al-Tawḥīd* by the outstanding Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī Muḥammad b. 'Alī, who died in the year three hundred and sixty-eight in Baghdād. Most of his contemporary learned in the surrounding areas "had neither written as the like, nor had heard about it".

The name of the author was forgotten for a while before it was remembered again with the significant details of Ṣūfism. Zāyn al-Dīn shaykh Muḥammad b. Khalaf (*al-Amawī*) summarized the book and gave it the title of, *al-Wuṣūl 'illā al-Gharad al-Maṭlūb min Jawāhir Qūt al-Qulūb*. Zāyn al-Dīn died in the protected (*maḥrūsah*) Damascus in 743 A.H. al-Khāfajī in the commentary of his book *al-Shifā'* wrote that: He was Abū Muḥammad b. Abī Ṭālib, the leader of Ṣūfism and the follower of the Sunnah, who had profound knowledge about the exegesis of the Qur'ān beside other sciences. He wrote volumes of commentary but his book *al-Qūt* was a splendid one.

In the Name of Allāh Most Gracious Most Merciful

Praise be to Allāh the First, the Eternal, who was there before the universe and space. Who has no beginning at all. He is the Last who has no end, and lasts for all duration after the annihilation of all beings, and He is the Hidden and very close, and (Allāh) The Manifest in His Supreme by overpowering without farness. The Hidden and very close, and nearby without touching. By His Kindness He beautified everything He originated, and perfected the design of everything He created. His wisdom regulated the judgements. His Will settled the ruled's matters. The inward and the outward manifest His kind ability. The recent and the latest were overwhelmed by His favours. He spread among His favoured creatures His graces and overwhelmed them all by His justice. He favoured them by allowing them to know Him the Exalted and the Glorified is He, and by regarding them as the best among those to understand His utterance, and finally by sending a Messenger to them from their midst. We ask God to bestow His blessings upon the Prophet and his relatives. By His favour we ask Him to help us to be thankful to His graces and help us to know also His Hidden divine decree (*Qadar*). May Allāh's blessings be upon the master of both older and later times, the Messenger of God, who is invested with the privilege of intercession, and with the special water-pool (*al-Hawd al-Māwrūd*). May Allāh's blessings be upon the Prophet who was singled out by being a medium (*al-wasilah*)¹⁵ and was given the praised worthy rank (*al-maqām al-mahmūd*) on the day of resurrection. May Allāh also bless the companions of the Prophet, and the helpers of the Prophet and their righteous followers until the day of resurrection. Here then comes the book of *Qūt-al-Qulūb* by Abū Ṭālib Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. 'Aṭīyyā al-Hārithī al-Makkī, (May Allāh be pleased with him). The book contains forty-eight parts, as follows:

(The first part) is about the verses of transactions (*mu'āmalāt*). (The second part) is about the verses that mention the invocations (*'awrād*) of day and night. (Part three) is about the work of the vigilant novice (*al-murīd*) during day-time and night-time. (Part four) is about the desirable (*mustaḥab*) verses of the Qur'ān and invocation after the end

¹⁵ *Al-Wasilah*: Between God and all the creatures on the day of resurrection.

(*taslīm*) of morning prayers. (Part five) is about chosen supplication (*da'wāt*) after morning prayers. (Part six) is about the work of the watchful devotee (*al-murīd*) after morning prayers. (Part seven) is about invocations of the day-time which are seven (*awrād*). (Part eight) is about the invocation (*awrād*) of night-time which are five. (Part nine) is about the time of morning prayers. (Part ten) is about how to know the time of noon (*zawāl*) and the increase and the decrease of the shadow by feet measurement. (Part eleven) is about the preference of the prayer during days and nights. (Part twelve) is about *witr*-prayer and the excellence of night-prayer. (Part thirteen) is about all the desirable (*mustahab*) that you could say when you wake up in the midnight or when you wake up in the morning.

(Part fourteen) is about the dividing of the night-prayer and the description of its performers. (Part fifteen) is about the amount of invocation and prayers to be done by the servant during the single day and night in the glorifying of God, as well as about the excellence of the prayer in a congregation. This part is also about the excellence of the times when the supplication is most likely to be accepted, and the mention of the prayer of *tasābih*. (Part sixteen) is about the behavior of the servant during the recitation of the Qur'ān and of how it should be read according to the evidence. (Part seventeen) is about some of the separated Qur'ān (*al-Mufaṣṣal*)¹⁶ and the continued Qur'ān (*al-mūṣal*)¹⁷. It is also about the praise of those who give the Qur'ān its worth, and the blame of those who do not. This part also deals with the commentary on the unusual words of the Qur'ān. (*gharīb al-Qur'ān*). (Part eighteen) is about the undesirable description of the heedless. (Part nineteen) is about the loud-reading of the Qur'ān and different intentions concerning that, and detailed rules about silent and loud reading. (Part twenty) is about the nights of merits in which people must spend the time in worship and continuous invocations (*awrād*). (Part twenty-one) is about Friday, some manners that must be observed during it, and the mention of the increase (*al-mazīd*) during its day and its night.

¹⁶ In the short *Sūrahs*, where in *al-Basmalah* separated each *sūrah* from the other.

¹⁷ The middle and the long *sūrahs* where *al-Basmalah* does not come so often.

(Part twenty-two) is about fasting, its degrees and the description of those who fast. (Part twenty-three) is about self-reckoning (*muḥāsabat al-nafs*) and the importance of time. (Part twenty-four) is about the nature of the novice's regular invocation and the description of the state of the gnostic by the increase (*al-mazīd*). (Part twenty-five) is about the soul (*al-nafs*) and the ways by which the gnostics exercise their feelings and emotions. (Part twenty-six) is about the witnessing of those who exercise observation (*murāqabah*) (Part twenty-seven) is about the basics [required] of the watchful devotees (*muridūn*) (Part twenty-eight) is about the observations of those who are nearest to God. (Part twenty-nine) is about the rank of those who are nearest to God, the description of the state of the worshipper of certainty and the notification of the state of the heedless ones. (Part thirty) is about the heart's passing thoughts of those who possess the works of the hearts (*mu'āmalāt al-qulūb*). (Part thirty-one) is about the book of knowledge in detail, the description of the learned, the excellence of the knowledge of gnosis over other kinds of knowledge. This part also deals with discovery of the way of the learned among the righteous ancestors and the clarification of the favours of the esoteric knowledge over the exoteric one. The difference between the learned of the hereafter and those who seek worldly gains with their knowledge. It also speaks of the corrupted learned ('*ulamā al-sū'*) who gain worldly pleasure by their knowledge, and the description of knowledge and how the ancestors gained it. The innovations of story telling and theology by those who came later, and what the recent people innovated of utterances and actions by which they deviated from the ancestors' way. The excellence of the science of faith and certainty over other kinds of sciences, and the warning against derivation. The explanation of all that we mentioned and the detailing of the information and the clearness of the way of tracing (*al-āthār*)¹⁸.

(Part thirty-two) is about the explanation of the degree of certainty, the rules of the people of certainty and the basic nine degrees of certainty which the pious can reach: repentance, patience, thankfulness, hope, God's fear, asceticism, trust in God,

¹⁸ *Al-athar* refers to the Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh).

contentment and love (*mahabbah*).¹⁹ (Part thirty-three) covers the explanation of the five Islamic pillars. The first is the obligatory testimony of tawhīd by the believers. Additionally, the mention of its favour for it is the testimony of those who are near to God, the mention of the testimony of monotheism by the Prophet (pbuh) and its favours for the possessors of certainty. The explanation of prayers: Firstly is cleaning (*istinjā'*)²⁰ after the call of nature. Its obligatory duties (*farā'id*), its rules according to (*Sunan*). Secondly the ritual ablution before prayer, its obligatory rules, traditional rules and its meritorious ones as well. Thirdly is prayer, its obligatory rules and its traditional rules. The praying person, how he catches up the congregational prayer, when he is regarded as missing the congregational prayer in addition to other relevant rules. The last point here is about the appearance of the praying person. The obligatory alms, its due-time. The mention of the favours of charity (*sadaqāh*), its rules of giving, and the description of the poor. The month of fasting (*Ramaḍān*). At last the book of pilgrimage (*Hajj*) by which you perform your ritual duties and complete your religion. (Part thirty-four) is about the book of Islām and faith (*Īmān*): The belief in Sunnah by heart; how the Muslims practice the exoteric knowledge; then the pillar of Islām and faith; how Islām and faith are connected; the share of the heart in any deed; the differences between Islām and faith; how one can fall in hypocrisy and how the ancestors were able to avoid befalling in hypocrisy. (Part thirty-five) is about the practices of the Prophet (Sunnah) and its favours; some Islamic moral rules; the belief of the heart in exoteric knowledge which is mentioned in sixteen points:

- (1) To believe that faith is both belief and practice.
- (2) To believe that the Qur'ān is the speech of God which is uncreated.
- (3) To believe in God's attributes.

¹⁹ These nine degrees of piety come in order from the first degree to the last one.

²⁰ *Istinjā'*: using solid material like stone when lacking water for cleaning

- (4) To know and believe as well in the preference of the companions of the Prophet (pbuh) and to prefer those who have been preferred by God and His Messenger.
- (5) To believe that the leadership is in the tribe of Quraysh until the day of resurrection.
- (6) Do not declare as unbeliever the one who prays to the same direction of the *Ka'bah* (*qiblah*).
- (7) To believe in the Divine Fate, the good and the bad.
- (8) To believe that the questioning of the angles Munkār and Nakīr in the grave is true.
- (9) The grave's torture is true.
- (10) To believe in the Balance.
- (11) To believe that the Path²¹ (*al-Sirāt*) is true.
- (12) To believe in the approached basin (*hawḍ*) by which Allāh favoured His Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh).
- (13) To believe that seeing God is true in the hereafter.
- (14) To believe that the believers of monotheism will not remain forever in Hell, but they will be taken out therefrom.
- (15) To believe in judgement in the last day.
- (16) There is a chapter which is derived from the agreement about the innovators (*ahl al-bida'*), and that they will not be considered as part of the Muslims; The mention of the merits of the Sunnah as well as the mention to the way of the righteous ancestors.

(Part thirty-six) is about the basics of the Islamic Law (*Shari'ah*) and the firm ties of faith (*'urā al-Imān*); the condition by which anyone is considered as a Muslim and the degree of goodness in Islām. The sign of God's love to the Muslim; the rights of a Muslim upon the other, which is the sacredness of Islām upon Muslims; the rules of

²¹ *Al-Sirāt*: a hair thin bridge over Hell in the day of resurrection.

Sunnah related to the body; some sins and innovations concerning the growing of the beard; what is good about voluntary *rukū'* (prayer of *nāfilah*), and what is undesirable (*makrūh*). (Part thirty-seven) is about great sins (*al-kabā'ir*) explanation in detail; a matter about the unbelievers' judgement. (Part thirty-eight) is about the book of sincerity in different situations and warning of its diseases during actions. (Part thirty-nine) is about the degrees of nourishment (*aqwāf*), its increase and decrease. (Part forty) is on food, its manners (*ādāb*), and Sunan, recommended kinds of food and unrecommended ones. (Part forty one) is about poverty, its obligations and its favour; the descriptions of the special ones; details about accepting the gifts and rejecting them. (Part forty-two) is about rules of the travelers and purposes of traveling. (Part forty-three) is about the book of rules of the prayer leader (*Imām*) and the description of leading the prayer (*Imāmah*) and those who pray behind the prayer leaders. (Part forty-four) is about friendship and brotherhood for God's sake, and their guidelines; these who love each other for the sake of God and their descriptions. (Part forty-five) is about marriage and whether it is better to marry or to remain unmarried and some rules about woman concerning marriage. (Part forty-six) is about entering the bathroom²². (Part forty-seven) is about work and means of living through buying and selling, rules and conditions to be well known by the worker and the trader in their dealings. (Part forty-eight) is about the books of Lawful and unlawful things, and some dubious matters between them; the favour of the lawful, and the dispraise of the dubious and different examples about these matters.

²² Especially the public bathrooms.

CHAPTER ONE

Part Thirty One

ON THE NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE QUALITIES OF THE LEARNED

(pp. 129-131)

This part is about knowledge, its details, the qualities of the learned, and the superiority of gnostic knowledge (*'ilm al-ma'rifah*) over the other branches of knowledge. This part also addresses the methods of our righteous ancestors (*al-sālaf al-sālih*) and the explanation of knowledge that requires silence and the path of the pious people. Concerning knowledge it deals with the difference between outward and inward knowledge and between worldly scholars and the scholars who seek with their knowledge the hereafter. Furthermore, this part discusses the superiority of gnostics over the literalist scholars.

Added to the above, this part discusses the following topics: The mention of the blameworthy learned who seek earthly gains out of their knowledge; the description of knowledge and the methods of learning; the dispraise of innovations brought about by the later learned through “their” stories and discourses; the mention of innovations-both verbal and practical-made by “later” people, being a departure from the teachings of the ancestors; the preference of faith and certainty to other branches of knowledge; warning against the one’s using subjective opinion “in matters of religious nature”; the mention of the meaning of the Prophet’s saying: (Seeking knowledge is obligatory on all Muslims¹, and the other *ḥadīth*, “Seek knowledge even if it be in China²) for seeking knowledge is an obligation on all Muslims”.

¹ Muhammad b. Yazid al-Qazwini, *Sunan Ibn Mājah* (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah, n.d.) *Introd.* :17.

² I have been unable to trace the source of this *ḥadīth*.